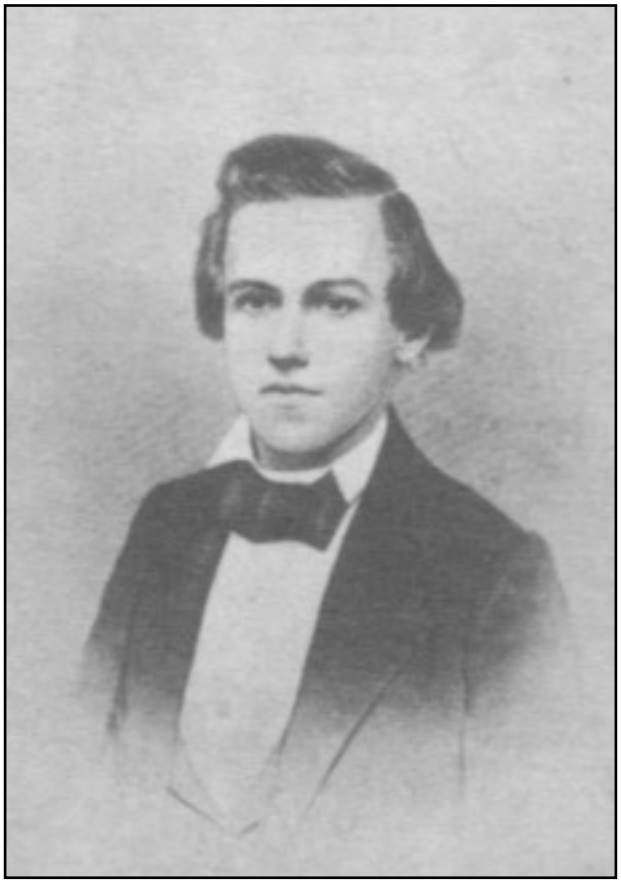
Edge, Morphy and Staunton

Edward Winter

(2000, updated in 2005 and 2006)



Paul Morphy

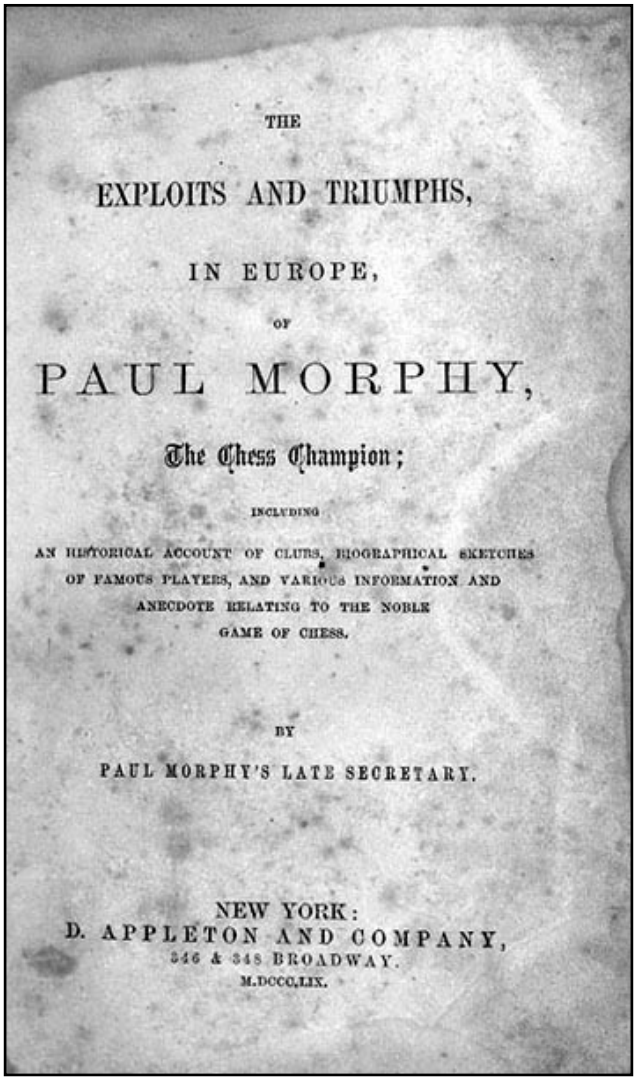
Given the interest in the relationship between Frederick Edge and Paul Morphy and, more generally, the Staunton-Morphy affair, an overview is offered here of historians' previous efforts to set out the facts and analyse the issues and personalities involved. Included too are the fruits of our own researches in *Chess Notes* into Edge's background, together with some suggestions for further reading.

