

From *The Laws and Principles of Whist* by “Cavendish”, John Wurtle Lovell; New York; 1880; pp. 43-64.

WHIST.

HISTORICAL.

The early history of whist is involved in obscurity. All games of high character become perfected by degrees; and Whist, following this rule, has been formed by gradual development. As early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, a card game called *triumph*, or *trump* was commonly played both in England and on the continent. This game in its chief features, viz., the predominance of one particular suit, and in its general construction, was so similar to Whist, that it may be assumed to have been the game from which Whist afterwards developed.

Trump was played in more than one way; or, rather, there were two distinct games called trump. *Triumphe* or *French ruff* was a game very like *écarté*, only there was no score for the king; Trump or *English ruff-and-honors* was a game closely resembling Whist.

The earliest mention of trump the author has been able to discover is in Berni's "*Capitolo del Gioco della Primera*" (chapter on the game of primero) published at Rome in 1526. In this book several card games are enumerated, and among them "*trionfi*" a game played by the peasants. It seems probable that *trionfi* is the same game as trump.

Under the name of *la triomphe* trump is included by Rabelais in the long list of some two hundred and thirty games that Gargantua played. The famous history was finished about 1545; a portion of it was published before this date.

Douce, in his "Illustrations of Shakespeare," concludes from finding trump in this list that we derived the game from a French source. But it is more probably that the game referred to by Berni and Rabelais was French ruff, and that trump as played in this country was purely of English origin.

How and when trump or English ruff-and-honors originated cannot now be ascertained. It was played by Latimer to illustrate his text in a sermon "On the Card," preached by him at St. Edmund's Church, Cambridge, the Sunday before Christmas, 1529. He mentions the game under its original and corrupted appellations, and clearly alludes to its characteristic feature, as the following extracts will show.

"And where you are wont to celebrate Christmass in playing at Cards, I intend, by God's Grace, to deal unto you Christ's Cards, wherein you shall perceive Christ's Rule. The game that we play at shall be called the Triumph, which, if it be well played at, he that dealeth shall win; the Players shall likewise win; and the standers and lookers upon shall do the same. * * * You must mark also, that the Triumph must apply to fetch home unto him all the other Cards, whatever suit they be of. * * * Then further we must say to ourselves, What requireth Christ of a Christian man? Now turn up your Trump, your Heart (Hearts is Trump, as I said before), and cast your Trump, your Heart, on this card."

Late on in the sixteenth century the game of trump is not unfrequently referred to, especially in old plays. In “Gammer Gurton’s Needle” (1551), written by Bishop Still, and said to be the first piece performed in England under the name of a Comedy, Old Dame Chat thus invites some friends to a game of trump:

“CHAT. What Diccon? Come here, ye be no stranger;
We be set fast at trump, man, hard by the fyre.
Thou shalt set on the king, if thou come a little nyer.

* * * * *

Come hither, Dol; Dol, sit downe and play this game,
And as thou sawest me do, see thou do even the same;
There is five trumps besides the queene, the hindmost
thou shalt find her;
Take hede of Sim Glover’s wife, she hath an eie behind
her.”

In Decker’s or Dekkar’s “Belman of London” (*circa* 1550) it is stated that “Deceipts [are] practised even in the fayrest and most civill companies, at primero, sant [pique], maw [spoil-five], trump, and such like games.”

In Eliot’s “Fruits for the French” (1593), trump is called “a verie common alehouse game,” and Rice, in his “Invective against Vices” (printed before 1600), observes that “renouncing the trompe and coming in againe” (*i.e.* revoking intentionally), is a common sharper’s trick.

The game of trump is also mentioned by Shakespeare in “Antony and Cleopatra,” Act iv., scene 12 (first published 1623).

