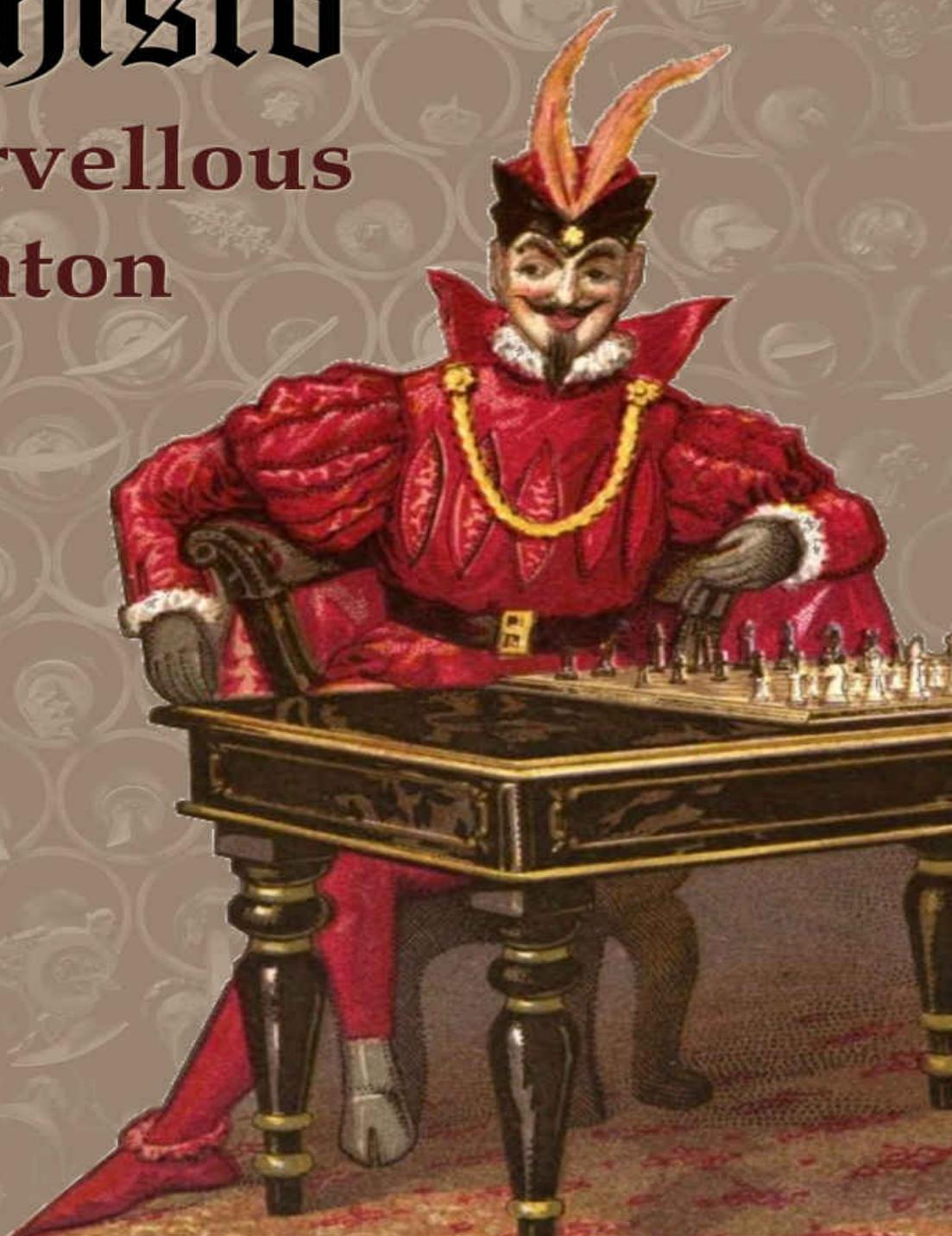


Entangled TOMES

**Mephisto**  
the Marvellous  
Automaton



Edited by Katherine Nabity

**"Mephisto"**  
**the Marvellous Automaton**

**Exhibited**  
**at the**  
**International Theatre,**  
**Exposition Universelle,**  
**Paris.**

**1889.**



## Entangled Tomes edition

Introduction and formatting by Katherine Nabity

Entangled Tomes feature newly formatted versions of lost classics and curated anthologies of works from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Other Entangled Tomes:

*Our Past in the Uncanny Valley*

*David P. Abbott in The Open Court*

For news about future releases, sign up for the Entangled Continua

Publishing newsletter:

<http://eepurl.com/bLJViH>

## Published by [Entangled Continua Publishing](#)

Introductory materials copyright © 2020 by Katherine Nabity

### **License Note:**

Aside from introductory materials, the content of this volume is available in the public domain. Regardless, work and thought have been put into this volume. Please, do not reproduce, copy, or distribute for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

### **About the Cover and Ornamentation:**

Photographic elements:

Sindre Aalberg (<https://unsplash.com/@sindreaalberg>)

Ornamentation: [Via Freepik](#)

Design by Katherine Nabity

# Introduction



Mephisto was a chess-playing pseudo-automaton created by Charles Godfrey Gumpel and was first shown in 1878. The following was, I assume, a pamphlet created to both advertise and commemorate the automaton. It includes a fictional story to mythologize Mephisto, a chapter on Mephisto's competitors, testimonials about Mephisto as a machine and as a player (with several additions found in an earlier publication), and some sample games played by the Victorian-era robot. On first reading, I found it to be a very odd collection of things.

In contrast to the other two celebrity chess automata, the Turk and Ajeeb, Gumpel made no claim that Mephisto itself played chess. In fact, this pamphlet includes Gumpel's mathematical refutation of a machine being able to reason at all through a chess game. Instead, the secret of Mephisto isn't *if* the automaton is controlled by a human mind but *how*. That was the purported mystery and it remains a mystery here.

"How 'Mephisto' Was Caught" seems an strange inclusion considering that all of the other material in the pamphlet. While everything else seems concerned with pre-debunking Mephisto as a human-controlled machine, the story is entirely fanciful. But if you consider chess-playing automatons as being adjacent to magicians in the realm of entertainment, "How 'Mephisto' Was Caught" bares much resemblance to the occult origin stories and trappings of many magicians. For example, the magician Joseffy, known now for his feats of clockwork prowess, was often billed as "the Necromancer." In such a light, a story about playing chess with the Devil seems the order of the day.

Mephisto didn't garner as much attention as the Turk or Ajeeb. By many accounts, the human controllers were very good chess players, perhaps

better than the Turk itself in its later years. Chess periodicals of the day seemed fairly respectful of Mephisto as an opponent. Perhaps this level expertise warned off the more common riff-raff players. Ajeeb, for example, also played checkers, and welcomed all-comers. Or perhaps by the end of the 19th century, the populous had somewhat tired of chess and the sensationalism of robotic chess players. Mephisto is certainly not as well remembered as the Turk, but it has not been forgotten either. In 1980, a century after the automaton's debut, the Hegener & Glaser company branded their line of chess-playing computers as "Mephisto." Alas, while H+G's computers run software robust enough to stump Gumpel's equations, the boards sadly cannot move their own pieces.

Katherine Nabity  
Tempe, 2020

# Table of Contents



## [How "Mephisto" Was Caught](#)

A Chess Legend by C. Godfrey Gumpel, Assoc. Inst. Civ. Engrs. and Inst. Electr. Engrs.

## [A Chapter on Automatic Androids](#)

by the Inventor and Constructors of "Mephisto"

## [A Letter on Mechanical Chess](#)

by the late Richard A. Proctor, Esq. Editor of "Knowledge"

## [Testimony of John Imray, Esq. M.A.](#)

Member Inst. Civ. Engrs. and Member Inst. Mech. Engrs.

## [Opinions of the Press](#)

## [Selection of Games Played by Mephisto](#)

## [About the Editor](#)

# How Mephisto Was Caught

A Chess Legend\*  
by C. Godfrey Gumpel



**D**ESCHAPELLES, the Chess King, learnt Chess in four days, after which he beat every player who dared to meet him over the Chessboard. I studied Chess for four years, and acquired a certain proficiency, but discarded all hope of ever reaching that standard of skill to which every young Chess-player sanguinely aspires.

Often have I turned away from board and men with the resolve never again to enter a contest; convinced that I never could become a Chess-player of the foremost rank, I consoled myself with the thought that Pandora's box could not possibly deal out to every aspirant the genius necessary to become a Ponziani or a Philidor.

Besides—the grapes were sour—to be a first-class Chess-player, and keep up the reputation of being such, detracted in my eyes from the pleasures which the game otherwise afforded.

The worship of Caïssa is, however, so alluring, so fascinating, that the mind, after an interval of repose, returns to it with renewed vigor, greater hope, and redoubled energy, intent on wresting the palm of victory from the majority of opponents.

It would be an injustice to the noble game of Chess, were we guided by momentary results in our estimation of the pleasures and advantages to be derived from the pursuit of this intellectual pastime. We may lose a game, or even a match; yet we have fought well, fairly met our challenged foe, have

not blundered, but gained his respect by our doughty combat; and being beaten, we have not hesitated to yield to our opponent in a manly spirit. Such thoughts have often induced me to direct my steps back to the Chess Club, and enticed me to enter again the list of combatants in a tournament; inspired by the intellectual feats of Staunton, Anderssen, and Morphy, I cherished the hope of reaching nearer and nearer the perfection of such masters. When gaining a victory, visions of further successes buoyed me up and refanned my sinking courage; a well-contested but lost game caused me to apply myself to renewed study, and so engaged I often passed the midnight hours in solitude over the Chessboard.

It was after an evening spent at the Chess Club over a match-game which I lost, although (as Chess-players always flatter them selves) I ought to have won it. Dispirited, I wended my way homewards, my heated brain busy with the position of the game, in which I made the move that turned fortune (of course, not my opponents skill) against me. I must have been thinking aloud, must have been soliloquizing whilst walking along, for I heard a voice near me exclaim: "You can be the strongest Chess-player in the world if you will follow my instructions."

Any other remark would have found my ear deaf; but this so harmonized with the thoughts then occupying me, that I was conscious of hearing the voice very plainly. I turned round to look at the person addressing me, but to my great astonishment I could see no one except two or three human figures flitting along the dimly lighted streets at a distance too great for their voices to have reached me.

I stood still, feeling rather baffled for a moment; then, smiling at my foolishness in allowing my mind to be thrown off its guard by its own wanderings, I resumed my journey. Of course, I thought, this is only a specimen of Dr. Carpenter's "unconscious cerebration," and whilst giving way to a merry laugh, I quickened my steps to make up for the time I had lost so dreamingly on the road.

I reached home later than usual; it was already half an hour past midnight. The servants had strict orders never to wait up for me after half-past eleven, hence all had gone to rest, and I was the only occupant of the lower part of the house. I locked and bolted the street door, fastened the chain in the usual manner (as confirmed by the servant when questioned about it the next morning), and then looked in at the library, where I opened several letters received by the last post. I could, however, not fix my attention upon

either of these letters; my mind was still too much occupied with my defeat; and had I gone to bed, sleep would have kept away from me for hours. So I determined to settle my doubt about the chances I had thrown away in the game played during the evening, by subjecting it to a closer analysis. I arranged board and men, and played the game over up to the point where I could have forced it, my opponent being completely at my mercy. But how could I have possibly overlooked so evident a move at the decisive moment? What made me so blind as not to see that with this one *coup* my opponent's resources were completely gone?

Almost angrily I rose from my chair, fully convinced that, with mind harassed and irritated by an annoying vocation during the day, I could not expect it to be fit for so trying a mental task as a match-game at Chess; and I settled the whole question by exclaiming, "I never can be a profound Chess-player." At that moment I felt a draught of air through the room as if doors at each end had been suddenly opened, although I heard no noise, and a voice exclaimed: "But you can, if you will follow my instruction."

I recognised the voice; it was the same which I had heard on my way home, but now it seemed to come from every part of the room, and made me stagger back into my chair. I defy the stoutest heart not to beat quicker at such an unwelcome phenomenon occurring to him when alone during the still hours of the night. No human being was near me when the voice in the street sounded so close to my ear, and no one had followed me into the house, as I myself had fastened the street door. Besides, I had not been so absorbed in my analysis but that the least noise would have forced itself on my attention.

Yet here was the same voice, clear and sonorous, coming from no distinct part of the room to indicate the whereabouts of the speaker. I remember shutting my eyes, whilst the idea of unconscious cerebration flashed across my mind, with the conviction that it could not be this. I was far from harboring any belief in spirits or ghosts, and my philosophy certainly excluded animism from its doctrines; hence, spiritualistic tendencies of mind could never have caused my brain to produce unconsciously the speech I heard.

All these reflections passed rapidly before me, and made the whole phenomenon still more puzzling, particularly as I perceived that a mephitic odor diffused itself about me. I opened my eyes, and to my horror discovered my light extinguished, while a subdued red glare filled the room. I felt that my mind was laboring under some fearful hallucination, from which I

endeavored to free myself by rising from my chair. But my limbs refused to obey my will. I was prostrate, paralyzed, and felt the perspiration pouring down my forehead in cold drops. While in this state of agony I heard the voice addressing me in the following words, spoken in a cynical, sarcastic manner, which made me shudder, and caused my blood to curdle in every part of my body: "First, my dear A., let me allay your fears, which I know, from long experience, torture you mortals in a pitiable degree; take my assurance that I have not come to harm you, however mysterious the manner and form of my approach. Take courage, regain your full consciousness, and believe me, although it may appear incredible, that all you have just experienced in your person is the result of your own weak human nature. Do not be deceived in me and my character, for, I doubt not, we shall be good friends as soon as your eye has become accustomed to my face and figure." These words induced me to take a look at the speaker, who, I felt, now stood opposite to me on the other side of the Chess table. The first object that caught my sight was his keen, penetrating eye, which appeared to have a singular attractive power—so great, that I felt myself unable to look at any other part of his person. This, however, did not prevent me from observing his tall figure enveloped in a fiery red dress, his biliously tinted features, expressing a cutting sneer and a sardonic smile, his long fingers, etc. All reflection had forsaken me; my blood seemed to have ceased to circulate, and my tongue refused to express the question now tormenting my mind. But he seemed to guess my thoughts, and forestalled my inquiry by introducing himself to me in the following words: "You will have, I hope, no objection to my taking the seat opposite to you at this table, whilst making you acquainted with me and the object of my visit. You may, in your own mind, have already denominated me the Devil, or Satan, or given me any of the names by which popular superstition designates what it calls an evil spirit. But as I know, my dear A., that your mind is cast in a mould superior to the ordinary type, it is not necessary now to refute any such ideas about my person or origin—for the moment, at least—and I will beg you to accept my presence here as a material fact; leave all scruples and further questions until we have transacted our business, and call me simply Mephistopheles, or, shortly, Mephisto. I can read in your face that you have heard of me before this, no doubt in connection with the life and death"—(a shudder run through me when remembering of what kind it was)—"of Dr. Faustus; but feel no alarm; I do not wish to practice magical science with you, but have come to you as a

Chess-player. You look surprised. Know then, my dear A., that I am as passionately fond of Chess as your are; but I possess the advantage of having practiced the game since it was invented, and measured my strength against all the old Chess masters, from Greco, Paolo Boi and Ruy Lopez down to Philidor and Labourdonnais. Not only have I played with them, but most of the ancient players have had to thank me for their skill. Without your knowing it, I have often watched your struggles to improve in this most fascinating mental sport; and having seen and admired your unflagging industry, and, above all, knowing you to possess a mind which engages in subjects of higher import in a free and unbiased spirit, I have long felt a desire to assist you in your endeavours to become a strong Chess-player." He paused for a moment, as if hesitating how to proceed, whilst the smile on his face assumed a truly diabolical expression. I had ceased to rack my brain for a solution of this extraordinary phenomenon, and was sitting motionless in my chair, ready to accept any phase which this adventure might assume, when I heard him say: "Why I appear to you at this hour and in this form I cannot tell you now, as time is fleeting, and I have to be three thousand miles away in the heart of Asia before the sun is at its meridian there; hence I must be brief tonight, but on my next visit we shall have more time for explanation. Yes, my dear A., I mean to come again, and my visits will, I am sure, become more and more agreeable to you; but we must come to an understanding before we proceed. My presence here is subject to certain conditions; *the first, and the only important one, is: that you must not on any account or in any form make the sign of the cross in my presence, or during the whole time that my transactions with you may last.* You can, by means of it, break the spell with which I control you at this moment, and you may banish me from your presence; but you certainly do so at the risk of your life. I need not ask you, as I know that you have strength of mind sufficient to promise fulfillment of this stipulation." At these words I felt my whole body shaking, with a peculiar sensation in every joint; it was evident to me that I was free to move, from which I had been prevented by the mysterious influence of my visitor.