Edge wrote many non-chess books on British and American politics and history, of which the most readily available today is *Slavery Doomed* (originally published in London in 1860 but reprinted by the Negro Universities Press, New York, in 1969). His only chess book, on Morphy, was published in two editions:

- *The Exploits and Triumphs in Europe, of Paul Morphy, The Chess*

Champion by Paul Morphy's late Secretary (New York, 1859), and

- *Paul Morphy The Chess Champion* by An Englishman (London, 1859).



THE

EXPLOITS AND TRIUMPHS,

IN EUROPE,

OF

PAUL MORPHY,

The Chess Champion;

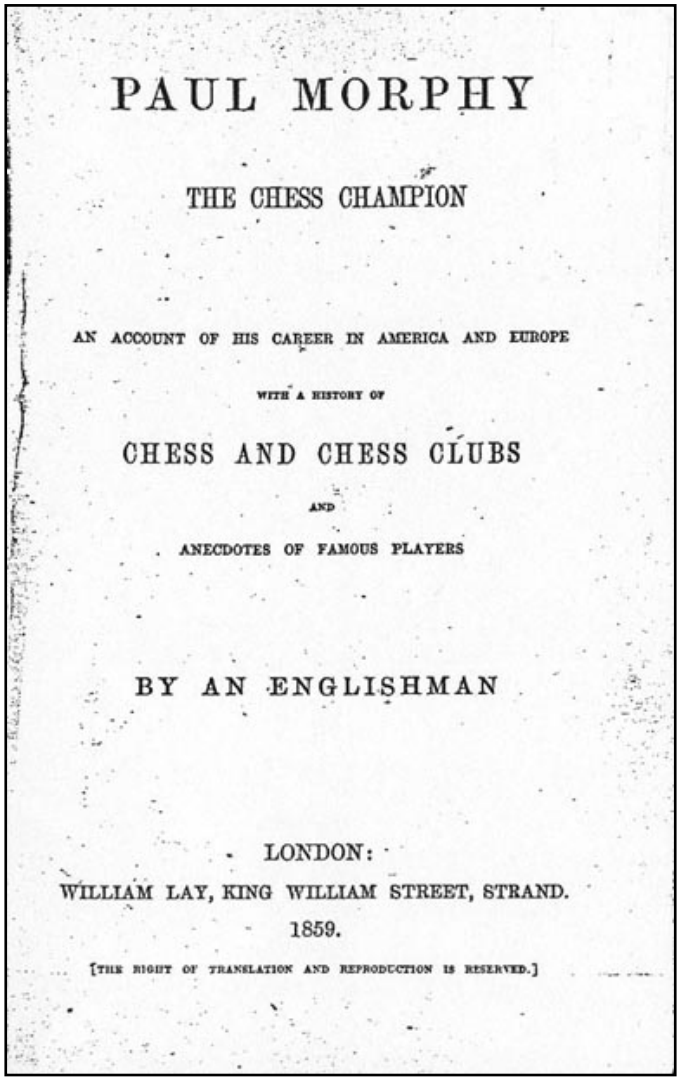
INCLUDING

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF CLUBS, BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF FAMOUS PLAYERS, AND VARIOUS INFORMATION AND ANECDOTE RELATING TO THE NOBLE GAME OF CHESS.

BY

PAUL MORPHY'S LATE SECRETARY.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
346 & 348 BROADWAY.
M.DCCC.LIX.