“ANT. My good *knave*, Eros, now thy Captain is
Even such a body; here am I Antony;
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my *knave*,
I made these Wars for Egypt; and the *Queen*,
Whose *heart* I thought I had, for she had mine;
Which, whilst it as mine, had annex’d unto ’t
A million more, now lost, — she, Eros, has
Packed cards with Cæsar, and *false-played* my glory
Unto an enemy’s *triumph*.”

The repeated punning allusions to card-playing in this passage leave no doubt as to the reference in the last word. Douce (“Illustrations”) pointed out its real meaning, and also ridiculed Ben Jonson’s derivation of the word trump from *tromper*.

There is abundant evidence to show that trump is a corruption of the word triumph. In addition to the instances already given, the following may be quoted: In Cotgrave’s “French and English Dictionary” (1611), *Triomphe* is explained as “the Card-game called ruffe or trump.” Seymour, in his “Court-Gamester:” (*circa* 1720), says — “The term trump comes from a corruption of a word triumph; for wherever they are they are attended with conquest.”

The derivation of the word *ruff* or *ruffe* has caused much speculation, and has never been satisfactorily settled. *Ruffe* seems to have been used as a synonym for trump early in the seventeenth century, as appears from the extract from Cotgrave's "Dictionary." Nares, in his "Glossary," says — "Ruff meant a trump card, *charta dominatrix*;" even at the present day, many Whist players speak of ruffing, *i.e.* trumping; and, in the expression a cross-ruff, the word *ruff* is preserved to the exclusion of the word trump.

The game of *ruff-and-honors*, if not the same as trump or ruff, was probably the same game, with the addition of certain advantages to the four highest cards of the trump suit. Rabelais includes in his list a game called "*les Honeurs*," but whether it has any affinity to ruff-and-honors is doubtful. In "Shuffling, cutting and dealing in a game at Pickquet being acted from the year 1653 to 1658 by O. P. and others" (1659), the "Old Foolish Christmas Game with Honors" is mentioned. Some writers are of the opinion that trump was originally played without honors; but as no description of trump without honors is known to exist, their view must be taken as conjectural. In 1674, Charles Cotton, the poet, published a description of ruff-and-honors in "The Compleat Gamester: or Instructions how to play at Billiards, Trucks, Bowls, and Chess. Together with all manner of usual and most Gentile GAMES, either on Cards or Dice." Cotton gives a drawing of the game of "English Ruff and Honors," (see frontispiece) and thus describes it: —

"At Ruff and Honors, by some called Slamm, you have in the Pack all the Deuces, and the reason is, because four playing having dealt twelve a-piece, there are four left for the stock, the uppermost whereof is turn'd up, and that is Trumps, he that hath the Ace of that Ruffs: that is, he takes in those four Cards, and lays out four others in their lieu; the four Honors are the Ace, King, Queen, and knave; he that hath three Honors in his own hand, his partner not having the fourth, sets up Eight by Cards, that is two tricks; if he hath all four, then Sixteen, that is four tricks; it is all one if two Partners make them three or four between them, as if one had them. If the Honors are equally divided among the Gamesters of each side, then they say Honors are split. If either side are at Eight Groats he hath the benefit of calling Can-ye, if he hath two Honors in his hand, and if the other answers one, the game is up, which is nine in all, but if he hath more than two he shows them, and then it is all one and the same thing; but if he forgets to call after playing a trick, he loseth the advantage of Can-ye for that deal.

"All cards are of value as they are superior one to another, as a Ten wins a nine if not Trumps, so a Queen a Knave, in like manner; but the least Trump will win the highest Card of every other Card [suit]; where note the Ace is the highest."

Tis game was clearly Whist in an imperfect form. Whist is not mentioned by Shakespeare, nor by any writer (it is believed) of the Elizabethan era. The introduction of the name *whist* *whisk* would appear to have taken place early in the seventeenth century.

