



SKITTLES
ROOM

From the Archives

Hosted by
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From the Archives...

Since it came online many years ago, ChessCafe.com has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the [ChessCafe](#) home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

The following article appeared on June 25, 1859 in the *New York Ledger*.

The Boston Banquet to Paul Morphy

The banquet at the Revere House, Boston, in honor of Paul Morphy, last week, was most brilliantly successful: a worthy ovation to the distinguished hero of the occasion.

Among the prominent guests were Chief Justice Shaw, President Walker of Harvard College, Senator Wilson, Hon. Charles Hale, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Jared Sparks, Mayor Lincoln, Professor Agassiz, Dr. Holmes, Hon. Mr. Burlingame, Rev. T. Starr King, James Russell Lowell and Hon. Josiah Quincy, Jr. We print Hon. Charles Hale’s speech, on account of the reference made in it to Mr. Morphy’s engagement to edit a chess department in the *Ledger*. We think it will interest our readers. Mr. Hale is editor of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, and Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

The Newspaper Press – Announcing with fidelity the events in the daily history of the world, it has also adorned its columns with the brilliant record of American victories in chess and declared their intellectual significance.

Mr. Charles Hale was called upon to respond. He said – I had felicitated myself, Mr. President, that there was no possible ground on which I could be expected

to speak this evening; but since you call upon me, I see the point; for do we not all know that the indefatigable Bonner – to whose net only the biggest of whales and the prettiest of goldfishes come – has “secured” (this I believe is the phrase) – has “secured” our young friend and honored guest “to be chess editor of the Ledger?” – Paul Morphy is now an editor; – and so I am to suppose that the honor devolves upon me of welcoming him to the journalists’ rank, and extending to him the right hand of fellowship! This last distinction, then, was reserved to culminate a career of triumphs.

It was nothing to be feted by Dukes and Earls, to receive golden presents, to be the theme of poetry and of eloquence, and the object of lovely woman’s smiles; one more glory was wanting, and the Morphy has achieved – admitted to the sacred order and dubbed a Knight of the Press, here in Boston, where was erected the first printing press in America, we give him his golden spurs and bid him go on and conquer in the field of journalism!

The old story of the origin of chess represents that many centuries before the Christian era, India was ruled by a cruel tyrant; that during his reign, a learned Brahmin, who felt much compassion for the suffering people, tasked his ingenuity to discover some means to give the King a lesson; and having no Advertiser, and no Ledger, in those benighted days, in which to fulminate thunders against the corrupted and depraved administration, he invented and taught the King this charming game to bring to his mind the fact that however strong and powerful the King might be, he was nothing without the support of the other members of the State, his Knights, his Bishops, and even his humble Pawns.

It was the reciprocal of that other lesson which not long afterwards, the Roman hero undertook to teach the rebels on the Sacred Mount by the grosser fable of the Belly and the Members. The *casus belli* in that instance was reduced by much the same process as our Indian Brahmin adopted, but the delicacy and refinement of the two nationalities is well contrasted in the various means employed.

The Brahmin invented chess; the King learned its hidden lesson, and the groaning people were relieved. But, in the process of time, the world has become so wise on this side the Atlantic as to find that Kings and all the rest are useless trumpery: “a church without a Bishop, and a State without a King,” is our theory and our practice. We have neither king, nor queen, nor privileged order of knights nor clergy – all descend to the place of pawn or rather the pawns occupy all the high places. The Japanese in pride told the shipwrecked Yankee sailor that they had ten sovereigns, and asked him how many his people had? “We have 27,000,000” was the prompt reply.

One further moral must the game of chess convey; and so young America goes forth to show the world in precise conformity with the genius of our equal institutions, that Kings, Queens, Knights and Bishops are all mere puppets and playthings in the hands of one American citizen! After some further allusions to Mr. Morphy’s triumphs, Mr. Hale concluded with renewed expressions of

congratulation.



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