

# 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 in England. This game in its chief feature, viz., the predominance of one particular suit, and in its general construction, was so similar to Whist, that no one can doubt it to have been the game from which Whist grew.

There were two distinct games called trump. *Triomphe* or *French ruff* was very like *écarté*, only there was no score for the king; Trump or *English ruff-and-honours* closely resembled Whist.

Berni (*"Capitolo del Gioco della Primera,"* Rome, 1526), enumerates several games at cards; among them are *trionfi*, played by the peasants; and *ronfa*, the invention of which is attributed to King Ferdinand.

*Triumphus Hispanicus* is the subject of a "Dialogue" written in Latin and French by Vives, a Spaniard (d. 1541).

*La triomphe* and *la ronfle* are included by Rabelais (first half of sixteenth century) in the long list of some two hundred and thirty games played by Gargantua.

In "A Worlde of Wordes or Most copious and exact *Dictionarie* in Italian and *English* collected by John Florio, 1598," *ronfa* is defined as "a game at cardes called *ruffe* or *trumpe*;" and under *trionfo* we find "*triumph. \* \* \* Also a trump at cards, or the play called trump or ruff.*"

There is no evidence to show whether the above were the foreign or native form of trump. Douce, in his "Illustrations of Shakespeare," concludes, from finding *la triomphe* in Rabelais' list, that we derived the game of trump from a French source. But it seems more probable, from the non-appearance of English ruff-and-honours in the *Académie des Jeux*, and from the distinction drawn in Cotton's "Compleat Gamester" between "English ruff-and-honours" and "French ruff" (*la triomphe* of the *Académie*), that the game referred to by Berni, Vives, Rabelais, and Florio, was not the same game as English ruff-and-honours, for which a purely English origin (as the name implies) may be claimed.

How and when trump or English ruff-and-honours originated cannot now be ascertained. It was played at least as early as the time of Henry VIII., for it was taken by Latimer to illustrate his text, in the first of two sermons "Of the Card," preached by him, at Cambridge,

in Advent, about the year 1529. He mentions the game under its original and corrupted appellations, and clearly alludes to its characteristic feature, as the following extract will show.

“And where you are wont to celebrate Christmass in playing at Cards, I intend, with 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 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, whatsoever 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.”

Later in the century trump is often referred to. In “Gammer Gurton’s Nedle, made by Mr. S., Mr of Art [Bishop Still] 1575,” the second piece performed in England under the name of a comedy (performed at Christ’s College, Cambridge, in 1566), Old Dame Chat thus invites some friends to a game:—

“CHAT. What diccon: come nere, ye be no straunger,  
We be fast set at trumpe man, hard by the fyre,  
Thou shalt set on the king, if thou come a litte  
nyer.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Come hether, Dol, Dol, sit downe and play this  
game,  
And as thou sawest me do, see thou do even the  
same

There is 5. trumps beside the Queene, ye hindmost  
yu shalt finde her  
Take hede of Sim glover’s wife, she hath an eie  
behind her.”

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 comming in againe” (*i.e.*, revoking intentionally), is a common sharper’s trick. Decker, in “The Belman of London” (1608), speaks of “the deceites practised (euen in the fairest and most ciuill companies) at Primero, Saint, Maw, Tromp, and such like games.”

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 was 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”) points

out its real meaning, and ridicules 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 "Dictionarie of the French and English Tongve" (1611), *Triomphe* is explained as "*the Card-game called Ruffe or Trump; also the Ruffe or Trump at it.*" Minsheu, in "The Guide unto Tongues" (1617), gives, "The TRUMPE *in cardes. Triumpho, ita dict: quod de cæteris chartis triumphare videatur, quod illis sit præstantior.*" Seymour, in his "Court Gamester" (1719), says—"The Term *Trump* comes from a Corruption of the Word *Triumph*; for wherever they are, they are attended with Conquest." Ash ("Dictionary, 1775.") has "Triumph (*s. from the Lat. triumphus*). \* \* \* A conquering card, a trump; *but this sense is now become obsolete.* Trump (*s. from triumph*)."