The meaning of the word is unknown. It has been suggested, and the suggestion is worthy of consideration, that whisk is derived by substitution from ruff, for both of them signify a piece of lawn used as an ornament to the dress. The commonly received opinion is that whisk means *silence*. But this loses sight of the fact that the original appellation was whisk. The first known appearance of the word in print is in the "Motto" of Taylor, the Water Poet (1621). Taylor spells the work whisk. Speaking of the prodigal, he says: —

"The prodigall's sister, like to a flux,
The mercer, draper, and the silkman suckes;

* * * * *

**He flings his money free with carelessness.
At novum, mumchance, mischance (chuse ye which),
At one-and-thirty, or at poore-and-rich,
Ruffe, slam, trump, nody, whisk, hole, sant, new cut.**

The word continued to be spelt whisk for about forty years, when the earliest known use of the present spelling obtained, in a passage quoted by Johnson, from the second part of *Hudibras* (spurious) published in 1663:

**“But what was this? A game at Whist
Unto our Plowden-Canonist.”**

After this, the word is spelt indifferently, whisk or whist. Barrington says that Whist is not named in the first edition of “*The Compleat Gamester*,” but this is an error. In the edition of 1674 (which appears to be the first), Cotton, who never uses or alludes to the earlier name whisk, says, “Ruff and Honors (*alias* Slamm) and Whist, are Games so commonly known in *England*, in all parts thereof, that every Child of Eight Years old, hath a competent knowledge in that recreation.”

After describing ruff-and-honors (see the passage quoted, pp. 47, 48), Cotton adds, “Whist is a Game not much differing from this, only they put out the Deuces and take in no stock; and is called “Whist from the silence that is to be observed in the play: they deal as before, playing four, two of a side * * * to each Twelve a-piece, and the Trump is the bottom Card. The manner of crafty playing, the number of the Game Nine, Honors, and dignity of other Cards, are all alike, and he that wins most tricks is most forward to win the set.”

Cotton’s work was afterwards incorporated with Seymour’s *Court Gamester* (first published 1719). The earliest editions contain no Whist, but after the two books were united (about 1734), Seymour says, “Whist, vulgarly called whisk. The original denomination of this game is Whist [here Seymour is mistaken], or the silent game at cards.” And again, “Talking is not allowed at Whist; the very word implies ‘Hold your Tongue.’ ”

Dr. Johnson does not positively derive Whist from the *interjectio silentium imperans*; he cautiously explains Whist to be “a game at cards, requiring close attention and silence.” Nares, in his Glossary, has “Whist, an interjection commanding silence;” and he adds, “That the name of the game of Whist is derived from this, is known, I presume, to all who play or do not play.” He, however, in his preface, well remarks that he knows “the extreme fallaciousness of the science of etymology when based on mere similarity of sound;” but in the case of Whist, he has allowed similarity of sound to master his judgment. Looking to the early spelling, whisk, it appears to the author that the whist-silence theory has been taken for granted too hastily.

While Whist was undergoing these changes of name and of character, there was for a time associated with it another title, viz., swabbers or swobbers. Fielding, in his “History of the life of the late Mr. Jonathan Wild, the Great,” records that when the ingenious Count La Ruse was domiciled with Mr. Geoffrey Snap, in 1682, or, in other words, was in a spunging-house, the Count beguiled the tedium of his in-door existence by playing at Whisk-and-Swabbers, “the game then in chief vogue.” Swift also, in his “Essay on the Fates of

