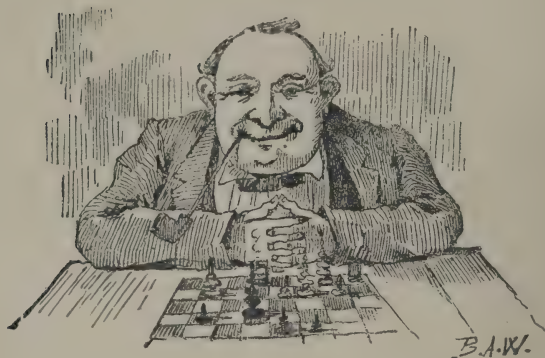


DR. SHORNCOP'S BONE.

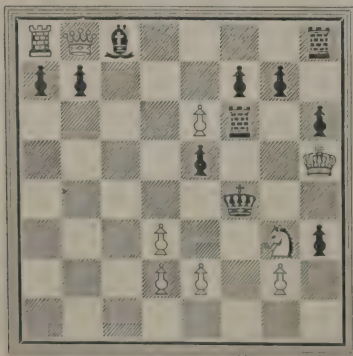
BY JOSEPH C. J. WAINWRIGHT.



HE above exultant figure-head pretty fairly represents Dr. Shornchops, the Suave ex-Secretary of the "Philidorian Associates." Do'st notice, dear Chesser, the wary wrinkling of his optical machines, the expectant twitch of his nostrils, as he thus lounges vis-a-vis to you? He begs leave to introduce to your en-

lightened scrutiny his favorite composition; for be it known, he is a Problemistic Author of the first-class.

"THE BONE"



Is this a "Mate Without Moving" Position!

This innocent looking little analysis has been the ruin of at least half a dozen flourishing Chess Clubs; it may be classed as a kind of intellectual "infernal ma-

chine," so destructive has it proved in the past to the self conceit of aspiring ye even *distinguished*, amateurs!

The ruthless Doctor long ago christened his pet:—"The Bone of Contention." The Ivories are certainly rather perversely placed. A little revelation of their "cuttings up" among the "Philidorians" would tickle the Doctor almost to death, and perhaps not prove injurious to the studious reader.

It was in ante-Brentano days that the "Philidorians" made, baked, kept and digested the Chess 'Cake' of the country as it were; they blazed away as the Champion Club of Metropolitan prestige; *their* President was a veritable Stein-Zuckerburne at the game. The Vice was vicious on problems; *he always* solved with the most cursory and supercilious glance; truly he was a gifted and high-nosed being; a Teuton by birth, and a Schweltermelter by name, he was extricated from an emigrant vessel, aged 9 (not the vessel), and *yanked* at once into the land of Morphy. His first problemistic effort, aged 10 (not the effort), after being pressed betwixt sprigs of selected lavender, was mournfully consigned to the toniest waste basket in the only editorial sanctum that had the honor of receiving it.

Later on he played a blindfold game with his Uncle, aged 15 (not the Uncle), and easily won the partie during the time his Uncle perambulated to and from the

bar, where he was wont to dispense the "foamy bock" to his thirsty clients. Finally after a stormy career as feeder to a New York sausage machine, at the age of 45 (not the chopper), he brought up short among the "Philidorians" with his pocket full of bank checks, in fact checked all over as his portrait, age 50 (not the picture), shows.



To resume: The Club was dull, the Club yawned, it kind of languished 'twixt Tournaments. Schweltermwelter is chewing the cud of a tough "Carpenter" in 4. John O'Quibbler is staring truculently at him the while; this latter is known as Jack of Clubs among the "Philidorians," on account of his irascibility. The extreme sultriness of the January evening, caused by a young furnace in a smallish room, predisposes the fighting men of the Club to conversation rather than to play; this dies at last, a solemn lull supremely supervenes. In the midst of this brooding calm Dr. Shornchops unfurls his mouth into a mystical smile, shakes his right ear knowingly, rasps his modest chin with a thumbnail as if to make sure that it had not disappeared in the circumjacent folds of fat, and communes thusly with himself:—

"Tis now three years that I have spared this Club; at last the time is apropos O. K. for my designs; I must need bring forth the avenging brain cleaver. Night by night the President waxes more wooden godlike, the Vice Presidential

skull elongates with conceit; the smaller fry pretend to always give odds at play, whilst every man Jack of them is a confirmed dualist on problems. The moment is ripe, rotten ripe: Attention all!" this latter aloud to the members. Up go twenty pairs of bushy eyebrows at this unlooked for interruption, the members hold their breaths, but anon peddle them out again judiciously. With fatal deliberation Shornchops wheels a little table into the centre of the floor, plants out his problem with frightful calmness, waves towards it with his pipe stem and orates as follows: "Fellow-Knights behold a small scheme to infuse life into our midst, a *bone* as it were to pick. In this position just arranged you will find fodder for argument. Let us suppose that White has just played; on making the move he says: 'I take with pawn.' At this moment an alarm of fire is heard outside. Now Mr. White, who is Captain of the Fire Department, deposits his pawn and rushes out."

"Please now look at the position once more," continues the Doctor. "Is it possible that White has just mated Black by taking Black's King's pawn *en passant*, but failed in his haste to remove the pawn from the board?" "This is the question I would have you decide. With your permission gentlemen we will organize into a debating society at once." Assent being eagerly given, Dr. Shornchops proceeds: "I nominate our President as Chairman, our worthy Vice will maybe open the debate in the affirmative, which is: 'pawn has possibly taken pawn *en passant*.' Brother O'Quibbler will reply in the negative." Thus speaking, with many a shy twinkle in his eye, the crafty Doctor settled into a seat near the door.

Every one was charmed with the new idea and ranged themselves on either side of the question as the President directed. All went well for awhile, but the Vice was not content this time with a corkscrew glance at the position, he actually boosted his goggles to the supreme eminence of his lofty brows and absorbed for all he was worth.

Just about this time O'Quibbler spied out a *point* in the negative, which pricked up his impatience to the snarling stage; he glowered over towards the Vice, but the Vice was hardly ready to demonstrate his analysis. 'Twas in vain he polished his chair seat with uneasiness; no kind

of use to rag and snag his hair. However the pent up *dam* must burst at last, and he did damn and was immediately fined with much suavity by the Chairman, at



the same time the Vice flooded him with a smile full of dreamy insolence. Then all the Quibbler in his nature arose; he arose also and jammed his fist down hard and fast upon his own particular Chess

board. Just here he found another point it was the sharp head of a Knight which cut his knuckles badly. To escape further fines, he now grabbed his hat and made for the door, apparently eating an apple, but it was his luckless knuckles he was munching. He disappeared from the club forever, with assassination in his scowl.

It is needless to follow further the fortunes or misfortunes of the disputants; they broke up the proceedings at daybreak with no decision arrived at; the agony lingered on for weeks. Two of the members were expelled for fighting a duel on the subject, poor Schwelterwelter's brain lapsed into a thermometer, running up and down his spinal column; he was ordered to Europe by his doctor just in time to save his reason. Five other club-men took to drink, some grew white headed with anxiety, the remainder were caught in a plot to lure Dr. Shornchops into a saw-mill for the purpose of furtively running him into a buzz saw; they were let out on heavy bail however. As for the President of the "Philidorians," the "bone" stuck in his throat with a vengeance, and the last seen of him, he was petrified over a board in the now deserted Club room, and trying to boil down "Dr. Shornchop's bone."

