

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF WHIST: AN ESSAY
ON THE SCIENTIFIC AND INTELLECTUAL
ASPECTS OF THE MODERN GAME, IN
TWO PARTS – PART I: THE PHILOSOPHY
OF WHIST PLAY; PART II: THE
PHILOSOPHY OF WHIST PROBABILITIES**

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The Philosophy of Whist: An Essay on the Scientific and Intellectual Aspects of the Modern Game, in Two Parts – Part I: the Philosophy of Whist Play; Part II: The Philosophy of Whist Probabilities by William Pole

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WILLIAM POLE

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THE
PHILOSOPHY OF WHIST

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IN TWO PARTS

PART I

THE PHILOSOPHY OF WHIST PLAY

PART II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF WHIST PROBABILITIES

BY

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ONE OF THE EXAMINERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON;
KNIGHT OF THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL ORDER OF THE RISING SUN.

"Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas."—VIRGIL.

"Die ersten Gründe und Prinzipien der Dinge aufzustellen ist doch wahrlich nichts leichtes."—HERDER.

FOURTH EDITION

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PREFACE.

IN the face of the existence of such works as those of "Cavendish" and Clay, any new treatise professing to teach the complete Practice of Whist must certainly be superfluous.

This little work has no such pretension. It only aims at presenting what is already known under a new aspect, which may, as the author believes, bring out the character and merits of the Modern Game more prominently, and give it a higher reputation.

Taking the Art of Whist Play as set forth in the two works above named, it is proposed here to shew that this art is not, as most people imagine, a mere assemblage of detached empirical rules, but is, in reality, a compact and consistent logical system, of a highly intellectual and philosophical character; a carefully built-up structure, so to speak, remarkable not less for its unity of design than for its elaboration of detail.

There are, probably, many adepts in Whist-playing to whom this aspect of their favourite recreation may be novel, and who may be interested to examine the philosophical basis and the *raison d'être* of rules and maxims which they have been in the habit of practising as a matter of routine. It is not presumption to assume that by such an examination they may acquire, if not a surer command of their art, at least a higher estimation of its character.

But it is in a humbler sphere that such a view of Whist Play is likely to be most useful—namely, as an aid to learners of the modern game, particularly in the earlier stages of their study. In the acquirement of all kinds of knowledge it is injudicious to offer to the beginner too much complexity of detail, which has the effect of discouraging him, and of making his progress difficult and irksome. His more advantageous course is to begin with simple and broad considerations, and then to pass on gradually to more intricate refinements.

Here, therefore, the philosophical view of Whist Play steps in most opportunely. The student will begin by making himself acquainted with the broad fundamental principles which underlie the whole system: following this up

by the acquirement and practice of a few simple rules embodying their first development and most general applications; after which he will find himself in the most favourable position for perfecting himself in the art, by the study of the more comprehensive details to be found in "Cavendish" and Clay.

The philosophical analysis of Whist would be incomplete without a reference to the doctrine of Probabilities; and the fact that these probabilities enter so largely into the theory and the practice of Whist Play furnishes additional evidence of its scientific and intellectual character. The importance of this branch of the subject was well appreciated by Hoyle; but it seems afterwards to have dropped out of notice, or at least to have rested for a long period with only an occasional mention, more as a matter of curiosity than of utility. When, however, the recent consolidation of the structure of the Modern Game began to attract attention, it naturally led to a revival of the interest in the Probability questions: and for some years past such questions have been discussed, somewhat elaborately, by many Whist authorities, chiefly in the columns of *The Field*. The author has occasionally taken part in these discussions, and he has to thank the proprietor

of that journal for the permission given him to reprint some of his papers. To these many additions have been made, and it is hoped that Part II. will be found, not only a novelty in Whist Literature, but a really useful example of the application of philosophical principles and processes, of a somewhat high order, to the theory and the practice of this noble game.

The Author has also to express his best acknowledgments to "Cavendish" for assistance kindly afforded to him in many ways.

· ATHENÆUM CLUB, LONDON, S.W. *December, 1883.*

In the Fourth Edition, the whole has been revised, and some additions have been made.

The Author has again profited by the kind suggestions of "Cavendish," and he has also to thank Mr. W. H. Whitfield, of Trinity College, Cambridge, for a verification of the Table on p. 141, and for an important correction in the following chapter. Probability calculations are of a peculiarly subtle nature, and the notification of any inaccuracies that may be discovered will be esteemed a favour.

In compliance with a very general desire, there has been added a Rhymed Paraphrase of the "Elementary Rules."

September, 1886.

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