The derivation of the word *ruff* or *ruffe* has caused much speculation. The previous quotations show that it is the same word as *ronfa* (Ital.) and *ronfle* (Fr.), and that it is synonymous with the English triumph or trump. 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-honours*, 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 Honneurs*," but whether it had any affinity to ruff-and-honours is doubtful. In "Shuffling, Cutting, and Dealing, in a Game at Pickquet: being Acted from the Year, 1653. to 1658. By O.P. [Oliver Protector] and others; With great Applause." (1659), the "Old Foolish Christmas Game with *Honours*" is mentioned. Some writers are of opinion that trump was originally played without honours; but as no description of trump without honours is known to exist, their view must be taken as conjectural. In 1674, Charles Cotton, the poet, published a description of ruff-and-honours 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 Honours," (*see* frontispiece) and thus describes it:—

"At Ruff and Honours, 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 Honours are the Ace, King, Queen, and Knave; he that hath three Honours 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 Honours are equally divided among the Gamesters of each side, then they say Honours are split. If either side are at Eight Groats he hath the benefit of calling Can-ye, if he hath two Honours 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 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 superiour 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 any other Card [suit]; where note the Ace is the highest."

This 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. It is probable that the introduction of the name *whist* or *whisk* took place early in the seventeenth century.

The first known appearance of the word in print is in the "Motto" of Taylor, the Water Poet (1621). Taylor spells the word *whisk*. Speaking of the prodigal, he says:—

"The Prodigals estate, like to a flux,  
The Mercer, Draper, and the Silkman sucks:

\* \* \* \* \*

He flings his money free with carelesnesse:  
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. The earliest known use of the present spelling is in "Hudibras the Second Part" (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*. In "The Compleat Gamester" (1674 and subsequent editions) Cotton says, under playing the cards at "Picket," "the elder begins and younger follows in suit as at Whisk." But he uses the other spelling in his chapter on the game itself. He observes, "Ruff and Honours (*alias* Slamm) and Whist, are Games so commonly known in *England* in all parts thereof, that every Child almost of Eight Years old hath a competent knowledge in that recreation."

After describing ruff-and-honours (see the passage quoted, pp. 39, 40), 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, Honours 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 earlier 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." Skeat ("Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, 1882") gives, "Whist, hush, silence; a game at cards \* \* \* named from the silence requisite to play it attentively."

Chatto, however, (Facts and Speculations on the Origin and History of Playing Cards, 1848), suggests that whisk is derived by substitution from ruff, both of them signifying a piece of lawn used as an ornament to the dress.

The best modern etymologists are of opinion that, whisk and whist, being, like whisper, whistle, wheeze, hush and hist, words of imitative origin, it makes no difference which form is first found. So the received derivation from silence, having

a good deal of evidence in its favour, may be accepted until some more conclusive arguments than Chatto's are brought against it.

While Whist was undergoing the changes of name and character already specified, 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 the chief vogue." Swift, in "The Intelligencer" (No. v, Dublin, 1728), ridicules Archbishop Tenison for not understanding the meaning of swabbers. "There is a known Story of a *Clergy-Man*, who was recommended for a Preferment by some great Man at Court, to A. B. C'T. His Grace said, he had heard that the *Clergy-Man* used to play at Whisk and Swobbers, that as to playing now and then a Sober Game at Whisk for pastime, it might be pardoned, but he could not digest those wicked Swobbers, and it was with some pains that my Lord S——rs could undeceive him." Johnson defines swobbers as "four privileged cards used incidentally in betting at Whist." In Captain Francis Grose's "Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue" (1785), swabbers are stated to be "The ace of hearts, knave of clubs, ace and

duce of trumps at Whist." The Hon. Daines Barrington (writing in 1786), 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, the etymology of the word showing it to be allied to sweep, swoop, swab, swap, and to be first cousin to sweepstakes. Swabbers soon went out of general use, but they may still linger in some local coteries. 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 game of Whist: "In the middle of the hand, one of the players, with a grin that almost mounted 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 enquiry, we were informed that the process was technically known as a 'swap' (qy. swab or swaber), 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 Hon. Daines Barrington ("Archaeologia," Vol. viii.) says, that Whist in its infancy was chiefly confined to the servants' 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 drinking 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—

"Perhaps a while, amusive, thoughtful Whisk  
Walks gentle round, beneath a cloud of smook,  
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 favour in the highest circles. Piquet, Ombre, and Quadrille, were the principal games of the fashionable world. But about 1728, the game of Whist 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 Coffee-house, 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 enquiry, 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 engaged in writing on games, and in giving lessons in Whist, and he was probably living in London. At all events, the only known genuine copy of the first edition of the "Short Treatise" (in the Bodleian), was published in London; and Hoyle afterwards resided in Queen Square. 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.