PAUL MORPHY

THE CHESS CHAMPION

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CAREER IN AMERICA AND EUROPE

WITH A HISTORY OF

CHESS AND CHESS CLUBS

AND

ANECDOTES OF FAMOUS PLAYERS

BY AN ENGLISHMAN

LONDON:

WILLIAM LAY, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.

1859.

[THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION AND REPRODUCTION IS RESERVED.]

The US edition was reprinted in 1973 by Dover Publications, Inc. and by Moravian Chess in the Czech Republic *circa* 2001. In a brief feature on the book pages of the October 1974 *CHESS* , reference was made to the divergent texts, and David Lawson published a lengthy factual reply on pages 102-103 of the January 1975 issue. He also discussed the different editions in his subsequent biography of Morphy (see page 190), as well as in his six-page Introduction to the Dover reprint of Edge's book, which also dealt with the relationship between Morphy and Edge. It began (page v):

> 'This book by Frederick Milne Edge gives us our closest personal look at Paul Morphy. No other contemporary could have provided more information, with the possible exception of Morphy's lifelong friend Charles A. Maurian; but Maurian merely gave some interviews many years later, when the freshness of his contact had passed.'

Elsewhere in the Introduction (pages vii-viii), Lawson wrote:

> 'Whether Edge acted as Morphy's valet as well as his secretary in England (as he very evidently did in France until the last few weeks there) is not clear, but most likely he did for part of the time. It is possible that Edge contributed to the strain that developed between Morphy and Staunton, although it is not at all apparent in his first letters to Fiske reporting Morphy's activities. Morphy's dislike for letter writing and details allowed Edge to become a large factor in his life in England and France. But for Edge, New York and New Orleans would have had almost no word about

Morphy's doings except for the reports on some of his games in the London papers. And certainly without Edge many games would not have been recorded and given to the press.

Also, without Edge there would have been no rebuttal to Staunton's unfair or unsportsmanlike charges concerning the chess match between him and Morphy that all Europe was waiting for.'

Lawson also remarked (page ix):

'We owe much to him [Edge], for the match with Anderssen and other games were due solely to his untiring efforts. With the Anderssen match in mind, Edge even schemed with Morphy's doctor to keep Morphy from going home for the 1858 Christmas holidays, as he had promised his family.'

To give an idea of the content and style of Edge's book, there now follow a few excerpts:

'Although possessing but little skill as a player, I had a strong liking for the game, and determined that every thing in my power should be done to render the meeting [the New York, 1857 Congress] successful.' (Pages 5-6)

'I can think of no more suitable epithet for Morphy than to call him "the Newton of Chess".' (Page 15)

'Zsen [Szén] went to Paris in 1831, and played some games with Labourdonnais at the odds of Pawn and Move, winning the majority. He then told the great Frenchman that he did not like playing for stakes as a general thing, but that he would propose to him a match of 21 even games for 200 francs; but Labourdonnais declined. And who will say he was wrong? for what pleasure could there be in sitting down day after day before the dullest player in Christendom, for the eventuality of 200 francs? Zsen was so frightfully slow, even in ordinary games, that he would have worn out 200 francs' worth of his opponent's pantaloons before the match was half through.' (Page 61)

'Morphy is a water-drinker, and Paris water would cure any Maine Liquor Law bigot of Teetotalism in a week.' (Page 160)