Clergymen” (1728), ridicules Archbishop Tenison for not understanding the meaning of swabbers. It appears that a clergyman was recommended to the Archbishop for preferment, when His Grace said, “he had heard that the clergyman used to play at Whist and swobbers; that as to playing now and then a sober game at Whist, it might be pardoned; but he could not digest those wicked swobbers.” Johnson defines swobbers as ‘four privileged cards used incidentally in betting at Whist.’ It has been conjectured by later writers that swabbers were identical with the honors; but this is an error. In Captain Francis Grose’s “Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue” (1785), swabbers are said to be “The ace of hearts, knave of clubs, ace and deuce of trumps at Whist.” The Hon. Daines Barrington (writing in 1787), says, that at the beginning of the century, whisk was “played with what were called swabbers, which were possibly so termed, because they who had certain cards in their hand were entitled to take up a share of the stake, independent of the general event of the game.” This was probably the true office of the swabbers. They, however, soon went out of general use, but the author has heard that they still linger in some local coteries. Mr. R. B. Wormald writes thus respecting them in 1873: — Being driven by stress of weather to take shelter in a sequestered hostelry on the Berkshire bank of the Thames, he found four persons immersed in the fame of Whist: “In the middle of the hand, one of the players with a grin that almost amounted to a chuckle, and a vast display of moistened thumb, spread out upon the table the ace of trumps; whereupon the other three deliberately laid down their hands, and forthwith severally handed over the sum of one penny to the fortunate holder of the card in question. On inquiry, we were informed that the process was technically known as a ‘swap’ (qy. swab or swabber), and was *de rigueur* in all properly constituted whist circles.”

After the swabbers were dropped (and it is probable that they were not in general use in the eighteenth century), our national card game became known simply as Whist, though still occasionally spelt whisk. The lion, Daines Barrington (*Archæologia*, Vol. viii.) says, that Whist in its infancy was chiefly confined to the servant’s hall. That the game had not yet become fashionable is evident from the disparaging way in which it is referred to by writers of the period. In Farquhar’s comedy of the “Beaux’s Stratagem” (1707), Mrs. Sullen a fine lady from London, speaks in a contemptuous vein of the “rural accomplishments of fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoaking tobacco.” Pope also classes Whist as a country squire’s game, in his “Epistle to Mrs. Teresa Blount” (1715) —

“Some Squire, perhaps, you take delight to rack
Whose game is Whisk, whose treat a toast in sack.”

Thomson, in his “Autumn” (1730), describes how after a heavy hunt dinner —

“Whist awhile,
Walks his dull round beneath a cloud of smoke,
Wreath’d fragrant from the pipe.”

Early in the century the points of the game rose from nine to ten (“nine in all,” Cotton, 1709; “ten in all,” Cotton, 1721; “nine in all,” Cotton, 1725; “ten in all,” Seymour, 1734, “rectified according to the present standard of play”). Every subsequent edition of Seymour (with which Cotton was incorporated) makes the game ten up. It seems likely that, simultaneously with this change, or closely following it, the practice of playing with the entire pack instead of with but forty-eight cards obtained. This improvement introduced the *odd trick*, an element of the greatest interest in modern Whist.

At this period (early part of the eighteenth century) there was a mania for card playing in all parts of Europe, and in all classes of society, but Whist had not as yet found favor in the highest circles. Piquet, and Ombre, and Quadrille, were the principal games of the fashionable world. But about 1728, this game rose out of its comparative obscurity.

A party of gentlemen (according to Daines Barrington), of whom the first Lord Folkestone was one, used at this date to frequent the Crown Coffeehouse, in Bedford Row, where they studied Whist scientifically. They must have made considerable progress in the game, to judge by the following rules which they laid down: — “Lead from the strong suit; study your partner’s hand; and attend to the score.”

Shortly after this, the celebrated EDMOND HOYLE, the father of the game, published his “Short Treatise: (1742-3). About Hoyle’s antecedents, but little is known. He was born in 1672; it is said he was educated for the bar. It has been stated that he was born in Yorkshire, but this is doubtful. At all events, the author, by personal inquiry, has positively ascertained that he did not belong to the family of Yorkshire Hoyles, who acquired estates near Halifax *temp* Edward III. It has also been stated that Hoyle was appointed registrar of the prerogative court at Dublin, in 1742. This, however, is unlikely. At that time, Hoyle was probably living at Bath, at least his treatise was published there, and he afterwards resided in Queen Square, London. Hoyle was engaged in writing on games, and in giving lessons playing now and then a sober game at Whist. It might be pardoned; but he could not digest those on Whist, at the time he is supposed to have had the appointment in question. The fact is, the name Edmund or Edmond is common in both the Yorkshire and Irish families of Hoyle; and probably one Hoyle has been mistaken for another.