"The other point," he continued, "to be observed by you, in order to make my presence and my return possible, is—silence to every one concerning me and my visits. But I scarcely think there is any necessity for me to dwell longer on the fulfillment of this condition, so that I can now revert to the chief object of our interview." Mephisto's piercing glance had so

riveted my eyes, and his words had so fixed my attention, that I could not gain a moment's time to attempt an explanation of this apparition; and he seemed anxiously watching me, so as to prevent my thoughts from being otherwise engaged than in the manner he desired.

"From my remarks," he resumed, "you already know that I profess to teach the royal game of Chess; to which I must add, that I can bring my pupils to a degree of perfection which enables them to combat successfully every other living Chess-player. I have, you must know, only one living pupil at a time, and the death of my last disciple in Arabia, who never had an opportunity to measure his strength with European players, has induced me to search for a new candidate. Your earnest desire to improve in the game has attracted my attention, and I now offer you the position of the strongest Chess-player in the world, if you will avail yourself of my assistance for that purpose. Before, however, I receive your reply, it is but fair that I should acquaint you with the conditions under which I offer my instructions to you, since, as you will perceive, my dear A., even the Devil likes to go to work in a straightforward manner."

I had by this time regained full control over my mind, and determined to meet my uninvited guest with all the courage and mental powers at my disposal; so I exclaimed (in a voice intended to be firm and fearless, which yet, however, must have betrayed some nervousness, as it brought a smile on Mephisto's face): "Be you man or devil, I beg you to understand that your presence here was never solicited, nor is it welcome; and I trust that, by the same mysterious means that enabled you to effect your entrance, you will ——." He would not allow me to continue, but, with his condescending cynical smile, interrupted me by saying; "Stop, stop, my dear A., be not too rash with your threats or your judgment; first hear me out, and then decide. Prejudice and my mysterious approach will, it seems, not allow you to treat me with any confidence; it is hence necessary that we should come to an understanding. I must beg you to divest yourself of the idea, fostered by popular tradition, that my object in all compacts which I make is the possession of the human soul. That is not the case; for the service which I desire to render you—namely, making you the strongest Chess-player—I shall ask in return your services during your terrestrial life; my influence over human beings does not extend beyond the grave, so I leave every one to answer for his own soul hereafter. I shall not press you for a decision tonight, but will give you a week to consider my proposition, which time will enable

you to discover that I can fulfill my engagement by making you victorious against any Chess-player whom you may feel inclined to challenge. This day week I shall return at the same hour, when I hope, my dear A., you will be ready to receive me, and, like a sensible man and an enthusiastic Chess-player, you will accept my terms. So, *au revoir*." I felt myself rudely shaken, and appeared just awakening from a dream. I rubbed my eyes and looked round me, when, instead of Mephisto, I discovered my wife standing by my side with a candle in one hand, the other resting on my shoulder. It is needless to relate the gentle reproof I received for my imprudence in spending the hours, so needful for rest of body and mind, over the Chessboard, and in so exhausted a condition that even an interesting position—still visible on the board—could not keep me awake. I had been asleep then? Why, of course; and but for some strange noise about the house, which awakened my wife and servants, I might have remained still longer in my unenviable position. I looked stupefied. I was sure I had been awake when my mysterious visitor made his appearance; the whole scene was too vividly impressed upon my mind to be the mere remembrance of a dream. Yet it must have been only a dream; and so, harassed by doubts and reflections, I sought the arms of sleep, hoping for a solution of my perplexed state of mind on the coming morrow.

My face must have betrayed the thoughts that occupied me, since my wife during the next following days did not cease questioning me about the cause of the trouble so plainly depicted on my countenance; and what made matters worse was my constant endeavor to avoid her company, that I might brood undisturbed over the nature of my adventure. All my attempts at a solution failed, and I could only shift an explanation of the phenomenon on to the shoulders of Kant, Schopenhauer, Helmholtz, or Zöllner, by assuming Mephisto to be a being of four dimensions, with the capacity of assuming our three-dimensional existence whenever it pleased him. All my cogitations ended at last in curiosity as to my Chess strength. Was I really stronger than I had been before the eventful night? I could easily put this to the test; and if I found myself really stronger, if I could conquer the first-class players all round, this would amount to a definite proof that I had not been dreaming. Impatience to measure myself against the champions of the club, and Chess-Divan took possession of me; and my most important engagements for the day being satisfied, I hastened to challenge the first strong player I could meet. I disdained to take odds, and nearly offended my opponent by insisting

upon playing even. To his, not more than to my own astonishment, I won—won by a combination which took me utterly by surprise, and which had the effect of bringing other players of no mean Chess strength around me, eager to test whether or not my suddenly acquired Chess powers were of a permanent or an ephemeral character. But all had to succumb.

So the week passed on, and the evening approached on which I had to meet my mysterious Chess master. My successes over the board had produced, no doubt, the intended effect. The Chess strength so miraculously acquired, unconsciously excited in me the desire for further powers, a wider knowledge and an extended mental vision. I seemed to long for the meeting with Mephisto, and so presented a frame of mind which made me a ready prey for his crafty snares. When I reached home from the club, rather earlier than usual, I was met by the servant at the door, who, in a trembling voice, informed me that a stranger, a tall foreigner, was waiting for me in the library; that he had gone into the room as if he knew the house, and told her not to trouble herself about him, that master would be home directly, and that she might go to bed; but somehow she did not like his appearance, and felt uneasy. Displeased at her encounter with Mephisto, I reproached the servant for her fanciful ideas, and told her rather sharply to be gone.

I found my visitor standing before a bookcase, so deeply interested in a small volume that he appeared not to notice my approach until I was close to him, when he turned round, and, in a pleasing voice, congratulated me on the contents of my library, and complimented me on the scope and the character of the intellectual food I had stored up; adding by way of comment, and, perhaps, with the view of making my mind more pliable to his subtle influence:

"I observe by the marginal notes in your handwriting, my dear A., that your mind is in advance of your times in judging important questions, which are agitating the present generation, and I fully subscribe to many of your remarks. How true when you say that 'we cannot estimate contemporary controversies better than by comparison with past historical prejudices, running parallel with them,' and again that 'the very same people, who now, through conceit and intolerance cry out, *atheist! atheist! shut him out!* would, in the time of Luther, have been ready to burn the Reformer; and, before Pontius Pilate, have joined in the cry: *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*'

"I shall," he continued, "feel less restraint in treating you with entire confidence, since your unbiased judgment will enable you better to

understand what I am about to communicate to you about myself. Know, then, that I have sacrificed what common-place people call 'a good name' for the irresistible desire to combat and to punish deceit, bombast, and hollow pretence, and, in fact, all humbug used by designing, ambitious men to further selfish aims under the cloak of noble, higher motives. You can well understand that I have been the object of their hatred, and that, in their persecution, they have not scrupled in ascribing to me every vice of which human nature is capable; and you know well how ready evil-doers are to echo such accusations; glad at the chance of shifting their guilt upon others.

"The intimate knowledge which I possess of the forces of nature and their practical application, has enabled me to perform acts and deeds which, by the ignorant, are looked upon as the result of supernatural powers; hence arose the popular idea about evil spirits, and magi art, and other abortions of the human mind. How many human beings have been burnt or tortured by a pedantic, arrogant clique of so-called scientific theologians and professors, simply for having been instrumental in enunciating a law of nature; or, for having explained physical phenomenon in a a common sense way, contrary to the tenets taught by these wise and learned fanatics. So it was in the Middle Ages and so, to some extent, it is still now; but the more the knowledge of physical nature spreads among the people, the more will the conceit and arrogance of these pseudo learned appear in their true light, and the less occasion will there be for me to continue the rôle which I have played among mankind."

As if guessing my momentary thoughts and anxious to prevent me from questioning him, Mephisto continued, after taking a seat opposite me: "I can understand that you are desirous of comprehending now what this rôle is, in fact what the nature of the assistance is, which I should ask of you in return for the services I propose to render you. I cannot explain this better than by relating the affair in which I have been engaged during the last few days, to give you an insight into, what are popularly designated as, my diabolical deeds.

"In a large city called New Babylon, probably not unknown to you, a quack has preyed, for a considerable time, upon the bodily afflicted by a novel system of treatment; and although this system is contrary to all physiological laws and to common sense, and ruins and kills many patients, whilst it cures none, this professional medicine-man has by its means accumulated a large fortune, chiefly owing to the truly disgraceful ignorance

concerning the laws of health pervading every class of society; and also owing to the fact that our hero was an acknowledged son of Æsculapius. He was a quack within the profession, and to illustrate one of your own remarks, he was tolerated by the faculty, as a heretic in the Middle Ages was and probably now still is, left undisturbed so long as he remained in the Church. Giordano Bruno was left alone in his heresy whilst he remained in his cell at Nola; but when he separated from the Church he was persecuted and ultimately burned. How many quacks outside the profession are at the present time cried down, who could point to their prototypes within the ranks of the learned as equally guilty? The 'doctor' in question possessed a wonderfully plausible tongue, combined with the necessary arrogance and self-assurance, by means of which he was enabled to persuade the ignorant patient that he had discovered a new method of treating all ailments with unfailing success. It consisted in enveloping the patient in cotton wool and plaster of Persia, and he had the effrontery to promise the cure of a great number of different diseases, from a crooked nose and blindness, down to corns and contracted toes. Not only did he fleece his patients of piastres (or guineas), but he undermined the constitution of many poor sufferers to such extent that they ultimately sank under the treatment, without suspecting the real cause of their decline.

"I could not," he continued, "resist the temptation of checking this Bombasto by accidentally mixing with his plaster of Persia an ingredient that acted so unmistakably on the patient's health as to open the eyes of the public to his nefarious doings. Legal proceedings were taken against him; a riotous crowd demolished his dwelling, and to save his life this professional quack had to flee the country.

"This man, no doubt, will cry out against the Devil as being the cause of all the evil done, and his consorts in similar lines of professional trading will heartily join in the cry. You see, dear A., how easy it is for me to get a bad name, and how difficult to gain the confidence of those even who are capable of judging in an independent and unprejudiced spirit. I hope, however that my story will convey to your mind the nature of the assistance which I have to ask of you, provided we can come to an understanding about the other points of our compact."

"But I am anxious to learn," I impetuously interrupted him "under what conditions or by what means you intend to let the compact be decided."

"Precisely so, my dear A.," he replied, "and but for your impatience

you would have heard me explain these to you. You will, during the past week have experienced the Chess powers which I have imparted to you, and you can try these powers in a contest with me to determine whether your services shall be at my, or my services at your, disposal during your lifetime. I propose that we shall play three games at Chess, one game-a-week; if I win all these games, your services shall be mine: in which case I shall provide you with ample funds for the remainder of your life, and keep you free from all harm which any undertaking on my account may subject you to, besides making you the strongest living Chess-player; and should I fail in this, even in one instance, our compact shall be considered canceled. If, on the other hand, you can succeed in drawing even one of the games, and so prevent me from winning all three, my services shall be yours in any way you may decide. I have only to repeat what I said at our first interview, as a primary condition, namely: *that you must not on any account or in any form make the sign of the Cross in my presence, or during the whole time that my transactions with you may last.* I cannot explain to you now for what reason I make this request; suffice it for you to know, that if you make this sign you may banish me from your presence at great risk to yourself; and that should I myself even inadvertently make the sign in any way or form, I forfeit the control of certain natural powers which now I am able to call to my aid. Such, my dear A., are the stipulations of our agreement, and it is for you now to declare whether or not you will accept the position of Chess champion of the world, with an ample competency for the remainder of your life, under the conditions I have named; with the chance of gaining my services, should the Chess contest decide in your favour."

Here his speech ended, while his keen eye was fixed on me as if searching for a reply. I had sunk into reflection which made it impossible for me to answer as quickly as he perhaps desired. He evidently noticed this, for he turned towards the bookcase whilst telling me he would give me ten minutes for considering the question.

Already during the past week had I, in anticipation of this moment, weighed the pros and cons of the offer made me, and had as often decided in the negative as in the affirmative, as either cool reflection or the intoxicating pride of a Chess champion took possession of my mind.

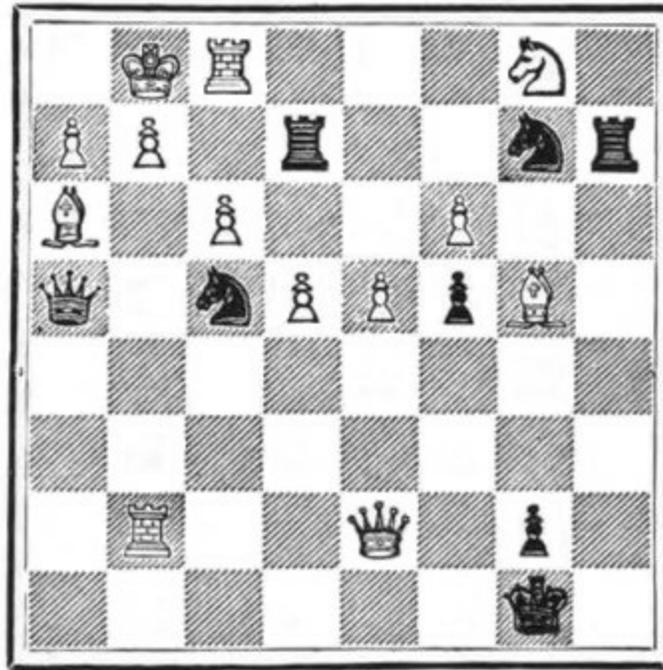
But what at this moment influenced me most was the prospect of winning against Mephisto with one drawn game out of the three. Surely, I thought, the Devil's Chess play cannot be so far beyond my powers as to

prevent me even from effecting a draw, particularly if I concentrate all my powers on this alone. Chances were greatly in my favour; and should the fate be against me in this contest, my ultimate lot appeared not a very hard one; so I decided to reply in the affirmative.

Mephisto's account of himself had, no doubt, had great influence in inducing me to treat him with more confidence than I felt towards him in the first hour of our interview; and he had brought my mind into such a condition, that he knew well, probably, how I should decide. Upon informing him of my willingness to agree to his terms, and to engage in the match, he seemed not in the least surprised, and showed not the least sign of rejoicing; but quietly took his seat at the Chess table, and expressed a desire, if I had no objection, that the first game might be played that same evening, although it was late. I consented, having previously taken the precaution of persuading my wife to spend a short time with friends in the country, so that I might be left unfettered in my movements at home.

