

move is given back. Generally they will gain their point, and the game will proceed as if nothing had happened. In the fifth class we have the "sarcastic players," who will accompany every move of their opponent with side remarks: Fine move! After my little queeny! Yes, you will! Nothing else? What move? and so on, ad infinitum. The sixth class, "the nervous players," is numerically the strongest. What these fellows, in their anxiety and excitement don't do to themselves, to the board, to everyone near them, is not worth doing. They will smoke their cigars with the wrong end in the mouth, without noticing the difference. They will steep their knights in the coffee, instead of the spoon, and, finally upset it over themselves and the opponent. They will move around on their chairs with a velocity of nearly sixty miles an hour. They will cover themselves with ashes, fill their pockets with chessmen, and are generally in a high state of perspiration. The seventh class, the "loud thinkers," is also very strong. With the hands on the board, the fingers wide apart, ready to take hold of every piece, one of them will analyze every move and ten moves ahead aloud. "If I go here, he will go there; if I take the pawn, he will say check; I'll move the king, discovering check, he must protect with the bishop and I have a sure win." Generally the game proceeds quite differently from what he has so carefully figured out, the opponent does not say check, as he expected, but simply takes a rook or the queen which he had left en prise. To the eighth class belong the "patient players" or "sticking plasters." With the hands deep in their pockets so as not to touch a piece by chance, they will take their full time limit for each move, they will consider every position with the greatest care, and before they touch a piece they will shove the board in every direction, taking first a birdseye and then a sideway view of all the figures. By their slow play they will worry their opponent to distraction, finally wearing out the patience of a saint.

It is a beautiful sight to watch two of this class play together, but it should be for humanity's sake, strictly forbidden to have one belonging to the nervous set, "tackle" one of the last class.

Dr. M. SCHAPIRO.

The Havana Chess Club has been reorganized and a new era of chess is hoped for by the Cuban lovers of the game. Manuel Marquez Sterling, formerly of the Manhattan Chess Club is one of the active spirits in the new regime. The name of the organization has been changed to Seccion de Ajedrez del Anteneo. The officers are Senor Paredes, President, Jose A. Blanco, Manuel Marquez Sterling, Enrique Corzo, Frederico Baro and Pantaleon Venero, Vice-Presidents, Miguel Carreres, Secretary. The club has challenged the Manhattan Chess Club to a cable match.

The population of Vicksburg, Miss., is not two thousand as our printer insisted, but twenty-two thousand. Our apologies to the patriots of Vicksburg!

### A STREAK OF LUCK.

The most prevalent of all human infirmities is that of attempting to account for things. We perceive the event, or rather we see that side of it which is presented to our vision, and forthwith proceed to explain it, classify it, label it and file it away among our mental experiences. But things are continually happening which can in no wise be accounted for; then we attribute them to luck.

There are old moss-backs who will try to tell you there is no such thing as luck about chess—as if the Almighty ever exempted anything from its influence—but they are clearly off their bases. For a mathematical instance take this, which you can verify in any club: A wins two out of three games from B; B wins two out of three from C; and yet C, who should be a mere two-spot to A, will turn around and beat him two out of three. Funny, isn't it?

Mind I don't say it is all luck, but the element of chance certainly does

crop out with amazing frequency and hangs on sometimes with the tenacity of a bull-terrier. A beautiful continuous performance in that line was started by our Spring Handicap of four years ago; the culmination of which still belongs to the future.

If there is any earthly reason for holding a chess handicap, aside from the innings it affords to pig-headed luck, I should like to know it; but with the piping of the first bluebird some duffer always projects the Spring Handicap bomb into our peaceful sessions. The idea is no sooner suggested than the younger fry regularly clamor for it, while the veterans look bored, like victims chosen for jury service, and try desperately to wriggle out.

That was the tourney which brought Fimright to the front—thanks to young Edwards and the handicapping committee—though I admitt we were all a little to blame for keeping the ball rolling, after they had once fairly started it.