Hoyle became famous as soon as he avowed the authorship of the “Short Treatise.” It was originally published anonymously. It seems probable that Hoyle originally drew up some notes for the use of the pupils to whom he gave lessons in Whist, as his original edition speaks of “purchasers of the *Treatise* in Manuscript disposed of the last winter,” and also that there was “a *Treatise on the Game at Whist* lately dispersed among a few Hands at a *Guinea Price*,” and further, that the author of it “has fram’d an *Artificial Memory* which takes not off your Attention from your Game; and, if required, he is ready to communicate it upon Payment of one Guinea. And also, He will explain any *Cases* in the Book, upon Payment of one Guinea more.”

The value of the “Short Treatise,” and its rapid success, caused surreptitious copies to be circulated. To secure his property, Hoyle printed the manuscript, and registered it at Stationer’s Hall in November, 1742. It is said that the treatise ran through five editions in one year, and that Hoyle received a large sum for the copyright. This last statement, however, requires verification; at all events, Hoyle continued for years to sign every copy personally, as the proprietor of the copyright. This was done in order to protect the property from further piracy, as the address to the reader shows.

In the fifteenth edition the signature is impressed from a wood block, and in the seventeenth it was announced that Mr. Hoyle was dead. He died in Welbank (qy. Welbeck) Street, Cavendish Square, on August 27th, 1769, aged 97.

One effect of Hoyle’s publication was to draw forth a witty skit, entitled “The Humors of Whist. A Dramatic Satire, as acted every day at White’s and other Coffee-Houses and Assemblies” (1743). The pamphlet commences with an advertisement mimicking Hoyle’s address to the reader. The prologue to the play is supposed to be spoken by a waiter at

White's.

“Who will believe that Man could e'er exist.
Who spent near half an Age in studying *Whist*?
Grew gray with Calculation — Labor hard
As if Life's Business centred in a Card?
That such there is, let me to those appeal,
Who with such liberal Hands reward his Zeal.
Lo! *Whist* he makes a science, and our Peers
Deign to turn *School Boys* in their Riper Years.”

The principal characters are Professor Whiston (Hoyle) who gives lessons in the game of Whist; Sir Calculation Puzzle, a passionate admirer of Whist, who imagines himself a good player, yet always loses; Sharpers, Pupils of the Professor, and Cocoa, Master of the Chocolate-house. The sharpers are disgusted at the appearance of the book.

“LURCHUM. Thou knowest we have the Honor to be admitted into the best Company, which neither our Birth nor Fortunes entitle us to, merely for our Reputation as good *Whist-Players*.

SHUFFLE. Very well!

LURCH. But if this damn'd Book of the Professor's answers, as he pretends, to put Players more upon a Par, what will avail our superior Skill in the Game? We are undone to all Intents and Purposes. * * * We must bid adieu to White's, George's, Brown's, an all the polite Assemblies about Town, and that's enough to make a Man mad instead of thoughtful.

SHUF. Damn him, I say, — Could he find no other Employment for forty Years together, than to study how to circumvent younger Brothers, and such as us, who live by our Wits? A Man that discovers the Secrets of any Profession deserves to be sacrificed, and I would be the first, LURCHUM, to cut the Professor's Throat for what he has done, but that I think I have pretty well defeated the malevolent Effect of his fine spun Calculations.

LURCH. As how, dear SHUFFLE? Thou revivest me.

SHUF. I must confess the Publication of the Treatise game me at first some slight Alarm; but I did not, like thee, LURCHUM, indulge in melancholy desponding Thoughts: On the contrary, I called up my Indignation to my Assistance, and have ever since been working on a private Treatise on *Signs at Whist*, by way of counter Treatise to his, and which, if I mistake not, totally overthrows his System.”