Mephisto himself proposed that I should have the choice of men, and the first move in the first game; and not seeing any reason why I should refuse, I accepted, thinking that I certainly gained a chance of either bringing the game to a decisive position in my favour or securing a draw; so I chose the white men, and opened with the usual moves leading to the Giuoco Piano, which gave me a safe position. I obtained what appeared to me a formidable attack, and gave myself up to the idea that I had an easily won victory; but Mephisto's tactics were evidently to allow me to deceive myself. He played simply a defensive game, reckoning upon my overcertainty of winning, and then gradually brought his pieces into a safe position, ready to take advantage of any oversight of mine. So the game must have lasted about three hours, when I considered my attack upon my opponent over-whelming. I had my King safely sheltered, was a piece and four Pawns ahead, and threatened mate on the move, as the following position will show:

“ A ” (White).



“ MEPHISTO ” Black).

Whilst already congratulating myself upon certain victory, I heard my opponent coolly remark, that, although I had played in a most creditable manner, he could now announce a mate in seven moves. For the moment I mistrusted my senses as to whether I had heard correctly, and indulged in a smile of doubt. Mephisto, observing this, repeated his announcement, made the first and indicated the following successive moves, to convince me of the certainty with which he had calculated the issue of his strategy. I stared at the position, my burning head leaning on my hands, whilst I was wrestling with the desire to express in angry words my chagrin at the result; when, with a pitying smile, and in a tone which jarred upon my ears, Mephisto expressed his gratification at finding me so strong, and prophesied better success for me with all mortal opponents. "Meantime, dear, A.," he continued, "take matters calmly, and do not yet despair of being the winner in our contest. I shall return in a week's time, and hope to find you complete master over all your faculties. Till then, farewell." So absorbed was I in contemplating the position that I forgot the ordinary civilities which a host owes to his guest,

and he made his exit unattended.

When I found myself alone, a paroxysm of rage for a moment took possession of me, perhaps not so much in consequence of the loss of the game, as because of the patronizing tone in which my opponent addressed me, after having himself escaped by a hair's-breadth from the fate which he inflicted upon me. In this frame of mind I retired for the night, but it was many hours before my mind became oblivious of the troubles of the day.

Two days elapsed before I found courage to look at a Chessboard again, with the object of pondering over the game played against my mysterious visitor; and the more I looked at the position, the more clearly it became apparent to me that my own impetuosity and over-confidence in my safety had caused the loss of the game. With a mate on the move, I forgot my wily opponent, who so maneuvered that, by the sacrifice of his Queen and two Rooks, he inflicted defeat on me in seven successive checks. Had I kept my Queen at home, and opened my game by advancing my Pawns, it was evident that I could not have failed to secure victory. The oftener I analysed the game the more convinced I became that Mephisto depended rather upon my over-confidence in attack than upon my want of combining-power and circumspection; and this reflection seemed to renew my courage for re-engaging my adversary in the remaining games of our match. I purposely avoided the Chessboard, and spent a few days in the country, thereby gaining vigour of body and clearness of mind before returning home to meet my opponent.

On the day of our next appointment, I arranged the table with Chessboard and men in readiness for the arrival of my visitor. I was desirous that Mephisto should not suspect the slightest hesitation on my part to meet him in our encounter. He arrived in good time, and entered the room unannounced. A pleasing, self-satisfied smile was on his face, which made me remark that he no doubt felt sure of his victim, but that it did not require any special politeness on his part to confirm me in my resolution to abide by the stipulations of our compact. "My dear A.," he replied, "you are in error if you think the emotions expressed in my features are caused by our meeting. What makes me feel happy is the result of my latest adventure; and when I relate it to you, I doubt not that you will rejoice with me at the deserved fate dealt out to one of the worst human beings, a Spanish priest, who, under the cloak of religion, ruined a whole family to possess himself of their property, and place the daughter in his power for his own villainous purposes. I

befriended this scoundrel and persuaded him to seek a quiet retreat in an isolated mountainous district, whilst at the same time informing the sons of the whole transaction. Disguised as brigands these latter waylaid our worthy priest, deprived him of the purloined property, freed their sister from an ignominious fate, and left this highly respectable hypocrite in a helpless condition in a lonely spot, where death from starvation must be his ultimate fate. Having seen the remnant of this once happy family fairly on their way to a sea-port for transhipment to a foreign land, I hastened here to meet you at the appointed time, and I must apologize, dear A., if I am late."

Mephisto's confidential tone had the effect of making me feel freer and less constrained in his presence; so much so that I could not resist the desire to question him on his occupation generally. "Then, you have," I exclaimed, "not always been the dark spirit of evil, the sworn enemy of mankind, that history and tradition have presented to us?"

"Dear A.," he replied, "the time will soon arrive when I shall make you fully acquainted with me, and when you will learn with surprise that my history is closely interwoven with the history of the human mind; that as this latter widens its field of inquiry and its depth of comprehension, to that extent will my *raison d'être* vanish, and my whole character be understood. But more of this anon; let us proceed to our game, as time is pressing with me, and I should not like to be guilty of hurrying you in your moves."

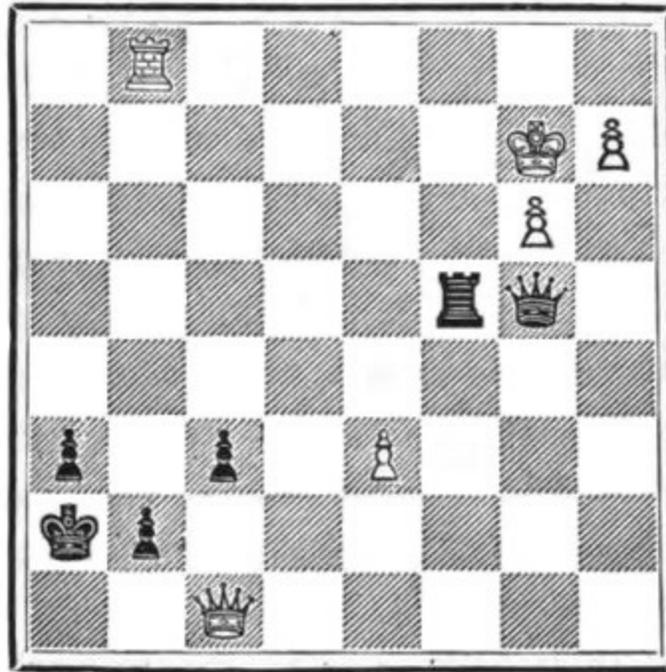
Mephisto had the first move; and on my replying with Pawn to K4, &c., he led up to a Ruy Lopez. I took advantage of the analytical studies of our modern masters, especially Steinitz and Zukertort, who have thoroughly exhausted this opening in both attack and defence, and defended myself in a manner which caused my adversary to study carefully these, to him, perhaps new positions.

I succeeded after the eighteenth or twentieth move not only in making the game even, but in forcing the exchange, and my attack assumed an apparently overwhelming character. Mephisto, however, proved himself a wonderful Pawn player, and evidently endeavoured to gain the advantage by pushing a Pawn to Queen; to prevent which, I was obliged to give the exchange. This, as well as his excellent maneuvering of the Knights, enabled him to ward off the immediate danger, and bring about an equality of pieces, as shown in the following position:

We were both left with Queen, Rook, and three Pawns, but the advantage of position was greatly in my favour. I threatened mate on the

move, which could only be avoided by an exchange of Queens; his Rook was *en prise*, and I had a free Pawn at K6 ready to go to Queen. He could not possibly escape this time, particularly since any attempt on his part to mate me could only result in a draw, owing to the position of my King. I must have involuntarily evinced my delight at the apparent certainty with which I thought I had caught the Devil, because Mephisto looked at me with a sneering smile, and said, "No doubt, my dear A., you look upon our contest as coming to a favourable conclusion through your unquestionably excellent play; but I am sorry to inform you, that you mistake the issue of this game. You must observe that it is now my move; and taking advantage, of it, I can mate you in seven moves at latest." "Never," cried I, excited; "I play my K to R3 and back to Kt2, and you can but draw the game; and if you prevent the mate I threaten, then the exchange leaves me with a clear Rook." "I have too high a regard for you," he replied, "to do more than indicate the exact position in which I produce the mate." I saw it; saw only too plainly that, with all my good play, I was conquered—conquered by a wily stratagem, of which none but a diabolical Chess-player could be capable.

“A” (White).



“MEPHISTO” (Black).

Disheartened, I sank back in my chair; and whether sleep, swoon, or Mephisto's magic power overcame me, I know not—but I lost my senses for a time. When I regained consciousness, I found that my mysterious visitor had disappeared, having left the position on the board as it was at the moment when he announced the mate—a mate, strangely enough, again in the fatal seven moves. Yes, whichever way I played, with the best reply on my part, it was, either way, mate in the same number of moves; and my short-sighted assumption, that his checking would lead to a draw, was blown to the winds. In a fit of anger, I swept the men off the board, took my hat, and sought to cool my heated brain in the night air. Who can depict my astonishment when I found the street-door properly locked, bolted, and chained! It made me halt, and sobered my anger considerably; for it forced on my mind the recognition that I had to deal with a superior power. What had become of Mephisto? How had he made his exit? The impossibility of answering such questions, except by guesses, made me discard the attempt; and instead of roaming about the streets in the night, I turned back and went to bed, endeavouring to forget my

disappointment in sleep.

The next few days found me gloomily pondering over the adventure in which I had so foolishly engaged; and the question constantly recurred to me: How will Mephisto dispose of my services, should fate decide against me in our contest? It was of course now too late to raise this question with a view of evading the consequences of his winning the third game; but the greater the probability of the match being decided in Mephisto's favour, the more did my mind dwell on the nature of my connection with this mysterious being. I could not but admit that, so far, his whole appearance and his actions had removed from my mind any fear such as a spirit of the traditional type would have inspired. Mephisto's true nature seemed an enigma which closer acquaintance alone could solve, and the prospect of thoroughly analyzing so mysterious a being, who apparently had played so important but dubious a *rôle* in the world's history, fascinated me so much, as to overcome even the slightest hesitation to carry out our compact in the strictest sense. That he was in his nature and character different from what popular credulity had painted him, I was fully convinced; and I was, furthermore, prepared to believe that his so-called supernatural powers were nothing but the most extended knowledge and practical application of natural forces, which humanity laboriously acquires by slow steps. So, the more I reasoned upon my adventure, the less restraint I felt in meeting my Chess master for the third and deciding game.

The eventful evening arrived, and I had everything in readiness for the reception of my visitor. When he entered the room, he approached me and cast a searching glance as if to read my thoughts; but seeing me look calm, and, if not exactly cheerful at least without any indications of depression of mind, he began chatting about the events of the day in an indifferent manner, until suddenly he turned round and asked significantly, "And you are quite prepared, my dear A., to engage in the last game of our contest, in order to decide in what relation we shall stand to each other during the remainder of your life?" "Oh, certainly," I replied; "do not, pray, imagine that either fear or mistrust would make me break my word in regard to our compact. Let us proceed, if you are willing, to the Chessboard at once, and you shall find that I intend to do battle with you till the last chance of my winning has disappeared."

Mephisto looked at me in an inquiring manner, as if to detect a little bravado as the basis of my speech. A smile stole over his face whilst taking

his seat opposite me, and he remarked: "Whatever the result of this game may be, I can give you the assurance that you shall never have occasion to regret the manner in which you have confided in me. But," he continued, after a short pause, "let us proceed with the game, and reserve all further explanation until the result of our contest has been decided. I shall have more to say to you then than I can utter at present; so, dear A., make your move."

I adopted this time the Vienna opening, and played a careful, steady game, always looking more to safety at home than to attack; but my wily opponent took every opportunity to make me aware of the weakest point in my position, and by this means harassed me. However, his several attempts at breaking into my camp failed, and the battle was in consequence prolonged for many hours. No decided advantage was gained on either side; but, as I had to watch for every opportunity that the varying position afforded for drawing the game, so my opponent had to be upon the alert to prevent this. I began to feel the effect of this continuous strain on my mind, and became alarmed lest my adversary should succeed in beating me through my lack of physical endurance; hence I determined to make one great effort to force the position, so that, by the exchange of pieces, the game should become less intricate. I endeavoured to get his Queen out of play, and was prepared to exchange Rooks, in which case my extra Pawn would have won the game, as will be seen from the accompanying diagram.

In fact, the position appeared to me such, that I felt my opponent could not succeed in doing more than draw the game, which was equivalent to my winning it. It was Mephisto's move now, and he took some time to decide what to do. He looked intently at the position, and seemed to count. "Aha!" I thought; "he is aware that he cannot escape; he sees, no doubt, how futile is the attempt to ward off the undoubted issue of the battle." I was in my own mind curious how this amiable Devil would behave under defeat; how he would admit that he was beaten, and that his services would be at my disposal. He seemed to guess my thoughts, and looked me full in the face in a friendly, serious way, as much as to reproach me for rejoicing at his misadventure. I felt a little ashamed, and was on the point of excusing myself, when Mephisto addressed me in the following words: "You have, no doubt, in your experience found that Fate often appears to deal with us as if purposely to test our mental and moral qualities by promising us the easy achievement of our desires, and, at the moment of accomplishment, causing disappointment in an unexpected manner. Well for him who has sufficient



**White, "A."      Black, Mephisto.**

–                      R takes Kt (ch)  
K to B3                      –

He now sacrificed his Queen by taking my Rook, checking, and the game proceeded:

–                      Q takes R (ch)  
R takes Q                      R takes R (ch)  
Q to K3                      R takes Q (ch)  
P takes R                      Kt to B7

Although now fully aware that my position was hopeless, I played on, making my moves mechanically and quickly, goaded by Mephisto's brusque manner, which he had assumed whilst these moves were being played. I had nothing left to do but to push my Pawn, which he took with his Knight, checking,

P to K4                      Kt takes P (ch)

and I as readily and quickly played my King to Q3; whereupon Mephisto grasped his Rook to give what I saw at once was a neat and finished mate.

My fate was decided, my services were assigned to the Devil, and the deserved reward of a foolish freak made itself painfully felt. All this flashed instantaneously through my mind, and in despair I was on the point of sinking back into my chair, when I saw my opponent, to my great astonishment, allow the Rook to drop out of his hand, whilst a fiendish laugh, which sounded like a yell of agony, shook the room and the house to its foundation. Utterly unable to comprehend the meaning of this finish of our game and the paroxysms of rage to which Mephisto gave vent, the reflections upon my fate became doubly painful. My diabolical master seemed to gloat over his conquest, and by his manners to prepare me for the tortures of. . . . But where was Mephisto? Neither sight nor sound revealed his presence to me. His disappearance heightened the mystery of the whole scene; so much so, that I at first hesitated to raise myself out of my chair. It was quite evident that he had suddenly disappeared, but I failed to perceive the cause of this. Before leaving, he had swept the Chessmen off the board—contrary to his former custom, when he had left me the position to study. Curiosity made me play over the game, bringing it again to the position in which he had announced mate in seven (oh, that ominous number!) moves, and I carefully

repeated the continuation as recorded until I came to the last. The whole secret lay revealed! Mephisto could not, or would not, make the move! Why? Dear reader, I cannot tell you why; but if you take a Chessboard and men, go into your chamber, lock the door, set up the position as shown in the diagram, and makes the moves as stated, you will understand why Mephisto could not, and I dared not, make the final move.

Astonishment at the turn my adventure had taken made me for the moment quite overlook the consequences. Mephisto, not having completed his last move, had not mated me; so, of course, according to his own stipulation, I had won the match: and in the excitement of the moment I cried aloud, "The Devil is caught; henceforth his services will be mine, and I shall chain him to the Chess table to play for my amusement."