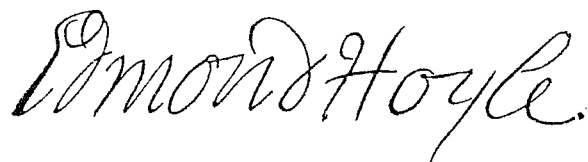
Internal evidence shows that Hoyle originally drew up notes for the use of his pupils. His early editions speak of "Purchasers of the *Treatise* in Manuscript, disposed of the last Winter," and further state that the author of it "has fram'd an *Artificial Memory*, which takes not off your Attention 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 cheap spurious editions lament that there was "a *Treatise* on the Game of *Whist* lately dispersed among a *few* Hands at a *Guinea* Price;" that it was to be procured with no small difficulty; and that the public lay under imposition

and hardship in not being able to get the book under a guinea, and by its being reserved only in a few hands.

No doubt, the circulation of these surreptitious copies induced Hoyle to print the manuscript, and to register the "Short Treatise" at Stationers' Hall in November, 1742.

The treatise ran through five editions in one year, and it is said 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.

The following is a fac-simile of Hoyle's signature, taken from the fourth edition:—



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 (Welbeck) Street, Cavendish Square, in August, 1769, aged 97.

One effect of Hoyle's publication was to draw forth a witty skit, entitled "The Humours 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 spoke 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—Labour hard!  
As if Life's Business center'd 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 Honour 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*, and 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 his Treatise gave 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 upon 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,<sup>1</sup> Sir *Calculation*? I mean that sign'd with his Name.<sup>2</sup>

*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—go to Court with it—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.

<sup>1</sup> "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*.

<sup>2</sup> Authorised as revised and corrected under his own hand.—*Hoyle*.

*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<sup>1</sup> are so exact! \* \* \* his Observations<sup>2</sup> are quite masterly! his Rules<sup>3</sup> so comprehensive! his Cautions<sup>4</sup> so judicious! There are such Variety of Cases<sup>5</sup> 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 them 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

<sup>1</sup> "Calculations for those who will bet the odds on any points of the score," etc.—"Calculations directing with moral certainty, how to play well any hand or game," etc.—*Hoyle*.

<sup>2</sup> "Games to be played with certain observations," etc.—*Hoyle*.

<sup>3</sup> "Some general rules to be observed," etc.—"Some particular rules to be observed," etc.—*Hoyle*.

<sup>4</sup> "A caution not to part with the command of your adversaries' great suit," etc.—*Hoyle*.

<sup>5</sup> "With a variety of Cases added in the Appendix."—*Hoyle*.

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 that has lost her Money" writes, "As for Play, I do think I may, indeed, 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 given 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 modern physician, says, "*Hoyle* tutor'd me in the 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 Whisk 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 spilt 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 Acquaintance 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 idle 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 enlighten'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 with 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 head quarters of fashionable play. These 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 code agreed to by the Committees of both Clubs was adopted in 1864; it shortly found its way into all Whist circles, deposed Hoyle, and is now (1874) 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, against the Dowager Lady Snuphanuph and Mrs. Colonel Wugsby, in a passage too well known to require quotation. 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 honours 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 Clay ("Short Whist," 1864), the alteration took place under the following circumstances: "Some sixty or seventy years back, Lord Peterborough having one night lost a large sum of money, the friends with whom he was playing proposed to make the game five points instead of ten, in order 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 this 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 in 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 has been several times translated into

French. Whist was played by Louis XV., and under the first Empire was a favourite game with Josephine and Marie Louise. It is on record ("Diaries of a Lady of Quality," 2nd 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 conquérant.*" 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 le Whiste, jeune homme? Quelle triste vieillesse vous vous préparez!*" 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 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'être* 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 three remarkable books, which call for a short notice.

In 1864, appeared "Short Whist," by J. C. (James Clay). 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. In 1883, Dr. Pole issued another volume, called "The Philosophy of Whist." This is an essay on the scientific and intellectual aspects of the modern game. It is divided into two parts, "The Philosophy of Whist Play" and "The Philosophy of Whist Probabilities," the latter having been strangely neglected since the publication of Hoyle's "Essay towards Making the Doctrine of Chances Easy" (1754).

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.