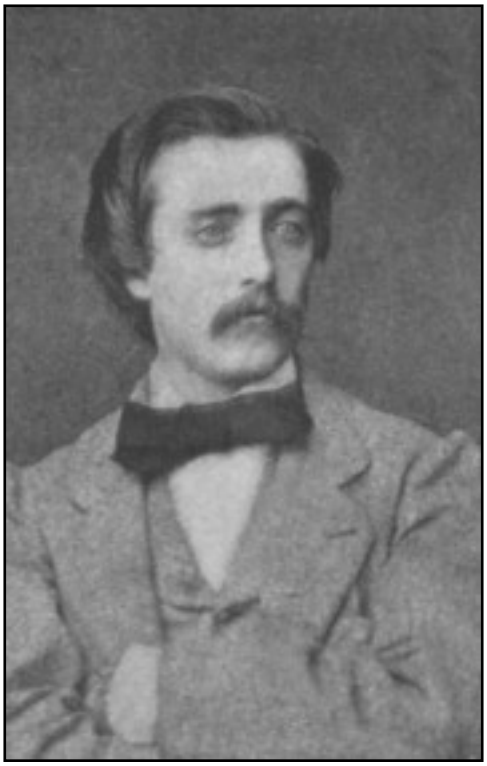
'The two principals being again face to face, Harrwitz commenced with his "same old two-and-sixpence" pawn to queen's fourth ...' (Page 167)

'On hearing this, I began to talk the matter over quietly with him [i.e. discussing with Morphy the prospect of meeting Anderssen], asserting that his voyage to Europe was useless, if he did not play Anderssen. All was to no effect. Morphy did not appear to have the slightest ambition, say what I would to him. He must be at home in December; he had promised to be there, and home he would go. Very well; Morphy and I were at daggers drawn and we began our fight. He said he would go, and I said he shouldn't. He wanted to know how I could prevent him; I told him that all the clubs in Europe would stop him. "Very well", answered he, "I'll be stronger than all Europe." "Bravo", says I, "that's spirited, at all events." Says he – says I – says he –

and Morphy went to sleep and I to work.

> Without saying a word to anybody, I set to writing letters to all the leading Chess Clubs on the Continent and in England, informing them of the bad move Morphy was about to make, and requesting those in the interests of chess to induce him to remain, until at all events he had met Herr Anderssen. Now, the mere fact of Morphy staying, as the simple individual, was nothing; but it was something to make sure beyond all dispute that he was infallibly the best living player; and, in addition, to add many games to the finest pages of chess literature. I am happy to state that the different clubs thought as I did; so the result will prove.′ (Pages 183-184)

The reaction to Edge′s book in the main contemporary magazines was not particularly positive or extensive. An example is *The Chess Monthly* (New York), which was edited by Daniel Willard Fiske (1831-1904) with, for much of the time, Morphy listed as co-editor.



Daniel Willard Fiske

On page 316 of the October 1858 issue the *Monthly* had shown itself well disposed to Edge:

> ‵Mr Morphy left for Paris on 31 August, accompanied by Mr Edge. This gentleman deserves the thanks of Mr Morphy and of the American chess public for his kindness in relieving our countryman from many of the annoyances to which a stranger in a strange land is more or less subjected. He was one of the most efficient Secretaries of our Congress last year.′

The following year (May 1859 issue, page 165) Edge′s book was announced in the *Monthly* :

'It is understood that a book entitled *Paul Morphy's Travels and Triumphs in Europe*, is soon to be issued by an eminent publishing-house of New York. It will contain none of the champion's games, but will be a pleasant and gossipy account of Mr Morphy's tour, by one who had an excellent opportunity to observe all the incidents connected with it.'

Some of Edge's letters to Fiske give the impression that the two were well acquainted and friendly, but despite Edge's comments to Fiske about his forthcoming Morphy book the *Monthly* did not roll out the red carpet. The July 1859 issue (pages 204-207) had a book review section featuring five recent publications. Edge's book was the fifth:

'The work which stands last of those we have cited is altogether curious. Mr Morphy expressly disclaims any connection with it in any way or manner. There are many passages which might well have been omitted; there are many more which might well have been rewritten. The spelling of *Szén* might have been substituted for the remarkable orthography *Zsen*, and *Mongredieu* would have looked better as *Mongredien*, the real name of the distinguished President of the London Chess Club. But in spite of these and other imperfections there is a good deal of gossipy, anecdotal matter in the volume, thrown together in a rollicking, Bohemian manner, which will afford the reader a half-hour's entertainment.'