I had scarcely uttered these words, when I discovered Mephisto standing by my side, his piercing eye fixed on mine; and he replied, "I take you at your word; be it so; but why for your own amusement only, when there are so many devotees to the game who will be anxious to measure their Chess strength against me? You look at me in astonishment, no doubt, hardly realizing the idea of my being publicly exhibited; but sit down, and I will tell you why I suggest this.

"You have, during my absence just now, discovered the reason of my inability to mate you in the number of moves I declared to do; hence I accept the game as a draw, and the match as decided in your favour.

"Fate has declared against me; and although I might have chosen a different course, it would have entailed upon me a sacrifice too great to be compensated for. I therefore assign to you my services, the nature of which you have already indicated. I can," he continued, "read in your face your surprise at the readiness with which I submit to the conditions of our compact; and to explain this, as well as to prepare you for the relation in which we are to stand to each other in the future, pray listen to the following: I have already informed you that my superior knowledge of the forces of Nature and their practical application enables me to produce phenomena which appear to the ignorant the result of supernatural powers, and that I have used this physical advantage for the gratification of my desire to combat and punish deceit, pretence and arrogance. It is not surprising that in return I should be reviled as the origin of sin, and that my control of the natural forces should be adduced as a proof of my wickedness. The earliest record of the world's history gives proof of the fact that ignorance on the one side and

cunning on the other combined to ascribe to me the cause of all evil in the world; and although the ideas about me, my form and activity, may have altered during the last centuries, it was not until a superior mind, about two hundred years ago—Baruch Spinoza—proved, and endeavoured to convince his contemporaries, that the existence of an evil spirit interfering in the world's development was incompatible with the existence of an Almighty ruler of the universe. He was rewarded by expulsion from his community. Other enlightened minds followed, who attempted to free the public mind from the disturbed ideas about my being; who showed the absurdity of the horns, cloven hoof, and tail with which a diseased imagination had pictured me, and who combated the persecutions of witches as the outcome of overstrained fanaticism.

"Most of these men, whose views and ideas were in advance of their times, had to suffer for their boldness in combating the prevailing popular superstitions. Still, these numerous attempts to destroy the belief in the existence of an evil spirit which acts independently of the Almighty have not been without effect in enlightening the minds of the present generation; and the liberal views entertained on this subject by your men of science and the educated public generally, induce me to believe that the time has come when I may boldly show myself in public. Let my presence in your midst be a proof of the fact that, whatever is done henceforth in the world, the Devil has had no hand in it, and that any attempt to shift the guilt upon me should be looked upon as an indirect admission of the accuser's own guilty conscience. In this way will my presence here contribute to enlighten the public mind and destroy all superstition, and with this view, I am willing to be chained, as you express it, to the Chess table. With amusement we can combine instruction and promote the practice of the Royal Game; a dissemination of it can but have beneficial influences, as is so well expressed in the following lines which my fondness for the game made me indite to a friend, who published it in the *American Chess Monthly* some years ago:

"Chess is a representative contest, a bloodless combat, an image, not only of actual operations, but of the greater warfare which every son of the earth, from the cradle to the grave, is continually waging—the battle of life. Its virtues are as immeasurable as the sands of the African Sahara. It heals the mind in sickness, and exercises it in health. It is rest to the overworked intellect, and relaxation to the fatigued body. It lessens the grief of the mourner, and heightens the enjoyment of the happy. It teaches the angry man

to restrain his passions, the light-minded to become grave, the cautious to be bold, and the venturesome to be prudent. It affords a keen delight to youth, a sober pleasure to manhood, and a perpetual solace to old age. It induces the poor to forget their poverty, and the rich to be careless of their wealth. It admonishes Kings to love and respect their people, and instructs subjects to obey and reverence their rulers. It shows how the humblest citizens, by the practice of virtue and the efforts of labour, may rise to the loftiest stations; and how the haughtiest lords, by the love of vice and the commission of errors, may fall from their elevated estate. It is an amusement and an art, a sport and a science. The erudite and the untaught, the high and the low, the powerful and the weak, acknowledge its charms and confess its enticements. We learn to like it in the years of our youth; but as increased familiarity develops its beauties and unfolds its lessons, our enthusiasm grows stronger and our fondness more confirmed.

"But whilst ready to accept the challenge of all comers, let me, above everything, maintain silence—silence in every tongue—since my natural tendency to expose imposition and conceit would make enemies, which must be avoided; but we can admonish the boastful by defeat on the Chessboard."

Here Mephisto finished, placed himself on the chair at the Chess table, and, with his face bent over the board, remained in sullen silence. In vain I attempted to elicit some further remarks from him about the many enigmas surrounding his whole being and his past career: his tongue was tied.

He is now ready to do battle against all comers, the best opponent that any player was ever engaged with. He always smiles at his adversary, has no annoying habits, shows no temper, and when he has defeated his adversary, he merely looks up in acknowledgment of the honour shown him.

Who can solve the mystery?

\* \* \* \*

Some readers may think they discover in the positions of the first two games, well-known problems by Mendheim and Lolli; but there can be no doubt whatever that, when composing the problems in question, these two famous Chess-players had the advantage of Mephisto's assistance, because he knew the positions so well, and the solutions of them are so truly diabolical.

\* This legend was written in 1877, and, in anticipation of "Mephisto's" visit to Paris in 1878, it was submitted to Mons. Delannoy for translation into French; but not thinking the frame-work of the story suitable for the French taste, that celebrated and versatile writer, with the author's consent, adapted the leading idea in the construction of a story entitled "Mephistopheles à l'Exposition Universale de Paris de 1878," which was published in "*La Stratégie, Journal des Echecs*," 15th April, 1878. The legend first appeared (with sundry passages cut out) in the "*Gentleman's Magazine*," London, September, 1881, and in a condensed form in the *Chess-player's Chronicle*, 25th October, 1881. In its complete form as now presented it was published in "*Brentano's Chess Monthly*," New York, 1882.

# A Chapter on Automatic Androids

by the Inventor and Maker  
of the Automatic Chess-player "Mephisto"



THE imitation of the actions and movements of organized beings by means of inanimate mechanism has at all times excited the ingenuity of man, and history records such attempts as having been made with more or less success. Merely to copy the "form divine of man" or animals proved no insuperable task: it resulted among the Greeks in the production of works of art, which at the present time still excite our admiration; but to put life into a marble figure—to make this product of human hands move and act like its prototype—why, this would place man on an equality with the gods!

While such ambitious ideas may have impelled the ancients in their attempt at the production of Automata (such as the walking statues of Daedalus and the flying pigeon of Archytas, &c., &c.), in more recent times it was the desire to excite the astonishment of the ignorant, the admiration of the learned, and to contribute to the amusement of the mighty. During the middle ages, when the physical sciences were still in their primitive development, when Theology, Scholastic Philosophy and Alchemy were the highest branches of learning to which the human mind could aspire; nay—even as late as the seventeenth century, the study of nature's phenomena (Astronomy perhaps excepted) was of rare occurrence; and hence any experiment, demonstrating the action of physical forces, and now made a plaything in our nurseries, was then looked upon as a wonder requiring the magician's wand for its manifestation. There must have been at that time

something fascinating in the production of such mechanical toys, when we see the sage Roger Bacon busying himself with the construction of a talking head, Regiomontanus with a walking fly, and Albertus Magnus with a figure which opened the door when any one knocked; we have, however, too little definite information to guide us in our judgment as to the merits of their products. In more recent times we read a marvellous account of an Automaton group, constructed by M. Camus, for the amusement of Louis XIV., consisting of a carriage and horses, with a lady who alighted to present a petition; and also in the Memoirs of the Academy of Science or 1729, of a set of actors representing a pantomime in five acts.

No name has been more associated with Automata than that of Vaucanson, a French mechanic of the last century, whose fame was principally achieved by the invention of an Automaton Duck, made entirely of brass, which imitated the quacking noise, moved its wings, picked up and swallowed food, and after having subjected this to a kind of digestion, expelled it.

He next constructed a flute-player, a figure of life size, seated on a pedestal, which contained a set of bellows actuated by clockwork; whether, however, the sound was produced in the flute by the moving fingers and lips of the figure is highly improbable, but was more likely the result of a flute—or reed—organ contained within the body. Nevertheless, this figure deserved the name of Automaton, since the effect was achieved by self-acting mechanism, without the aid of human agency, beyond the winding-up of the clockwork.

A little later we find an Automaton-Writer, constructed by a mechanic named Droz, in Switzerland, receiving deserved attention for its great ingenuity. The hand and fingers contained clockwork, by means of which the latter were enabled to write several letters in distinct and even beautiful outline. The son of Droz, however, eclipsed his father by the production of an Automaton representing a young girl, who played several pieces on the pianoforte, following the notes with eyes and head; and, when finished, rose from her seat and turned and bowed to the audience. This piece of ingenious mechanism excited great admiration in the Paris salons towards the end of the last century.

\* \* \* \* \*

None of these products of human patience and skill attained so great a reputation as did the so-called Chess Automaton of Baron von Kempelen, a Hungarian nobleman at the Court of the Empress Maria Theresa. Animated merely by a desire to please his Imperial mistress, he produced a figure in the form of a Turk, seated at a chest or box, on which was placed a chessboard. This chest, to which the figure was permanently attached, moved about on castors, and when exhibited was wheeled into the middle of the room so that the audience could inspect it all round. Several doors of the chest were successively thrown open to show the machinery contained within; all was then closed, the clockwork wound-up, and play commenced—during which, however, no part of the interior was ever exposed. This Automaton played not one or several "set" games, but entered the contest against all comers; hence the great astonishment and curiosity it excited wherever it made its appearance. Long treatises were published on the great merit of this wonderfully ingenious mechanism. Men of science, who ought to have been able to solve the puzzle, were sorely tried to say more than that this machine was an Automaton, that is: a machine producing by means of clockwork movements in a direction and manner, which in a human being required the guidance of the highest intellectual faculties.

But was there ever any doubt about this machine being an Automaton? Did not every part of the chest contain machinery, excluding the possibility of a human player being secreted within it; and as the chest or box had no direct communication with any part of the surroundings, how otherwise than by mechanism could this phenomenon be produced? Such was and is, no doubt, the reasoning applied by the ordinary—even the educated and often scientific (?) observer. Nothing tests a man's higher grade of common sense and his thinking powers more than the solution of a question, which throws him out of his ordinary every day track. Here is a phenomenon, to the explanation of which he cannot apply any or all the speciality of his learning; he is completely lost to give a sound and simple judgment, as he has to fall back upon his natural capacity for reasoning, and hence breaks down. With astonishment the audience surrounded this Automaton, and were lost in admiration of the ingenuity displayed by the inventor. So it was at the end of the last century; and whether popular common sense has made any progress since, we shall see as we proceed.

The inventor of this "Automaton" never hesitated to speak his mind plainly as to the real merits of his machine. "It is," said he to his friends

(citing from Geo. Walker's "Chess and Chess-Players"), "a trifle, not without merit as to its mechanism; but those effects, which to the spectators appear so wonderful, arise merely from the boldness of the original conception, and the fortunate choice of the means employed by me to carry out the illusion," which, interpreted into plain language, means that Von Kempelen never wished to palm off his Chess-player as an Automaton, placing himself thereby far above a critic in the "Leisure Hour" of January nth, 1879, who by his remarks endeavours to pull him down into the ranks of tricksters. When the machine had to serve other less scrupulous masters, it was presented, not as "a trifle, not without merit," but as an Automaton playing an intellectual game by the intricate combination of machinery; whereas, in truth, a human being was concealed within the chest, and the merit of the whole contrivance consisted in the ingenious manner in which this concealment was effected in so small a space. Although generally looked upon with wonder and astonishment, yet there were voices raised to expose this so-called Automaton as a trick.

Already soon after its first exhibition, a Mr. Philip Thicknesse published a pamphlet in 1785 with the object of "denouncing the Chess-playing automaton as a piece of imposition;" and cites an analogous case, which had, perhaps, put him on the scent:—

"Forty years since," writes Thicknesse (see Geo. Walker's "Chess and Chess-Players"), "I found three hundred people assembled to see, at a shilling each, a coach go without horses, moved by a man withinside of a wheel, ten feet in diameter, just as the crane-wheel raises goods from ships on a quay. Mr. Quin, the Duke of Athol, and many persons present, were angry with me for saying it was trod round by a man within the hoop, or hinder wheel; but a small paper of snuff put into the wheel, soon convinced all around that it could not only move, but sneeze too, like a Christian."

Geo. Walker adds:—

"We wonder how De Kempelen would have met a proposition to throw an ounce or two of snuff upon speculation among his springs and levers?"

Mr. Thicknesse continues:

"I saw the ermine trimmings of the Turk's outer garment move once or twice when the figure should have been quite motionless, and that a confederate is concealed is past all doubt; for they only exhibit the Automaton from 1 to 2 o'clock, because the invisible player could not bear a longer confinement; for if he could, it cannot be supposed that they would refuse to receive crowns for admittance from 12 o'clock to 4, instead of from 1 to 2. Indeed M. de Kempelen had the candour to say to a certain nobleman in Paris who asked him to disclose the solution of the problem, 'Quand vous le saurez, mon prince, ce ne sera plus lien.'"

After the Automaton's second visit to London (during which, for a time, Mr. Lewis, the famous Chess-Player, directed its moves), a solution of the enigma was published by a Mr. (afterwards the well-known Professor) Willis, of Cambridge University, proving "by figures and drawings, that a man may be concealed in the chest, able to overlook the board through the stuff-waistcoat of the figure; having shifted his position in his lonely cell several times, while the different parts of the apparatus were being exposed successively to view."

Before giving his own explanation of the Automaton, Geo. Walker makes the following very pertinent remarks:—

"Our early reading supplies our memory with a bit of Sandford and Merton, in which one of the boys is deservedly reprimanded for taking the bread out of the mouth of the juggler, at the country fair, through neutralizing a portion of his legerdemain by public exposure; and, for a somewhat similar reason, never should our good goosequill have dissected the Chess Automaton without fair and sufficient cause. Still this demands explanation. The two cases of the juggler and the Automaton, placed in juxtaposition, are by no means analogous. The conjuror at once honorably admits that he works by sleight of wrist,—by confederacy,—and also by previously combining certain laws of nature, and established causes of effect, to produce corresponding results unknown to the vulgar. The Chess Automaton, on the other hand, stood before its patrons with a lie in its mouth; dipping his timber fingers saucily into the pockets of the lieges, under most foul and false pretences.

"The man who really played the Chess Automaton was concealed in the chest! Such, in half-a-dozen words, is the sum and substance of the whole truth of the contrivance; but the manner in which his concealment was managed is as curious as ingenious. He sat upon a low species of stool, moving on castors, or wheels, and had every facility afforded him of changing and shifting his position, like an eel. While one part of the machine was shown to the public, he took refuge in another; now lying down, now kneeling; placing his body in all sorts of positions, studied beforehand, and all assumed in regular rotation, like the A B C of a catechism. The interior pieces of clockwork—the wheels, and make-weight apparatus—were all equally moveable, and additional assistance was thus yielded to the fraud. Even the trunk of the Automaton was used as a hiding-place, in its turn, for part of the player's body."

The appended wood-cuts (figures 1 to 5), taken from Professor Willis' book, will give some idea of the manner this was effected:—

Figure 1.