On the other hand, the gentlemen are in raptures.

“SIR CALCULATION PUZZLE. The Progress your Lordship has made for the time you have study'd under the Professor is wonderful. — Pray, has your Lordship seen the dear Man to-day?

LORD SLIM. O yes. — His Grace sate him down at my House, and I have just lent him my Chariot into the City. — How do you like the last edition of his Treatise with the Appendix.* SIR CUALCULATION? I mean that signed with his Name.†

SIR CAL. O Gad, my Lord, there never was so excellent a Book printed. — I'm quite in Raptures with it — I will eat with it — sleep with it — got to Court with it — I go to Parliament with it — go to Church with it. I pronounce it the Gospel of Whist-Players; and the Laws of the Game ought to be wrote in golden Letters, and hung up in Coffee-houses, as much as the Ten Commandments in Parish Churches.

SIR JOHN MEDIUM. Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! you speak of the Book with the Zeal of a primitive Father.

SIR CAL. Not half enough, **SIR JOHN** — the Calculations‡ are so exact ! * * * his Observations§ are quite masterly ! his Rules¶ so comprehensive ! his Cautions¥ so judicious ! There are such Variety of Cases** in his Treatise, and the Principles are so new, I want Words to express the Author, and can look on him in no other Light than as a second *Newton*.“

The way in which Sir Calculation introduces Hoyle’s Calculations of Chances is very amusing.

“**SIR JOHN.** ’Twas by some such laudable Practices, I suppose, that you suffered in your last Affair with **LURCHUM**.

SIR CAL. O Gad, No, **SIR JOHN** — Never any thing was fairer, nor was ever any thing so critical. — We were nine all. The adverse Party had 3, and we 4 Tricks. All the trumps were out. I had Queen and two small Clubs, with the Lead. Let me see — it was about 222 and 3 Halves to — ’gad, I forgot how many — that my Partner had the Ace and King — let me recollect — ay — that he had one only was about 31 to 26. That he had not both of these 17 to 2, — and that he had not one, or both, or neither, some 25 to 32. So I, according to the Judgment of the Game, led a Club, my Partner takes it with the King. Then it was exactly 481 for *us* to 222 against *them*. He returns the same Suit; I win it with my Queen, and return it again; but the Devil take that **LURCHUM**, by passing his Ace twice, he took the Trick, and having 2 more Clubs and a 13th Card, I gad, all was over. — But they both allow’d I play’d admirably well for all that.”

The following passage from the same pamphlet mentions the Crown — probably the Crown Coffee-house — and it has been inferred from this that Hoyle himself might have been one of Lord Folkestone’s party.

YOUNG JOBBER [A pupil of the Professor’s]. Dear Mr. **PROFESSOR**, I can never repay you. You have given me such an insight by this Visit, I am quite another Thing. — I find I knew nothing of the Game before; tho’ I can assure you, I have been reckoned a First-rate Player in the City a good while — nay, for that Matter, I make no Bad Figure at the *Crown* — and don’t despair, by your Assistance, but to make one at *White’s* soon.

Hoyle is also spoken of in his professional capacity in the “Rambler” of May 8, 1750. A lady writes, “As for play, I do think I may indulge in that, now I am my own mistress. Papa made me drudge at Whist till I was tired of it; and far from wanting a head, Mr. Hoyle, when he had not give me above forty lessons, said I was one of his best scholars.”

Again, in “The Gentleman’s Magazine” for February 1755, a writer, professing to give the autobiography of a fashionable physician, says, “Hoyle tutored me in several games at cards, and under the name of guarding me from being cheated, insensibly gave me a taste for sharpening.”