You see Edwards either got Fim right from Castle Garden direct or else first collided with him at his boarding house; at any rate, he found out that Fim played chess and then nothing would do but he must run him into the club, a raw foreigner; so he ought to be held responsible. Fim was a big, well-built, round-faced and rosy-cheeked son of Norway, with a smile that was actually contagious; you could no more help returning it than you can that of a six-months-old baby. And so abominably healthy—and handsome—he could wear a red tie with a spotted waistcoat and not appear over-dressed; which calls for a Complention, let me tell you.

But he was right enough for all that and more fun than a goat. At first he used to study our language in a little Conversations—Lexicon, the sort immigrants buy for a quarter; if any of them ever learned useful English from such a source, it is not on record. When asked his full name, for entry on the club roll, he said,

“Sometime I go by Hans Fimright and sometime by Chris Petersen, but

my right and true name is Hans Christian Petersen Fimright.”

The Major could hardly hold in and wanted right off to christen him Alphabetical Fimright, but Edwards said Mike was a nice euphonious name, so it stuck, and he was Mike Fimright in the club forever after.

As he came in just on the eve of the Handicap no one but Edwards, who was a knight player, knew anything about his game. I firmly believe Edwards lied in claiming to break even with the Norwegian, but the handicappers had nothing else to go on, so they promptly dealt him into class three, with the knight odds' fellows.

Mike was the most enthusiastic player in the bunch and right on hand for all his scheduled games. When not playing he was looking on and studying the styles of the older players. You ought to have been there! It would have done your heart good to see the way the luck hung about and clung to that Norwegian and to hear his innocent remarks when the members were talking about the games afterwards.

He was so jolly over it, too, like a boy at a circus, and not a bit swelled, so we were all glad to see him win; though the flukes of his opponents at critical junctures were pitiful.

Edwards, as bear-leader, did a good deal of chuckling in those days, over the winning streak of his protege. As I have intimated before, Mike was probably under-handicapped, for in his even games—with the crowd in his own class—the others were never in it; he had a straight walk-over.

But it was when he went against the full strength of the club, receiving the usual odds, that his luck was simply scandalous. Whenever Fim got in a tight place it seemed the other fellow always blind-staggered in the most accommodating way, allowing the Viking to score. By actual count we reckoned six or seven dead lost games that he managed to pull off by aid from the enemy. When asked how one of his adjourned games stood, Mike would smile in his captivating way and invariably say, “O, ay tank ay win him.”

It came to be a saying at the club, as did several other of his common-places. But win'em he surely did; the long and short of it was, he came under the wire with two and a half games to spare and went romping to the top of the second class.

But no one begrudged Mike his success; he took it all so naturally and innocently that any jealousy would have been ridiculous. Of course the papers had it all in, with a picture of "H. C. P. Firright, the rising young chess expert," and predicted all sorts of a great future for him. That was the beginning of the streak.

A few days afterward the business manager or chief push of The Scandinavian came over to the club and inquired all about Mike and the Handicap, saying he thought some of running a chess column in the weekly edition. That was a sufficient pointer for us that he was pumping to find out if Fim was the man he needed to take charge of it.

Of course we could not tell him the win was a rank scratch, due to a confounded run of luck, so we gave the Norwegian a good send-off. The next week Mike was interviewed by the chief push and put on to furnish a column a week, at seven or eight dollars per. This was quite a lift, for it did not interfere in the least with his regular "job;" which happened to be freight-handling or something of that sort, out at the railway yards. It seemed he was no slouch at his own language and getting up a column a week—with the help of the scissors and our tips—was little short of an up-and-down cinch.

Mike's English improved with surprising rapidity—more thanks to the coaching of Edwards and the rest than to the Conversations—Lexicon—and his popularity at the club was not diminished by his added victories. In the meantime contact with The Scandinavian's managing force had given Fim's alluring smile a chance to get in its pretty work. The chief saw money in that child-like smile, if judiciously displayed before prospective advertisers, so he put Mike

on regular salary as solicitor; and the freight yards knew him no more forever.

The next year he was the acknowledged first choice for the junior championship and that, as you know, rubs close enough to the professional class to scrape the paint. Now notice the luck again; closer than a brother wasn't a circumstance.