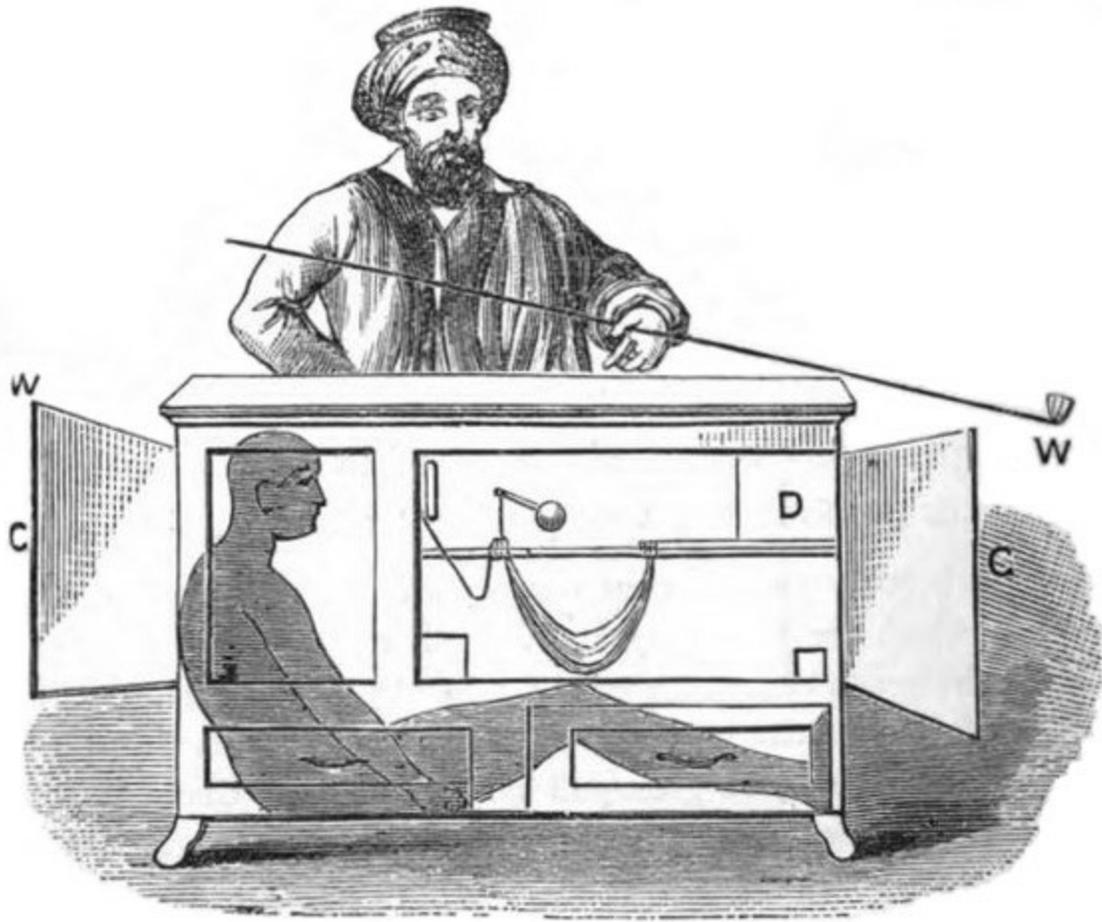


Figure 2.

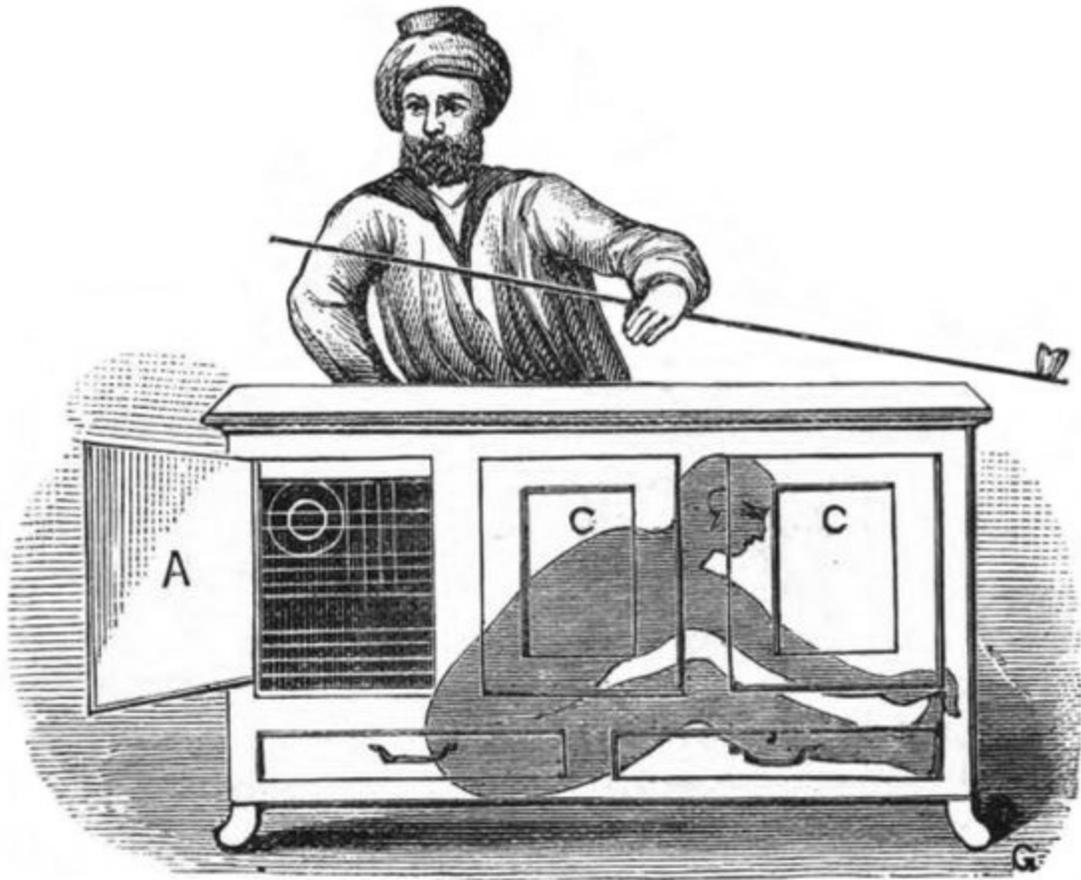


Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.



The vast apparatus of wheels, springs, levers, &c., were the dust thrown into the eyes of the public; and the winding-up of the machine, by Maelzel, was commented upon by Professor Willis in the following remarks:

---

"In all machinery requiring to be wound up, two consequences are inseparable from the construction. The first is, that in winding up the machinery, the key is limited in the number of its revolutions; and the second is, that some relative proportion must be constantly maintained betwixt the winding up and the work performed, in order to enable the machine to continue its movements. Now these results are not observable in the Chess-player; for the Automaton will sometimes execute sixty-three moves with only one winding up; at other times, the

exhibitor has been observed to repeat the winding-up after seven moves, and even three moves; and once, probably from inadvertence, without the intervention of a single move; whilst in every instance the key appeared to perform the same number of revolutions, evincing, thereby, that the revolving axis was unconnected with machinery, except, perhaps, a ratchet wheel and click, or some similar apparatus, to enable it to produce the necessary sounds; and, consequently, that the key, like that of a child's watch, might be turned whenever the purposes of the exhibition seemed to require it."

The reader who has followed so far, will be ready to join in the remarks of Mr. George Walker, when he says—"A man inside will most assuredly never again work the charm, but advanced as science is, during the present generation (written in 1850) a clever mechanic could easily and successfully vary the deception."

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, and has not this been done? Is not the Automaton Chess-player, lately exhibited at the Crystal Palace and other places about London, worked by machinery only? Is not the whole of the chest and figure exposed to view, showing the impossibility of a player being concealed within it; does not the attendant tell you that the machine-figure plays Chess by machinery, and does he not wind up the clockwork, which moves the arm, &c.? And, above all, does not the daily Press uphold this Chess-player as an Automaton, and support the public in the belief that it is a most ingenious piece of mechanism, deserving of the highest admiration?

These questions, ending with the finishing sentence, "I have seen it with my own eyes, and cannot believe otherwise!"—are not fictitious, but were addressed to the writer of this in the year of Grace, 1878, by men who expressed themselves and behaved like educated gentlemen. And even men of scientific position in society have shown their belief in this Automaton by exclaiming, "The secret has been found out now; there's a player inside the figure, who can see the board and men!" Yes, and see the opponent, and can hear every word said in front of the figure. (See an article on Automatic Chess and Card-Playing, in the "Cornhill Magazine," vol. xxxii., page 589, November, 1875.)

Setting aside the possibility or impossibility of a true Chess Automaton, the ordinary circumstances, accompanying the exhibition of the figure, were such as to rouse the suspicion of any thoughtful observer. The various doors successively opened, exposed to the audience only a small portion of the box and the figure, which were "almost big enough to contain two players;" and very little machinery, easily removed, sufficed to arrest the physical eye of the gaping visitors, not one in a thousand of whom would penetrate with his mental eye beyond and to the side of the exposed sham-mechanism. When once the doors were shut, and play had commenced, even a close approach to the front of the figure, to obtain a peep at the working machinery, was prohibited; and as for an exposition of this exquisite mechanism, this most ingenious contrivance of which even a Babbage might be proud, ah! that was impossible while the figure was playing. Why, of course, someone might steal the idea and enter into competition with the original inventor, and so deprive him of the rewards of his skill and patient labour!

It does not occur to these short-sighted advocates that the idea might be stolen—if that were at all possible—whether the machinery was shown at rest or in motion; and in fact, it was stolen in 1876 at Berlin, and the thief had the audacity to offer for sale and actually sell Chess Automata at £30 a piece, in consequence of which these self-acting Chess-Players were exhibited at a great many places and country fairs in Germany. The Press in the chief towns and cities, where the original was shown, did not hesitate to expose the showman's trick, and pronounce this ingenious mechanism as a base imposture.

There is a moral attached to this, which the reader can extract for himself after the following remarks and with the help of figures 6 and 7:—\*

Figure 6.



Figure 7



\* These sketches are copied from photographs bought at the Crystal Palace and the dark outlines of the player were added in accordance with a description, given by a Chess-player of note, who "acted the Automaton" for a considerable time in a similar figure.

If a man were to take his seat opposite you to engage in a Game of Chess, were to cover himself with a fancy dress, crown himself with a false head, and then were to ask you to believe him to be a Chess Automaton—well, dear reader, what would be your reply?

It is certainly not flattering to the state of public education that so simple a trick should for years have eluded the understanding of the mass of the people, and it proves that "the use of the imagination" is not only needed in scientific, but also in matters of everyday life. The faculty of the mind of seeing more than is presented to the eye is, no doubt, rare; the individual

judgment is set aside for a dependence upon authority: What do the papers, what does Mr. So-and-so say about it? is the first inquiry, and not: How can I explain this phenomenon?

No special knowledge of Chess or of Mechanism is requisite to answer the question about the possibility of a true Chess Automaton, that is: a self-acting machine which shall, by means of mechanism only, and the total exclusion of all external aid, perform the movements of a Chess-player on the Chessboard, with the definite object of forming all the combinations according to the rules of the game, and under all the varying circumstances of weak and strong play. Such a machine is an impossibility. The late Mr. Babbage, with the versatility of a superior mind, may have considered such an achievement as possible in theory; but practical reasons will easily show the futility of attempting the execution, or even the design, of such a mechanism. We may have at the commencement of a game only 20 possible moves to make; but as soon as the game is developed, the combinations, that have to be provided for, are so numerous as to defy all possibility of arranging the mechanism to produce them. A simple calculation will show. The Chessmen, although 32 in number, may for simplicity's sake be reduced to 12 (viz., King, Queen, Rook, Knight, Bishop, and one Pawn of each colour—leaving the other Pawns out of the question); while one of these 12 pieces stands on No. 1 square, either one of the other 11 may stand on No. 2 square, so that we can make 11 changes on No. 2 square, for each piece placed on No. 1; or for easier calculation, let it be 10 changes, hence on the two squares, we can ring  $10 \times 10 = 100$  changes. We have on the Chessboard 64 squares; since, however, the two Kings can never stand on adjacent squares, and as a King cannot be in check by more than two pieces at a time, &c., &c., we shall have to reduce the number of squares to, be it one half, 32. To obtain the number of combinations which can be formed by the Chessmen on these 32 squares, we have to multiply the number 10 by itself 31 times and the result would be given by writing 32 noughts after 1 (100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). Similar combinations may happen at different times on different parts of the board; still, provision must be made for the arm to make the required moves on either part; the same combination of pieces on the board shifted only one square, requires in the mechanism a special arrangement for such altered position; so that the above number of possible combinations, for which the mechanism must be constructed, is certainly not too high. The assumption that the number of

openings are limited and that the machinery can be "set" for the best moves, is very easily "up-set" by a Tyro putting his Queen en-prise, to say nothing of a false move; and unless the Automaton could take advantage of the first or correct the latter, the Game would soon arrive at a chaotic state.

A very amusing result is arrived at when inquiry is made into the time necessary for constructing the mechanism. This latter may be compared with a Jacquard's loom, in the cards of which (in this instance of metal) one hole is to be marked and drilled for each possible position of the men on the board. Let a workman mark and drill 1,200 holes per hour—12,000 per day of 10 hours; let him work 300 days in the year, and 50 years of his life, drilling 180, or in round numbers, 200 millions of holes during this period, then we should have to write 23 noughts after 5 (500,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) to obtain the number of workmen, whose lives' labour would be absorbed in marking and drilling the number of holes required to meet the above combinations.

No! a veritable Chess Automaton is an absolute impossibility; but this offers no justification for resorting to a base deception in the attempt at constructing a Chess-playing figure—an Android (a figure of the form of man) which shall to all external appearance be automatic, *i.e.*, self-acting.

\* \* \* \* \*

Disgust at the deception played by these so-called Automata was the incentive to the invention and construction of "Mephisto." He is a figure of life-size, seated in an armchair at an ordinary table, on which a Chessboard is placed. There is nothing extraordinary in the latter except that each square has a slight indentation, into which the base of the Chessmen fits, to ensure these being placed in and prevented from shifting out of the centre of the square. The men are Staunton pattern, like ordinary Chessmen. The figure is slight, unencumbered by any loose drapery, sits fairly on the chair, and is bolted to the table, to enable the arm, which is about 28 inches long from the shoulder- joint to the end of the fingers, to reach across the board.

The movement of the arm is made in so natural a manner that it cannot be better described than human-like.

When taking one of his opponent's pieces, "Mephisto" first removes this from the board and then places his own in its stead. The opponent's pieces, deposited by him on the table, he can take up again, and replace them

on the board—as, for instance, when giving back the Queen which an opponent had inadvertently lost. At the opening of the game he can play very quickly, making four or five moves in reply to his opponent's rapid play, without resting his arm; and, although sightless, he is quick, generally, in perceiving his opponent's move.

That these effects are really produced by the figure alone, without the aid of a confederate, or by any possible reflection of the board in any part of the room, can easily be proved by covering the front of the figure as also the board and men, while the opponent makes his move—such as putting his Queen en-prise, or taking one of "Mephisto's" pieces, or making a false move, thereby forcing "Mephisto" to a definite reply. This heightens the mystery surrounding the whole, since it becomes a question—how does the "guiding intelligence" see or know the moves, and how is the arm and hand directed to grasp the piece and deposit it on the proper square, which must be done with great precision; and the puzzle presented by "Mephisto" is complete, when, during play, every part of the figure and furniture can be closely inspected—so unlike all other so-called Automata, with the performance of which even an approach in a certain direction interferes.