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Whist was regularly played in fashionable society. In “Tom Jones,” Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellamar, and others, are represented as indulging in a rubber. Hoyle also comes in for notice in the following passage in the same work: ‘I happened to come home several hours before my usual time, when I found four gentlemen of the cloth at Whist by my fire; — and my Hoyle, sir, — my best Hoyle, which cost me a guinea, lying open on the table, with a quantity of porter spilled on one of the most material

leaves of the whole book. This, you will allow, was provoking; but I said nothing till the rest of the honest company were gone, and then gave the fellow a gentle rebuke; who, instead of expressing any concern, made me a pert answer, ‘That servants must have their diversions as well as other people; that he was sorry for the accident, which had happened to the book, but that several of his acquaintances had bought the same for a shilling; and that I might stop as much in his wages, if I pleased.’ ”

In an epic poem on “Whist,” by Alexander Thomson, which appeared in 1791, Hoyle was thus invoked —

“WHIST, then, delightful WHIST, my theme shall be,
And first I’ll try to trace its pedigree,
And shew what sage and comprehensive mind
Gave to the world a pleasure so refin’d:
Then shall the verse its various charms display,
Which bear from ev’ry game the palm away;
And, last of all, those rules and maxims tell,
Which give the envied pow’r to play it well.

But first (for such the mode) some tuneful shade
Must be invok’d, the vent’rous Muse to aid.
Cremona’s poet shall I first address,
Who paints with skill the mimic war of chess,
And India’s art in Roman accents sings;
Or him who soars on far sublimer wings.
Belinda’s bard, who taught his liquid lay
At Ombre’s studious game so well to play?

But why thus vainly hesitates the Muse,
In little doubt, what guardian pow’r to chuse?
What pow’r so well can aid her daring toil,
As the bright spirit of immortal Hoyle?
By whose enlightn’d efforts Whist became
A sober, serious, scientific game;
To whose unwearied pains, while here below,
The great, th’ important privilege we owe,
That random strokes disgrace our play no more
But skill presides, where all was chance before.

Come then, my friend, my teacher, and my guide,
Where’er thy shadowy ghost may now reside;
Perhaps (for Nature ev’ry change defies,
Nor ev’n death our ruling passion dies)
With fond regret it hovers still, unseen,
Around the tempting boards array’d in green;
Still with delight its fav’rite game regards,
And tho’ it plays no more o’erlooks the cards.

Come then, thou glory of Britannia’s isle,
On this attempt propitious deign to smile;
Let all thy skill th’ unerring page inspire,
And all thy zeal my raptur’d bosom fire.

Hoyle's name also finds a place in Don Juan. Byron, in saying that Troy owes to Homer what Whist owes to Hoyle, scarcely does justice to Hoyle, who was rather the founder than the historian of Whist.

The "Short Treatise" appeared just in the nick of time when Whist was rising in repute, and when card playing was the rage. The work became the authority almost from the date of its appearance.

In 1760, the laws of the game were revised by the members of White's and Saunders's Chocolate-houses, then the headquarters of fashionable play. These make the game five points instead of ten, in order to revised laws (nearly all Hoyle) are given in every edition of Hoyle from this date. Hoyle's laws, as they were called, guided all Whist coteries for a hundred and four years; when the Arlington (now Turf) and Portland Clubs, re-revised the code of the Chocolate-houses. The laws adopted by these Clubs in 1864, which have by this time (1874) found their way into all Whist circles, deposed Hoyle, and are now the standard by which disputed points are determined.

One of the chief seats of card playing, and consequently of Whist playing, during the eighteenth century, was Bath. Even Mr. Pickwick is depicted playing Whist there with Miss Bolo, Mr. Bantam, M. C., and the Dowager Lady Snuffanuff, in a passage too well known to require quotation, though Mr. Pickwick's visit was at a date when the chief glories of Bath had departed. Hoyle's first edition, it will be remembered, was published at Bath, as also was Thomas Mat[t]hews' "Advice to the Young Whist Player" (about 1805) — a sound and useful contribution to Whist literature.