Edge resented this review in the *Monthly*, as is shown by a letter he wrote to Fiske dated 7 November 1859 which we quoted in 2004 (C.N.3396):

'... When I read that cruel notice in the *Monthly* I sent you a communication which, in the heat of offended pride, I threatened to publish as a vindication of myself. Cooler judgment has shown me that it is nobler to suffer. Besides, I do not envy your feelings, and, above all, do I not envy Morphy's. His southern pride may, for the moment, overpower generosity, but conscience must, sooner or later, torture him for returning malevolence for kindness. When flatterers cease to charm him, he will come to one who never flattered; and he will form a low opinion of those who abetted him against one who, in spite of any former difference, proved himself one of the best, if not *the best*, friend he ever had.

History neither lies nor forgets. Nobody could chronicle Paul Morphy's feats in future ages without giving me my due ...'

The Edge work was mentioned only briefly in *The Chess Player's Chronicle* (1859, page 254):

'We have only been able to make a hasty perusal of the above volume, which appears to be written in a lively style, free from exaggeration, and therefore very likely to find favour with the general as well as the chess-loving public.'

At that time Staunton was no longer connected with the *Chronicle*, but he

called Edge's book 'a contemptible publication' on page 501 of his book *Chess Praxis* (London, 1860).

Later on too, Edge was to receive a poor press in his homeland. On page 51 of the February 1906 *BCM*, H.J.R. Murray (1868-1955) described Edge's book as 'rather ill-natured'. The July 1937 issue of the same magazine (pages 353-354) had this remark by Murray:

> 'Sarratt is said to have been a schoolmaster, but apparently on the authority of F.M. Edge, most unreliable of writers: Hazlitt's evidence rather tells against Edge. Edge again is our only authority for the pretty, but improbable legend that Sarratt had played with Napoleon, and compounded the struggle between pride and courtesy by drawing every game. We have no reason to think that Sarratt was ever out of England.'

Murray wrote detailed articles about Staunton in the 1908 *BCM* (November, pages 465-470 and December, pages 513-522). On page 518 he described Edge's book as 'a work which deals with the Staunton-Morphy episode in a strongly anti-Staunton manner'.

Edge's name also cropped up, of course, in two books by P.W. Sergeant (1872-1952): *Morphy's Games of Chess* (various editions from 1916 onwards) and *Morphy Gleanings* (London, 1932). Both works have been reprinted by Dover Publications, Inc., the latter under the title *The Unknown Morphy*.

Morphy's Games of Chess contained the following footnote on page 13 (concerning Staunton's participation in the Birmingham, 1858 tournament):

> 'Edge, though English by birth, was very biased against Staunton; but we can hardly think that his prejudice went so far as to allow him to falsify the evidence.'

Sergeant also made a reference to Edge on page 101 of his book *A Century of British Chess* (London, 1934):

> 'F.M. Edge, who was Morphy's secretary in Europe, alleges that Staunton had told Morphy he was not playing at Birmingham. Edge, however, is not altogether trustworthy, being bitterly prejudiced against Staunton.'

In a footnote on the same page, Sergeant wrote:

> 'B. Goulding Brown (*BCM*, June 1916) does not hesitate to call him "a liar". He attributes to Edge Morphy's non-competition at Birmingham. [...] I must say that my own reading of Edge did not lead me to think him a liar; though I cannot deny his anti-Staunton bias. Staunton reciprocated the feeling, for when he wrote that he feared Mr Morphy was in very bad hands he certainly referred to Edge.'

The article in question by B. Goulding Brown (1881-1965) was given on pages 191-194 of the June 1916 *BCM.* It discussed many points arising from Sergeant's first book on Morphy and

included, on page 192, the following:

> 'The whole story of Staunton's depreciation of Morphy (before the rupture and Morphy's appeal to Lord Lyttelton) is simply an impudent invention of Edge's, and fully justifies Staunton's denunciation of Edge's book in the *Praxis* as "a contemptible publication". With unparalleled effrontery Edge asked his readers not to take his word for granted, but to turn up the file of the *Illustrated* and see for themselves. I have done so, and I find him a liar. And I could wish that Mr Sergeant had done the same, before he penned his tremendous indictment of the greatest personality in English chess, and the central figure of the chess world from 1843-1851.'