It has taken the inventor the greater part of his leisure time during seven years to design and direct the construction of the machinery; and when finished he exhibited it for several months at his own house, during which period "Mephisto" played many Games against various Metropolitan Players of note. These Games, published in the columns of *The Field, Illustrated London News, Zand and Water*, Westminster papers, &c, found their way into other papers all over the world, so that "Mephisto's" name as a Chess-player soon spread to the Continent, to America and to Australia. Since he has made his appearance in public, he plays more an off-hand game, and rather resigns a contest than to continue a tedious end-game with a slow player.

The whole phenomenon presented by "Mephisto" appeals to the understanding of all educated persons, whether Chess-players or not; the frequent visits paid him by those who have once watched his movements prove the fascination he exercises upon his audience; and since the inventor represents "Mephisto" simply as an ingenious scientific puzzle, it removes this Android far above those so-called Automata, depending in their effect upon deception, and which to show in their proper light is his mission.

# A Letter on Mechanical Chess

by the Late Richard A. Proctor, Esq.,  
editor of "Knowledge"



THE paper of mine which appeared in a recent number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which I have instituted a comparison between the famous Automaton Chess-player, so called, which was made by De Kempelen more than a century ago, and the Mechanical Chess-player now playing excellent chess at . . . . . has been to some degree misunderstood by some reviewers. In the *Times* notice of my paper especially, the remark is made that I profess to explain the way in which both these figures are worked. The *Echo* reviewer more accurately points out in his very kindly criticism that I leave the mystery of Mephisto's play very much where I found it, and have said no more than anyone who had played half-a-dozen times with Mephisto could readily ascertain for himself. To say the truth, I had no intention of expounding Mephisto's mystery, while as regards De Kempelen's so-called automaton, there remains no mystery at all, seeing that a full and complete account of the manner in which the figure was worked was long since published by persons who had paid rather heavily for the right, and was also given by at least one of the players who had conducted the "automaton's" chess. What I purposed was chiefly to call attention to a very ingenious mechanical figure now exhibiting, a figure deserving far more attention than De Kempelen's received, whereas in reality it has received far less. What I particularly admire about Mephisto, or rather about the exhibition of this mechanical player, is its perfect honesty. We are not told any nonsensical

untruths about the figure, as were those who visited De Kempelen's "automaton" in 1769. Not only were they left to infer that the figure was really an automaton, which, of course, was not the case, but De Kempelen placed a casket on a little table near the "automaton" during the play, and assured his visitors that without it the figure could not play. Then there was a winding-up of machinery, and throughout the play a slow sound of wheels and clockwork was heard, though in reality the machinery exhibited to the admiring eyes of the general public, the ratchet wheel wound up, and the mechanism which produced the "slow sound" (whatever that may mean), had nothing whatever to do with the figure's chess-play; and though I would be loth to say aught which could injure a chess automaton exhibiting at the present time, and, indeed, hold that the value of one such mechanical figure need not necessarily cause us to overlook the interesting qualities of another, yet it is only just to point out that, in the case of Ajeeb, the so-called chess automaton at the Aquarium, reliance is not placed, as it fairly might be, on the cleverness with which a human figure is concealed within the body of the rather stalwart Turk, who is prepared to meet all comers at sixpence a game—the same price, by the way, which is charged for play with the lean and sardonic, but withal pleasant, prince of darkness, Mephisto. The interior of Ajeeb is displayed, and wheels are seen, which have, I venture to assert, very little to do with the working of the Turk's arm and hand. Before every game a process of winding-up is performed which might, unless I greatly deceive myself, be dispensed with, without in the slightest degree impairing the figure's performance. But this is not altogether the worst. Formerly, I believe, visitors were simply "left to form their own conclusions." Now, in the printed placards announcing the exhibition, the statement is definitely made that no child or diminutive human figure is concealed within the so-called automaton. Now this statement is in one sense perfectly true. No child is concealed, for the concealed player has passed the years of childhood long since. Nor is a diminutive human figure concealed, for the concealed player is not diminutive. A similar statement might as truly have been made about De Kempelen's automaton, which was certainly worked at one time by a chess-player rejoicing in six feet of vertical linear measurement. The real fact is, that there is nothing in the construction of Ajeeb, or in the arrangements for displaying what the exhibitor chooses to call the whole of the interior, to prevent a tolerably tall man from taking charge of the figure's play. It need hardly be said, however, that the interior of Ajeeb cannot possibly be

displayed while the figure is playing; though I have been told that the head has been removed at such times, and with no worse consequences than that Ajeeb is unable to indicate check by nodding twice, or mate by nodding thrice—for it would be too much to expect, even of so mysterious a being, that he should be able to nod without having a head to nod with.

But in the case of Mephisto, though we have a puzzle set us to interpret, or rather, a pretty little scientific problem to solve, we know the exact nature of that puzzle. We are told that there is no concealed player in the figure—no child, no diminutive person, no full-sized Stei . . .—well, let us say, full-sized Staunton or Wormald, since these players, being dead, may be referred to without fear of contradiction or offence; and abundant means are afforded us of convincing ourselves that no player *is* concealed. In the first place, the figure of Mephisto is far too slight to encourage the idea that a player could be concealed within it, even if the interior were not shown. Then the seat, which usually supplies an important part of the space within which a concealed player disports himself, is in Mephisto's case detached (the Prince of Darkness needs no seat in reality, being, of course, as free from the action of gravity as Satan showed himself when, under Milton's guidance, he wandered about in mid-space between the sun and earth, and hell and heaven—wherever these last may be situate). *But this is not all. Mephisto, unlike Ajeeb and De Kempelen's figure, can be examined internally, even while a game is in progress.* It matters nothing to him, who received the sword of Marguerite's enraged brother through his body without flinching, that, while an opponent is conducting a fierce (chess) attack against him, Mr. W . . . is prodding the most vital parts of his interior with a cane. He conducts his game as energetically as ever under these apparently unpromising conditions. I do not know whether the experiment has ever been tried of pouring snuff into Mephisto's interior, but everyone who has examined Mephisto will feel quite assured that it might be tried without producing those sternutatory effects which are said to have followed such an experiment when tried upon Ajeeb during the course of his recent travels in Germany. *Again, Mephisto has more than once performed a feat which Ajeeb will certainly not achieve very readily. He has conducted a game when the board has been entirely covered from the view of anyone except Mephisto's opponent.*

Of course, in one sense, Mephisto is on the same footing as De Kempelen's figure and Ajeeb, of the Aquarium. All three have been conducted by concealed players. But, whereas everything said or done by the

exhibitors of the two other figures, so far as the question of a concealed player was concerned, was intended to deceive, no deception whatever is practised in Mephisto's case. Then the mechanism of Mephisto is altogether superior to that by which the comparatively simple movement of the other players were effected. Those figures were not only not automata; they can hardly be described even as mechanical chess-players. At any rate, so far as Ajeeb is concerned, there can be no manner of doubt that the hand of the figure is directly worked by the hand of the concealed player placed within it. Now, Mephisto's right arm and hand are worked entirely by mechanism, and mechanism so ingeniously devised, that it is a perfect pleasure to watch the working of the arm, in the various movements which are required during the progress of the game. These are more varied than might be imagined by those who have not watched Mephisto's play; and as the board is a full-sized club board (the men are of the usual Staunton pattern), the movement necessary to remove a man from the further left-hand corner—viewing the board from Mephisto's side—to the right side, where he sets his prisoners, involves a wide sweep of the figure's right arm. But even this is a less remarkable movement than that which he makes when he has occasion to remove one of his own men from that left-hand corner to the left side of the board. This happens when, in rapid exchanging, Mephisto's opponent indicates, by a movement on his own side, that he is going to take the piece with which Mephisto would, in the first place, have effected a capture, if each move were separately made. The instantaneous manner in which Mephisto recognizes that the exchange is to be made, and, instead of moving his own piece, removes it from the board, is one of the most surprising features of the exhibition. It would not be at all remarkable if the concealed player, as in Ajeeb's case, could see the board and men; but knowing, as we do, that every move of the opponent's men has to be communicated to a concealed player at some distance below the floor, the rapidity of such movements is very remarkable, and reflects great credit on the ingenuity of M. G . . . , the inventor and constructor of Mephisto.

Lastly, I may remark that those who want to practise chess for its own sake can hardly do better than to visit Mephisto's sanctum (rather a strange name this, by the way, for an apartment tenanted by the Prince of Darkness, though he is a gentleman, according to Shakespeare). He plays, at a much cheaper rate than other strong players, capital chess, which can hardly be said of Ajeeb, though Ajeeb may win as large a proportion of the games he plays.

My own experience of the two players may be thus indicated. I think I have never been beaten by Ajeeb except through an oversight of mine (a likely occurrence enough in such rapid play as is required at his table), and I do not think I could win against Mephisto—certainly I never have won—except through an oversight of his.

# Testimony of John Imray, Esq., M. A.

M. Inst. Civ. Engrs., M. Inst. Mech. Engrs.



HAVING witnessed the performances of Mephisto and carefully examined its construction, I am satisfied that this mechanical Chess-player is a veritable automaton, its movements being effected by mechanism, and not by the agency of a player concealed within the figure, for, in the first place, there is no room for a living motor; and, secondly, what room there is, is mostly occupied by mechanism. How knowledge as to the state of the game is conveyed to the intelligent director of the moves (if there be such a being), or how his volition is conveyed to the mechanism of the automaton, I do not pretend to guess. Whatever be the nature of the communication, it is as perfect as it is mysterious, and the results, achieved apparently by the application of physical forces alone, equal, if they do not surpass, those that are usually attributed to the efforts of high intelligence.

Not only as a mystery inscrutably veiled, but also as a mechanism evincing the greatest ingenuity and skill, Mephisto forms an object of interest to the man of science, the chess-player, and, indeed, to the whole educated public.

JOHN IMRAY.

# Opinions of the Press on "Mephisto"

## The Mechanical Chess Player

Originally published by T. Pettitt & Co. of London, 1889 Includes some extra material from "Opinions of the press of 'Mephisto', the mechanical chess player." also a publication of T. Pettitt & Co of London.



*Illustrated London News. April 6, 1878*

CHESS INTELLIGENCE. – On Saturday last the London chess circle was introduced to a player whose singular attributes are likely to make some noise in the world in the course of the next few months. The name of the stranger is "M. Mephisto"—his personal appearance suggests all that his diabolical name implies—and he seems to all intents and purposes to be an automaton chess player. A genuine automaton chess player is of course an impossibility, for no merely mechanical contrivance can ever be made capable of creating and directing the multiform variations incident to a game of chess, and the inventor of this one, a well-known London amateur, does not pretend that "M. Mephisto" is an automaton pure and simple. He may claim, however, that he has succeeded in completely concealing from the spectator whatever intellectual agency is brought to its assistance. When engaged in play, the figure is seated in a chair at an ordinary table containing a chessboard and pieces, and there is not in any part of the figure or furniture sufficient space to secrete a chess-playing Tom Thumb.

The introduction to "M. Mephisto" was preceded by a dinner at the house of Mr. —, the guests including the Rev. Professor Wayte, Dr.

Ballard, Messrs. Bird, Blackburne, Potter, Hirschfeldt, Delannoy, Gastineau, and many others. After dinner several games were played, of which one is appended.

<b>WHITE</b>	<b>BLACK</b>
<b>(M. Mephisto.)</b>	<b>(Amateur.)</b>
P to K 4th	P to K 4th
Kt to K B 3rd	Kt to Q B 3rd
B to B 4th	B to B 4th
P to Q B 3rd	Kt to K B 3rd
P to Q 4th	P takes P
P to K 5th	P to Q 4th
P takes Kt	P takes B
Q to K 2nd (ch)	B to K 3rd
P takes Kt P	R to Kt sq
B to Kt 5th	Q to Q 4th
Q Kt to Q 2nd	R takes P
Kt to K 4th	P to Q 6th
Kt to B 6th (ch)	K to B sq
Kt takes Q	B takes Kt
Q to Q 2nd	R to K sq (ch)
K to Q sq	R to K 7th
B to R 6th	R takes Q (ch)
K takes R	—

and, as White wins another exchange, Black soon after resigned.



*Land and Water. April 6, 1878*

A CHESS SÉANCE. — On Saturday last a number of chess celebrities were entertained by Mr. —, at his residence in — Square. They had been invited to a dinner given in honour of MM. Rosenthal and Camille Morel,

who were to have been in London on that day, with two objects—first, to meet with the strong players of the Metroplis, in order to confer with them respecting the International Chess Congress; secondly, to pay their respects to Monsieur "Mephisto," a distinguished player at present staying with Mr. ——. Messieurs Rosenthal and Morel did not put in an appearance, and the cause of their absence was disclosed by a telegram sent from Calais, wherein it was stated that they had arrived at that port in order to cross over to England, but in consequence of the gale then raging were not able to do so. A letter from M. Rosenthal to the same effect, despatched by him upon his return to Paris, has since been received. The intelligence contained in the telegram caused much disappointment to the assembled guests; but, however, there was the *récherché* repast, and it received ample justice from those present. Among them were Messrs. Bird, Duffy, Gastineau, Hirschfeld, Hoffer, Minchin, Potter, Zukertort, Professor Wayte, and Dr. Ballard. Mr. Blackburne and one or two others came in afterwards, their object being to see the great "Mephisto," who was waiting in an adjoining room to receive his visitors. The dinner being finished, it was time for the curiosity of the guests to be satisfied, and they were accordingly conducted into the reception chamber. There they saw a being magnificently attired and jewelled, sitting in an easy attitude before a chessboard. He had a shrewd, but not very malevolent appearance, and but for the sight of one of his feet, as they could be observed crossed under the table no great fears might have been entertained by any one. However the sight of an individual rejoicing in a cloven foot is apt to cause some alarm. It appeared that "Mephisto" was willing to play a game with any one so inclined; and Mr. Minchin, one of the strongest English players outside the first class, sat down for that purpose. The game was watched with much interest, and so were the players, especially "Mephisto." He paid great attention to it, looking here and there over the board, now to this side now to that. Evidently he was studying his moves deeply. The contest was short, and in the end Mr. Mitchin resigned. The game is one of those we have given above. Mr. Hirschfeld, who, as all chess players know, is one of our first-class experts, then sat down to test "Mephisto's" skill. This combat went on for thirty-nine moves, and the hoofed gentleman ultimately obtained much the better, if not a winning, position; but was misled by a circumstance related in our notes to the game, which also is given above. It was hot finished; but, if continued, would probably have ended in a draw. We must now speak more mechanically of

Mr. ——'s remarkable invention; for the creature we have been describing is a machine figure devised by him, and able by its semi-anatomical construction to make all the necessary moves upon the chessboard. There would be nothing wonderful in "Mephisto" were he merely a cunningly-contrived receptacle inside which a man or youth might be concealed, That kind of showman's trick has been indeed worked to death; nor, according to our ideas, was it at any time worthy of notice. "Mephisto" is a slim figure, sitting at an ordinary chess-table. There is no possibility of any person being concealed either in or anywhere about him. He is not attached to a chest or placed against a wall, wherein there might be a cupboard. The visitors were able to go all round and examine him for themselves, as also underneath him; and some of them did scrutinise all his appurtenances most narrowly. The means by which the unseen intelligence is communicated to the figure is, of course, Mr. ——'s secret; but it was obvious that no one in the room supplied that intelligence. The chessmen, unlike those used by other so-called automata, are of different sizes, and "Mephisto" is able to play them to and from any square—his right arm with which he takes them up, being so constructed as to work with all necessary contractions and turnings for that purpose—the same almost as if he were a living player. "Mephisto," and his mode of playing, excited great admiration, and we imagine he will cause a sensation at the Paris Exposition, where, as we understand, he is to make his first public appearance. Besides Mr. Minchin, the following players have suffered defeat at his hands, viz., Messrs. Delannoy, Potter, Manning, and H. F. Down.