Early in this century, the points of the game were altered from ten to five, and calling honor was abolished. It is doubtful whether this change was for the better. In the author's opinion Long Whist (ten up) is a far finer game than Short Whist (five up); Short Whist, however, has taken such a hold, that there is no chance of our reverting to the former game. According to Mr. Clay, the alteration took place under the following circumstances: "Some sixty or seventy years back (1804-1814), Lord Peterborough having one night lost a large sum of money, the friends with whom he was playing proposed to give the loser a chance, at a quicker game, of recovering his loss. The late Mr. Hoare, of Bath, a very good Whist player, and without a superior at Piquet, was one of the party, and has more than once told me the story. The new game was found to be so lively, and money changed hands with such increased rapidity, that these gentlemen and their friends, all of them members of the leading Clubs of the day, continued to play it. It became general in the Clubs, — thence was introduced to private houses, — travelled into the country, — went to Paris, — and has long since entirely superseded the Whist of Hoyle's day."

Long Whist had long been known in France, but it was not a popular game in that country. Hoyle had been several times translated into French. Whist was played by Louis XV., and under the first Empire was a favorite game with Josephine and Marie Louise. It is on record ("Diaries of a Lady of Quality," 2d Ed. p. 128), that Napoleon used to play Whist at Würtemberg, but not for money, and that he played ill and inattentively. One evening, when the Queen Dowager was playing against him with her husband and his daughter (the Queen of Westphalia, the wife of Jerome), the King stopped Napoleon, who was taking up a trick that did not belong to him, saying, "Sire, on ne joue pas ici en conquérnat." After the restoration, Whist was taken up in France more enthusiastically. "The Nobles," says a French writer, 'had gone to England to learn to Think, and they brought back the thinking

game with them.” Talleyrand was a Whist player, and his *mot* to the youngster who boasted his ignorance of the game is well known, “Vous ne savez pas done le Whiste, jeune homme? Quell triste vieillesse vous vous pré-parez!” Charles X. is reported to have been playing Whist at St. Cloud, on July 29, 1830, when the tricolor was waving on the Tuileries, and he had lost his throne.

It is remarkable that the “finest Whist player” who ever lived should have been, according to Mr. Clay, a Frenchman, M. Deschappelles (born 1780, died 1847). He published in 1839 a fragment of a “Traité du Whiste,” which treats mainly of the laws, and is of but little value to the Whist player.

Before leaving this historical sketch, a few words may be added respecting the modern literature of the game. So far as the present work is concerned, its *raison d’etre* is explained in the preface to the first edition. How far it has fulfilled the conditions of its being, it is not for the author to say. It was followed, however, by two remarkable books, which call for a short notice.

In 1864, appeared “Short Whist,” by James Clay. Mr. Clay’s work is an able dissertation on the game, by the most brilliant player of his day. He was Chairman of the Committee appointed to revise the Laws of Whist in 1863. He sat in Parliament for many years, being M. P. for Hull at the time of his death, in 1873.

In 1865, William Pole, F.R.S., Mus. Doc., Oxon. published “The Theory of the Modern Scientific Game of Whist,” a work which contains a lucid explanation of the fundamental principles of scientific play, addressed especially to novices, but of considerable value to players of all grades.

These books exhibit the game both theoretically and practically, in the perfect state at which it has arrived during the two centuries that have elapsed since Whist assumed a definite shape and took its present name.

NOTES

* “The author of this treatise did promise if it met with approbation, to make an addition to it by way of Appendix, which he has done accordingly.” — *Hoyle*.

† Authorized as revised and corrected under his own hand. — *Hoyle*.

‡ “Calculations for those who will bet the odds on any points of the score,” &c. — “Calculations directing with moral certainty, how to play well any hand or game,” &c. — *Hoyle*.

§ “Games to be played with certain observations,” &c. — *Hoyle*.

¶ “Some general rules to be observed,” &c. — “Some particular rules to be observed,” &c. — *Hoyle*.

¥ “A caution not to part with the command of your adversaries’ great suit,” &c. — *Hoyle*.

** “With a variety of Cases added in the Appendix.” — *Hoyle*.