The American Citizen, a paper we always hoped would take up the royal game, at last concluded to do so; and offered to let Mike fill a half column weekly with chess "stuff," at five hundred a year. He was still a bit shy on Eng'ish as she is printed and was actually going to turn it down on that account, but we told him to go ahead, the club would not see him stick. And old Burchfield, who was a veteran chess-editor himself and had a mild admiration for Fim, offered to help out with his copy and generally insure him against weird literary breaks.

That gave him the entree to Burchfield's, where they used to work over the copy of evenings, and where Mike naturally met Burchfield's only daughter.

Amy Burchfield was undoubtedly a great beauty, but on the strictly classical order, which is seldom popular. She came out so very young and remained unmarried through so many seasons that other girls referred to events before her time as ancient history. Girls are so kind that way, when another holds the platform a little too long. She was of the pale statuesque type, with a magnificent figure which she carried grandly.

And she was clever enough, too; danced, sang, played and rode, but all in the manner of a statue; and no man likes a statue for a steady companion. I think we all mentally compared her to Galatea and thought she would ultimately become less frigid; at least several of us in turn attempted the role of Pygmalion, for brief intervals, but without the least show of success; the marble utterly refused to assume life under our spells.

Edwards was among those who had worshipped at her shrine and been

scorched—I mean frost-bitten—so he had another chuckle when she and Mike came together; but he chuckled too soon. In fact we all considered and some of us made bets—that it would be another case of chills and fever.

But this time it was different. Either his luck had become chronic, or the rosy cheeks and bewitching smile of Hans etcetera Fimright were irresistible, or Amy began to realize that she was a bit shelf-worn, or was unadulterated love, or damnable propinquity—take your choice and account for it as you like, but the ice began to melt—to shift the metaphor—followed, as the weather report has it, by rising temperature and a complete thaw.

Under the continued influence of the smile aforesaid, with other attributes hereinbefore mentioned, or intended so to be, the progress of the affair has reached the engagement stage—announced mate, as you might say. They are to be married next month and Edwards will act as best man.

All of which goes to show that a good-natured grin is better than money in bank, and a well-developed streak of luck than much fine gold. If a man is able to play them in combination, he may do what he likes and be anything he chooses, in the present state of this crazy old vale of tears.

J. W. DeA.

Probably the oldest chessmen known to exist are an almost complete set which is preserved in the East Indian Museum, London. They were excavated about thirty years ago on the site of the city of Brahmunabad in Sind, which was destroyed by an earthquake in the eighth century. They are black and white, made of ivory and ebony, turned and plain in character, without ornament. The kings and queens are about three inches high, the pawns one inch and other pieces of intermediate heights. —Pittsburg Dispatch.

## THE ORIGIN OF CHESS AND ITS INVENTOR.

Translated from Moallam ul-Shatranj by Lala Raja Bebn A. D. C. to H. H. the Maharaja of Patiala, the Author and Inventor of the Automatic Chess Recorder.

It is an admitted fact that Chess originated long before the historical era and that is the reason why there are numerous traditions regarding its invention. Some of the historians attribute this game to China, others to Persia and Egypt. Sir. William Jones however, in his work on Chess says: "It is proved on the authority of the Persians themselves that the Indians were the originators of the game of chess and that they acknowledge the fact that chess was introduced into their own country from India. Firdausi the Persian writer, in his famous book "Thalinama" says:—"Chess was one of the many valuable articles of Indian birth that the Raja of Qannanj, India, had sent to Nausherwan, the king of the Persians to try their wit. It was Buzoor-Cham-ehr, his minister, who distinguished himself in finding out its secret, for which he was amply rewarded by the king. He also, in return, composed and sent to India, Tahlitai-Nard, a game played nearly on the same principles as chess.

### TRADITION REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF CHESS.

The author Shahwi writes—In India there lived a Raja named Jamhoor who was famous for his justice and prudence. His capital was at Sandall. He had, by his bravery and magnanimity, conquered a great part of the country and his subjects were quite happy and contented under his benign and just rule. He had married a very handsome and accomplished lady, famous for her womanly virtues, and got a son from her, whom he gave the name of Kaw. He was only a child when his father, the king, died, which plunged his survivors in deep sorrow. Shortly after his death the ministers of the state and chief citizens held a large meeting and it was unan-