*The London Figaro. April, 24th 1878*

THE NEW MECHANICAL CHESS PLAYER, "MEPHISTO." – Great sensation is caused in Metropolitan chess circles by the exhibition of a mechanical chess player, the invention of Mr. ——, of —— Square, which differs from previous so-called chess-playing machines in the important point that neither the moving figure, which represents a full-size but well-shaped "Mephisto" nor the table on which the game is played, can possibly conceal any human being however diminutive in size. The player opposed to the

automaton is merely requested to make his move, whereupon "Mephisto" raises his arm by a slow but graceful movement, and plays his reply on the board, apparently in the most sensible manner. The secret of the mechanism has excited the admiration and baffled the ingenuity of mechanical experts, while the play of the automaton in various encounters against a large number of private visitors, which included some Metropolitan players of great force, has been characterised by such high qualities as to point to its being conducted by a master of great repute.



*Iron. April 27th, 1878*

A MECHANICAL CHESS PLAYER. — We have been favoured by the inventor, Mr. —, with a private view of a mechanical figure which plays chess, and plays it very well, too. It is not to be confounded with the so-called automaton chess-player within which is concealed a living player and in which a heterogeneous congeries of wheels and levers is packed for the sole purpose of deceiving the spectator. The figure, which is modelled and dressed to resemble the stage Mephistopheles, is purely mechanical, and we were satisfied that nothing was inside it excepting the chains and cords employed to produce the necessary movements. It is in a sitting position, the right arm and hand, with which the moves are made, being alone free to move, and the action is amazingly natural. Of course the intellectual operations of the chess-player must be performed in another room, the mechanical part of his duty being ingeniously transferred to the figure. How this is done is the inventor's secret.



*Chess Player' Chronicle. May 1878*

MR. — HAS INVENTED A new mechanical Chess player, of which both the construction and the performances are said to eclipse those of any previous Chess-playing machine. The talented inventor has named his mechanism "Mephisto," and has been hospitably inviting many of the leading

players of London to a series of séances at his house in —— Square in order to test the merits of his invention before re moving it to the Paris Exhibition. Among those who have succumbed to the prowess of "Mephisto" are Messrs. Potter, Minchin, Delannoy, Down, and Manning, and next month we hope to give one of his games. "Mephisto" is a slim figure, sitting at an ordinary Chess table, entirely disconnected from surrounding objects, and there is no possibility of any person being concealed in or near him. The power by which he acts with so much apparent intelligence is of course Mr. —— secret, but we fancy the clue will eventually be found in the Chess board, which is of peculiar make, each square containing a spike upon which it is necessary to press, both in placing thereon or in removing a piece.\*

The following account has been forwarded to us by an eye witness: "Mephisto's" dress is of a very gorgeous description—red velvet, trimmed with black; pink hat, with black border and two magnificent pink feathers; and his left hand is covered with a black kid glove, with the object, we suppose, of preventing beholders from entirely forgetting—notwithstanding his, on the whole, gay appearance—the awful nature of the being before them.

The beautiful smoothness of "Mephisto's" head has been the subject of much comment, and it is generally supposed to be the result of much study in his perpetual warfare with mankind. His baldness, however, can hardly be called "premature," since he tells us that he has played Chess ever since it was invented. The extraordinary merit of "Mephisto's" barber has also been observed, and we may add that the excellence of that gentleman as a shaver is only equalled by the skill with which "Mephisto" 'shaves' his opponents over the Chess board.

The control over the playing arm by the unseen force is very perfect. We need hardly point out to the reader acquainted with mechanics that it is a much more difficult problem to give the arm the necessary movements in the case of a Chess than of a Whist playing machine. The arm of Mr. Maskelyne's figure "Psycho" has only two motions, and both are merely arcs of circles. The one enables it to move its arms round the semi-circle in which the cards are placed, and the other gives it the power of raising the card, and thus displaying its face to the audience. In "Mephisto's" case, the connection between the arm and shoulder must be similar to what it is in the human frame, i.e., by a ball and socket joint. Consequently, the bond uniting the arm and the unseen power must be extremely good.

For some unexplained, and to us incomprehensible reason, "Mephisto" always very carefully places the piece he captures on the same side of the board (his right) and his opponent is requested to do the same.

"Mephisto" plays indifferently with the white or black pieces, which might have been expected, because being the reverse of a "young" player, he would not be likely to have any of his weaknesses

"Mephisto" from time to time moves his head in a fascinating manner, and takes a wide survey of the board. Onlookers who have made him the subject of psychological study assert that this proceeding is a sign of his contentment with the respect of the game.

"Mephisto's" play is generally thought to be cautious and profound rather than dashing and showy; but the before-mentioned observers have remarked that it varies very much with his opponent, and that he is apt to treat ladies in a very brilliant, if not in a very gallant manner.

\* Since this was written "Mephisto" is made to play on an ordinary board without spikes and without pressing down.



*Halloway Press. April 10th, 1878.*

COUNTIES CHESS ASSOCIATION – This meeting has now come to a close, except in regard to the first and second prizes of the handicap. "Mephisto" looks like the winner of the first prize, having proved the victor in the game with Colonel Minchin, to which we referred last week. He has also defeated Mr. Baxter, who, however, succeeded in drawing his first game with the automaton. We have not heard the result of his encounter with his next antagonist, the Rev. Mr. Coker; many will be inclined to back the cloven-footed "Mephisto" against the divine.

Monsieur "Mephisto," with his sardonic smile, is a very pleasant antagonist. He never takes back a move; and when he has resolved what to do, there is no hesitation; the hand is quietly raised and moves the piece to its appointed place. If he has to sacrifice a piece to avoid a mate, he offers no excuse, but proceeds quietly with the game, and in the end turns out victorious. In every respect the game is conducted as between ordinary

players, except that, when giving check, "Mephisto" touches his opponent's king, his constructor not yet having been able to give him the power of speech. Perhaps ventriloquism may supply this little want; but, after all, the silent touch may be better suited to convey the idea of the supernatural than would be the commonplace "check" of ordinary mortals.

The games with "Mephisto" seem to have been the most popular in connection with the present congress. While the meetings at King's College were attended by the players only, the automaton's reception room was often inconveniently crowded.

The inventor has been occupied during the last eight years in perfecting the figure. No doubt, it has only been the pastime of his leisure moments; but had we been possessed of a tithe of his mechanical ingenuity and skill, our efforts would have been directed towards contrivances that would have been of use otherwise than in the mimic warfare of chess.



*The Field. August 17, 1878*

*(Copied into several American and Continental Papers.)*

"MEPHISTO." – The curiosity and wonder excited during the last few months by the appearance of Mr. ——— mechanical chess player, "Mephisto" has much increased, owing to the latter's successful participation in the handicap tournament of the Counties Chess Association. "Mephisto" won the final round against Mr. F. S. Ensor on Saturday last, and, therefore, comes out first victor with the fine record of having beaten Messrs. Minchin, Coker, and Ensor even, and having defeated Mr. Baxter, while giving the odds of pawn and two moves. The personality of the conductor is kept as secret as the mechanism which covers his movements, but so much seems certain that it must be a player of first-class force.



*Weekly Times.*

PRETENDED AUTOMATA WHICH COULD play Chess and perform other games have been common enough, but we never remember to have seen anything which can compare with "Mephisto." All doubt is set at rest as to whether a child or dwarf is concealed in the figure by the thorough personal examination to which it is open, showing conclusively that whatever may be the secret, that that is not "how it's done." "Mephisto" is not exactly unknown in Chess circles, having defeated some of the best known metropolitan players before he went to the Paris Exhibition. The gentleman who, after seven years of patient study, has accomplished this extraordinary piece of mechanism, is of such a modest disposition that he does not even make his name public, although we may say he is not altogether unknown in the world of science. We do not purpose attempting any detailed description of the complicated actions which "Mephisto" is capable of performing, as the thing itself must be seen to be thoroughly appreciated.



### *Globe.*

THE UNKNOWN AGENT IS evidently a player of ability. "Mephisto" is slim, and well dressed in the style usually worn by Faust's Mentor. He is seated with outstretched legs, crossed—the hoof is not wanting—in a chair, under which it is stated is the mechanism, and in front of an ordinary Chess-table. There is a hole in his back, into which you can probe a cane, and certainly it would appear that in his case there is no player concealed within or under him, however otherwise the knowledge is conveyed to the guiding agent. Visitors are allowed to walk around and examine him whilst play is going on. Mephisto's moves are at times well considered—though the openings are quickly executed—and when decided upon there is no faltering, but are slowly and deliberately made, with the right hand, gloved. The most difficult, such as a knight's or castling, are marvellously executed, the turnings of the shoulder and the action of the fingers being perfect. He intimates check by tapping his opponent's King, and when taking a piece removes it before touching his own. Occasionally, when he has made what he considers, and he is seldom wrong, a good move, he evinces his self-satisfaction with a shake of his head and a sardonic smile. Altogether, "Mephisto" is well worth a visit.



### *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper.*

THE MYSTERY OF THE so-called "Automaton Chess-Player," which excited the world a century ago, and was revived in a bungling fashion at the Crystal Palace during recent years, has led to the construction of a far more curious figure, which plays Chess in the midst of a circle of spectators, and may at the same time be probed with a cane in a manner that appears to defy the possibility of any person being concealed, as was the case originally. Mephisto is the name given to the figure, and its anonymous inventor represents it simply as a scientific puzzle. Several gentlemen played against the demon yesterday afternoon and were easily beaten. At one time the Chessboard was completely covered with a cloth held just above the tops of the men, but Mephisto was quickly awake to an unexpected move made for the purpose of testing his skill.



### *Observer.*

AS A SPECIMEN OF mechanical ingenuity, "Mephisto" reflects the greatest credit upon the inventive power of his originator, and not only is he deserving of public attention, but will afford an interesting problem to scientific men to discover how the human agency is applied to give the necessary motive power to enable Mephisto to play so intricate a game. The inventor very modestly shrinks from publicity, but states that his chief object in making the figure is his love for the game, and a wish to popularise it, and to make it take a more prominent position in our modern games.



### *Era.*

MECHANICAL CHESS-PLAYERS HAVE been frequently invented and

introduced to the public, and some have been of the most ingenious construction. As this extremely clever performer will shortly leave London to delight the Parisians with his skill, lovers of a good game of chess should pay "Mephisto" a visit. They must not be deterred by his unearthly aspect. The philosophers tell us that the Mephistopheles of the present day is quite a "modern gentleman," and our friend "Mephisto" will be found a most affable and courteous opponent. We find this unearthly-looking performer seated in a chair at an ordinary chess-table. The chair on which he sits has a deep seat, but the visitor cannot unravel the mystery that way, for he is at liberty to inspect it, and even the body of the figure, while the game is proceeding, and it is evident that no human performer could find room to assist "Mephisto" in the management of his kings, castles, or pawns. The aspect of "Mephisto" is, for such a clever fiend, rather agreeable, and nothing is more amusing than the weird smile on his countenance when he has made a particularly good move and has got his antagonist in a "hot corner." Mephisto generally sits with his face uncovered, but he can play a good game with his head enveloped in a newspaper. This, however, is not perhaps the most wonderful part of the arrangement, as we know a blind man who is an accomplished chess-player. The mechanism is certainly most ingenious and well managed, since the most experienced in such matters confess themselves unable to explain the contrivance.



### *Daily News.*

HITHERTO, WE BELIEVE, "AUTOMATON" chess-players have had their secret agencies ruthlessly exposed, but in this instance, while an agency is freely admitted, it successfully defies discovery. The figure has no visible connection with any surrounding object, and from its construction any person can easily satisfy himself that no live person is concealed inside it. It is richly attired in the Mephistophelian costume, and its features are characterised by the astuteness and weird amiability that are popularly supposed to attach to that famous personage. "Mephisto" grasps the pieces on the board with a flexible hand, encased in a black kid glove, places and removes them with singular accuracy, indicates a mate by touching the king, and a checkmate by

removing it from the board, and depositing it on the side opposite to that where he has placed the pieces previously taken. He indulges in frequent gestures, turning his head from side to side, and occasionally favouring his opponent with a gracious nod.



### *The Times.*

THE HISTORY OF CHESS-AUTOMATA is a remarkable one. Von Kempelen's chess-player made the tour of the Courts of Europe and its secret was twice sold to crowned heads. The clever concealment of a human being in the interior was the explanation of all its wonderful achievements, and the merit of its invention lay in the devices by which the manipulation hid the person within while appearing to court inspection. The Crystal Palace automaton was an adaptation of the same idea. "Mephisto" depends upon another principle. He is actuated from without by a human intelligence, and the problem is to ascertain how the moves upon the board become known to his director and how the counter-moves are communicated to the figure. Ordinarily the board is uncovered, but occasionally a newspaper is placed over it, so that the moves could not be reflected by a mirror in the ceiling, and "Mephisto" plays a move in spite of the obstruction. The mystery of "Mephisto's" action is to be explained by the use of clever mechanism.



### *Brighton Paper.*

THE OTHER EVENING WE paid Mephisto a visit, and on entering the room found him seated at an ordinary table, upon which is placed a chess-board. Any visitor who can play is welcome to compete with Mephisto, and as soon as the former seats himself opposite him at the table, the automaton player will usually make the first move, and will almost invariably obtain the victory over his opponent. Whilst they were playing we had an opportunity of examining the figure, which is life size. We had an idea that possibly someone might be concealed inside, but in order to dispel such a notion, the

exhibitor took a stick, which he put into the back of Mephisto's neck, and ran it down inside of his body. The chair upon which he sits is an ordinary one, and in no way connected with the floor, other than by the four legs. Mephisto works by machinery, there can be no doubt of that, but how he is enabled to make the right move on the board is a perfect mystery. What will astonish the visitor most is the fact that the chess board can be covered over, and yet Mephisto will know his opponent's move, and make his reply accordingly, or correct a false move. He plays well, and at times when he has obtained a victory, or perplexed his opponent, he will raise his head and look triumphantly upon him, which, with his sardonic smile, causes great amusement amongst the visitors. In taking our leave of Mephisto all we can say is that, on the whole, he is a wonderful piece of mechanism; and we would recommend our readers to pay him a visit if they wish to see something marvellous.



### *Graphic.*

**MEPHISTO.** – The fiend who, according to his biographer, Goethe, tempted Faust, and lured the fair Margaret to her ruin, has, we rejoice to say, devoted himself to a more innocent employment. He has taken apartments at 48A, Regent Street, where he is ready to play chess with anybody for sixpence a game. He plays strongly, too, yet the wonder is that he can play any game at all, considering that often, when he is meditating a move, his attendant pokes a cane through a hole in his back into the centre of his body, to prove to visitors that there is no dwarf or other human creature concealed inside, as was the case with Von Kempelen's so-called "automaton" chess-player. Mephisto well deserves a visit. He is an urbane and gentlemanlike fiend, and the manner in which he grasps and lifts the chessmen indicates remarkable mechanical ingenuity. Of course there is human agency somewhere, but how it's done we don't pretend to say.



### *Land and Water.*

THIS WONDERFUL PIECE OF mechanical genius, whose pretensions are as honest as they are remarkable, has proved enduringly interesting to scientific men. Our own notions concerning Mephisto, and our appreciation of it as a triumph of mechanical skill altogether unprecedented, have heretofore been fully expressed, and need not be repeated. If there are any of our readers who have not seen and played with Mephisto they should seize the opportunity now offered them of doing so. While pleased to invite them to do this on their own behalf we are not free from the wish to serve the inventor, who, to our own personal knowledge, devoted years of study and experiment, and spent much money, before he succeeded in perfecting his conception.

# A Selection of Games Played by "Mephisto"



## Game 1

<b>(Mephisto.)</b>	<b>(Mr. W.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
Kt to K B 3	Kt to Q B 3
P to Q 4	P takes P
Kt takes P	Q to R 5
Kt to K B 3	Q takes K P (ch)
B to K 2	P to Q 4
Castles	B to K 3
Kt to Q B 3	Q to B 4
B to Kt 5	Kt to K 2
Kt to Q 4	Q to Kt 3
P to B 4	P to B 4
R to K sq	B to Q 2
Kt takes Q P	Castles to Q R
B takes Kt	Kt takes B
Kt to Kt 5	B to B (ch)

B to K 3	B to K 3
K K takes B P	B takes B (ch)
R takes B	B takes Kt
Kt takes B	Q to B 2
P to B 4	K R to K sq
R to Q R 3	K to Kt sq
R to Kt sq	Q to B sq
P to Q Kt 4	Kt takes P
Q to Q 4	Kt to B 3
R takes Kt P (ch)	K takes R
R takes R P (ch)	Kt takes R
Q to Kt 6 (ch)	K moves
Q or Kt mates	–



## Game 2

<b>(Mr. M.....)</b>	<b>(Mephisto.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
Kt to K B 3	Kt to Q B 3
B to B 4	B to B 4
Castles	P to Q 3
P to Q Kt 4	B to P
P to Q B 3	B to R 4
P to Q 4	P takes P
Q to Kt 3	Q to B 3
P takes P	Kt to K 2
B to R 3	B to Kt 3
P to K 5	P takes P
P takes P	Q to Kt 3

Kt to B 3	B to Kt 5
Kt to K R 4	Q to R 4
P to Kt 3	P to Kt 4
Kt to K 4	Castles to Q R
Kt to B 6	P takes Kt
Kt takes Q	B takes Kt
B takes P	Kt to Q 5
Q to B 4	B to B 6
K R to K sq	Kt to Q 4
B to B 5	B takes B
Q takes B	Kt to B 5
Q R to B sq	Kt to K 7 (ch)
R takes Kt	Kt takes R (ch)
K to B sq	Kt takes R
Resigns	—



### Game 3

<b>(Mephisto.)</b>	<b>(Amateur.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
P to K B 4	P to Q 4
P takes Q P	P to K 5
P to Q 3	Q takes P
Q to K 2	Kt to K B 3
Kt to Q B 3	B to Kt 5
B to Q 2	B takes Kt
B takes B	B to Kt 5
Q to K 3	Q Kt to Q 2
P takes P	Kt takes P

B to Q 3	Q Kt to B 4
P to Kt 4	Castles Q's
B takes Kt P	K R to K sq
P takes Kt	Kt to Kt 6
B to K 5	Kt takes R
P to K R 3	Q. takes Kt P
P takes B	Q takes P
Kt to B 3	P to K B 3
Castles	Kt to Kt 6
B takes K B P	Kt to B 8
Q to K 5	Q takes Kt
B to B 5 (ch)	K to Kt sq
R takes R (ch)	R takes R
B takes R	Q to K 6 (ch)
Q takes Q	Kt takes Q
B takes R P	Resigns



## Game 4

**(Mephisto.)**

P to K 4  
 Kt to K B 3  
 B to Kt 5  
 P to Q 4  
 P to K 5  
 Castles  
 B to Q B 4  
 B to Kt 3  
 P to Q R 4

**(Amateur.)**

P to K 4  
 Kt to Q B 3  
 Kt to B 3  
 P takes P  
 Q to K 2  
 Kt to Q 4  
 Kt to Kt 3  
 P to Q 4  
 B to K 3

P to R 5	Kt to Q 2
P to R 6	P to Q Kt 3
B to R 4	Kt to Q sq
Kt takes P	P to R 3
P to K B 4	P to K B 4
P takes P passing	Q takes P
Kt takes B	Kt takes Kt
R to K sq	B to B 4 ch
K to R sq	P to Q 5
Q to R 5 ch	P to Kt 3
Q to Q 5	Castles K R
R takes Kt	Q to R 5
P to K Kt 3	Q to R 6
Kt to Q 2	Q R to K sq
B takes Kt	K to R sq
Q to K 5 ch	K to R 2
R takes R	Q takes B
Kt to K 4	Q to R 6
Kt to B 6 ch	R takes Kt
Q takes P ch	Resigns



## Game 5

**(Amateur.)**

P to K 4  
 Kt to K B 3  
 B to B 4  
 P to Q 4  
 Castles

**(Mephisto.)**

P to K 4  
 Kt to Q B 3  
 Kt to B 3  
 P takes P  
 Kt takes P

R to K sq	P to Q 4
B takes P	Q takes B
Kt to B 3	Q to K R 4
Kt takes Kt	B to K 3
Kt to Kt 3	Q to Q 4
B to B 4	Castles
R to Q B sq	B to K Kt 5
Kt to K 4	P to K R 3
P to K R 3	B to R 4
P to B 4	Q to K B 4
Kt to Kt 3	Q takes B
Kt takes B	Q to B 4
Kt to Kt 3	Q to Q 2
Q to R 4	P to K Kt 3
Kt to K 4	P to B 4
Kt to B 6	Q to Kt 2
R to K 6	B to Q 3
P to B 5	Q to B 2
Q R to K sq	B to K 4
K R takes B	Kt takes R
Q takes R P	P to B 3
Q to R 8 (ch)	K to B 2
Q to R 4 (ch)	K to Kt sq
R takes Kt	Q takes Kt
R to K 2	P to Q 6
R to Q 2	K R to K sq
P to Q Kt 4	Q to B 6
Q to Kt 6	Q to B 5
P to Q R 4	Q to R 3
Q takes Q	P takes Q
K to B sq	R to K 5
R to Kt 2	P to Kt 4

Kt to Q 2	R to K 7
P to Kt 4	P to B s
Kt to B 4	P to Q 7
R to Kt sq	P to B 6
Kt to Q 6	R to Q 2
P to Q Kt 5	Q R to K 2
P takes R P (disc ch)	K to R sq
Resigns	—



## Game 6

<b>(Mephisto.)</b>	<b>(Amateur.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
P to K B 4	B to Q B 4
Kt to K B 3	P to Q 3
P to Q B 3	B to K Kt 5
B to Q B 4	Kt to K B 3
P takes P	B takes Kt
Q takes B	P takes P
P to Q 4	P takes P
P to K 5	Q to K 2
K to Q sq	K Kt to Q 2
Q takes Q Kt P	Castles
Q takes R	Kt Q to Kt 3
Q to K 4	Kt takes B
P takes P	R Q sq
P to Q 5	Kt takes K P
R to K sq	P to K B 3
B to K B 4	B to Q 3

Q Kt to B 3	P to Q B 3
K to Q B 2	P takes P
Q takes P (ch)	K to R sq
Q R to Q sq	B to Q B 2
B takes Kt	R takes Q
B takes B	Q to K B 2
R takes R	Kt to Q B 3
R to Q 6	Kt to K 2
R takes Kt	Resigns



## Game 7

<b>(Amateur.)</b>	<b>(Mephisto.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
Kt to K B 3	Kt to Q B 3
B to B 4	B to B 4
P to Q Kt 4	B takes P
P to B 3	B to R 4
P to Q 4	P takes P
Castles	P takes P
Q to Kt 3	Q to B 3
P to K 5	Q to Kt 3
B to R 3	K Kt to K 2
Kt takes P	P to Kt 4
Kt takes P	R to Kt sq
B to Q 3	Q to R 4
Q to B 4	B to Kt 2
R to Q sq	Kt takes P
Kt takes Kt	Q takes Kt

B to Kt 4	B takes B
Q takes B	Castles
K R to K sq	Q to Kt 4
P to Kt 3	Kt to Kt 3
Q to Q 2	Q to Q 4
R to K 4	Kt to K 4
Q to K 3	Kt takes B
Q takes Kt	Q takes R
Q takes Q	B takes Q
Resigns	—



## Game 8

<b>(Mr. M....)</b>	<b>(Mephisto.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
Kt to K B 3	Kt to Q B 3
B to B 4	B to B 4
P to Q Kt 4	B takes P
P to Q B 3	B to R 4
P to Q 4	P takes P
Q to Kt 3	Q to B 3
Castles	P to Q 3
P to K 5	P takes P
P takes P	P takes P
Kt to Q 2	Kt to K 2
Kt to K 4	Q to Kt 3
B to Q 3	Castles
Q Kt to Kt 5	B to B 4
Kt to R 4	Q to B 3

Kt takes B	Kt takes Kt
P to Kt 4	P to K R 3
Kt to K 4	Q to Kt 3
Kt to Kt 3	Q takes P
B takes Kt	Q to R 5
Q takes Q Kt P	Q to K B 3
B to Q R 3	K R to Kt sq
Q to R 6	R to Kt 3
Q to K 2	P to Kt 3
B to R 3	Kt to K 4
B to Kt 2	R to K sq
B to Q B 5	P to Q 6
Q to K 3	K R to K 3
Q takes K R P	P to Q 7
K to R sq	Kt to Kt 5
Q to R 3	Q takes R
R takes Q	R to K 8 (ch)
Kt to B sq	R takes R
B to Q 4	Kt takes P (ch)
B takes Kt	P to queens
K to Kt sq	B to Kt 3
B takes B	R P takes B
B to B 6	Q to Q 5 (ch)
K to R sq	K R to K 8
Q to B 8 (ch)	K to Kt 2
Resigns	–



## Game 9

**(Mephisto.)**

P to K 4  
Kt to K B 3  
B to Kt 5  
B to R 4  
Castles  
R to K sq  
B takes Kt  
Kt takes P  
P to Q 4  
Q to K B 3  
P to Q B 3  
Kt to Q 2  
Kt to Q 3  
Q to Kt 3  
Kt to K 4  
R P takes Q  
P to K B 4  
P to B 5  
B takes Kt  
P to K Kt 4  
Kt takes B  
Kt to K 5  
Kt to B 3  
Kt to K 5  
Kt to Kt 6  
R to K 5  
P takes P  
P to K Kt 4  
Q R to K sq  
R to K 7 (ch)  
R takes B

**(Mr. S.....)**

P to K 4  
Kt to Q B 3  
P to Q R 3  
Kt to K B 3  
Kt takes P  
Kt to B 4  
Q P takes B  
B to K 2  
Kt to K 3  
Castles  
B to Kt 4  
P to K B 3  
Q to Q 4  
Q to Q 3  
Q takes Q  
B to Q 2  
B to R 3  
Kt to Kt 4  
B takes B  
Q to R K  
P takes Kt  
B to B sq  
P to R 3  
R to K B 3  
B to Q 2  
P to K R 4  
K to B 2  
P to Q Kt 3  
R to Q sq  
K to Kt  
R takes R

R to K 8 (ch and  
mates next move)

—



## Game 10

**(Mephisto.)**

P to K 4

Kt to K B 3

B to B 4

Kt to Kt 6

P takes P

Kt takes B P

Q to B 3 (ch)

Kt to Q B 3

Q to K 4

B to Kt 3

P to Q 4

P takes P

Q to Kt 4 (ch)

B to Kt 5

Castles (Queen's side)

Q to B 3 (ch)

Kt takes Kt

R takes Kt

P to K 6

Q to B 7 (ch)

P takes R (ch)

B takes B

B to Q 2

**(Mr. T.....)**

P to K 4

Kt to Q B 3

Kt to K B 3

P to Q 4

Kt takes P

K takes Kt

K to K 3

Kt to Kt 5

P to Q Kt 4

B to Kt 2

B to Q 3

B to B 4

K to B 2

Q to K sq

Q to K 3

K to K sq

Kt takes Kt

Q to K Kt 3

R to K B

R takes Q

K to B sq

P to K B 3

Q takes Kt P

R to K sq	Q takes B P
R takes B P	Q takes R (ch)
B takes Q	P to Kt 3
B to Kt 4 (ch)	K to Kt 2
P (Queen's mating)	–



## Game 11

<b>(Mons. C.....r.)</b>	<b>(Mephisto.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
Kt to K B 3	Kt to Q B 3
B to B 4	P to K B 4
P takes P	P to Q 4
B to Kt 5	B to Q 3
P to Q 3	Kt to K B 3
Castles	B takes P
B to K sq	B to K Kt s
P to K E 3	B to E 4
P to K Kt 4	Kt takes P
P takes Kt	B takes P
B takes Kt (ch)	P takes B
B to Kt 5	Q takes B
P to B 3	Castles
Q Kt to Q 2	Q to B 4
B to B 4	P to K 5
P takes P	P takes P
Kt to Q 4	Q to K E 4
Q. to Kt 3 (ch)	K to E sq
B to Kt 3	B takes B

P takes B	Q to E 6
P to B 4	B to B 6
K Kt takes B	P takes Kt
Kt takes P	Q takes P (ch)
K to B sq	R takes Kt
Q to B 2	Q to R 5 (ch)
Q to E 2	E to E 6
Q takes R	Q takes Q (ch)
K to Kt sq	Q to Kt 6 (ch)
K to B sq	P to K E 4
Q K to B sq	R to K B sq
R to K 2	R to B 5
R to Kt 2	R to R 5 (ch)
K to Kt sq	Q to K 6 (ch)
R to B 2	Q takes K (ch)
R to B sq	R to R 8 (ch)
K takes R	Q takes R (ch)
K to R 2	P to R 5
P to B 5	P to Kt 4
P to Q Kt 4	P to Kt 5
P to Kt 5	P to Kt 6 (mate)



## Game 12

### Remove Mephisto's Queen's Knight.

<b>(Mephisto.)</b>	<b>(Mr. M.....s.)</b>
P to K 4	P to K 4
P to K B 4	P takes P
Kt to K B 3	P to K Kt 4

P to K R 4	P to Kt 5
Kt to K 5	Kt to K B 3
B to B 4	P to Q 4
P takes P	B to Q 3
P to Q 4	Kt to R 4
Q to Q 3	Kt to Kt 6
B takes P	Kt takes R
Castles	Kt to B 7
Q to K 2	Castles
Q takes Kt	P to K B 4
B to R 6	R to B 3
B to Kt 5	Kt to Q 3
R to K sq	P to K R 3
Q to B 4	Q to B sq
B takes R	Q takes B
K to Kt sq	Kt to B sq
P to K Kt 3	B to Q 2
Kt takes P	Q to Kt 2
Kt to K 5	K to R 2
B to Q 3	B takes Kt
P takes B	R to K sq
P to K 6	R to K 2
Q takes B P (ch)	K to R sq
R to B sq	Kt takes P
P takes Kt	B takes P
Q to Q B 5	P to Kt 3
Q to B 6	Q to Kt sq
Q to B 3 (ch)	R to Kt 2
R to B 6	Q to K sq
R takes P (ch)	K to Kt sq
R takes B	Q to E 4
P to E 3	R takes P

B to R 7 (ch)	K takes B
R to K 7 (ch)	K to R 3
Q to K B 6 (ch)	R to Kt 3
Q to B 8 (mate)	—

# About the Editor



Katherine Naby lives in the Tempe, AZ with her husband, author Eric Naby. In addition to editing/formatting classic works and writing her own fiction, she plays ultimate frisbee whenever she can and loves reading about early 20th century stage magic.

For news about future releases, sign up for the Entangled Continua Publishing newsletter: <http://eepurl.com/bLJVH>