The issue at stake was a claim by Edge about Staunton's annotations of Morphy's games in the *Illustrated London News* during a specific period. In the 1980s Frank Skoff examined Goulding Brown's charge against Edge, notably in the *APCT News Bulletin* of May-June 1985 (pages 115-118). He reviewed each of Staunton's columns and concluded:

> 'Besides being a lover of literature and a Latin scholar, Brown was a history coach at a well-known university. He left all his skill as a historian behind him in his denunciation of Edge, which, to be charitable, was an act of gross incompetence since he knew better and should have checked the primary source, Edge's own words.'

In C.N. 957 Skoff wrote:

> ' *I also read the 1916* BCM *article by Goulding Brown and found it nonsensical, some of it also being refuted by Lawson in his book.* '

And:

> ' *As for Goulding Brown, I must add that the evidence he produces to call Edge a "liar" would never pass a court test, or any other rational proof. What he does is select the brief quotes that are favourable to his case, ignoring those that are not.* '

Skoff's four-part article in the *APCT News Bulletin* , a review of *The Oxford Companion to Chess* , focussed on the Staunton and Morphy entries. It was published in the following issues: February 1985, pages 43-44; March 1985, pages 60-62; April 1985, pages 86-88; May-June 1985, pages 115-118. In addition, the January 1986 issue (page 11) carried a brief letter from Kenneth Whyld (1926-2003), together with a response to him by Skoff. Only the latter mentioned the Brown affair:

> 'My review demolished a salient foundation of the Staunton entry: Goulding Brown's claim in 1916 that Edge was "a liar" and therefore any of his statements could be tossed aside as unreliable. That libelous claim – an easy way to avoid considering evidence one doesn't like – was followed, in one form or another, by other British journalists to this day. You operated under the same influence by describing Edge pejoratively as "a copy seeking journalist" and therefore the cause of all the trouble between Staunton and Morphy, as though Staunton's conduct had been angelic. Ignoring that conduct or "distilling" it inaccurately can only result in distortion and inaccuracy. Most astoundingly, until my review, Brown's libel had remained unexamined for nearly 70 years; before then no one checked it for validity and soundness. How could you (or any other journalist) have missed the obvious bias and incompetence of Brown?'

As indicated by the various quotations elsewhere in the present article, many different opinions on Edge's work have been expressed. One of the most positive was from Bob Meadley, in C.N. 1480:

> ' *It ' s a terrific book which includes a unique chapter on the history of English Chess as well as the boring Staunton affair. But it has great style, bubbling along with good stories. A chess classic.* '

The two letters from Edge to Fiske presented in C.N. 840 and C.N. 1358, in 1984 and 1987 respectively, gave rise to much analysis and discussion in *Chess Notes* . James J. Barrett, who supplied Edge's letter of 3 April 1859, commented in C.N. 840:

> ' *The text shows Edge to be a complicated man. His pushiness is well illustrated in the interchange with Mongredien. Although the latter speaks directly to Morphy, Edge did not let him answer. There are valuable glimpses of*

Morphy at a very personal level. The relating of his attitude towards Edge as a slave, at least in Edge ' s mind, is an electrifying revelation (or opinion). '

Barrett added some further thoughts in C.N. 1269:

' *Ruminate about this statement of Edge ' s* : "... and I write a work which will live as long as the game lives *and will make him more famous than anything he has ever done* " [*my emphasis – J.J.B.]. This is possibly the most remarkable insight into Edge ' s state of mind at that time in the whole letter. An honorable mention might go to the masochistic/martyr-complex implications of the passage beginning " *and besides, there is a sweet satisfaction ...*" *etc. Psychoanalyst Fine would have a field day. '*

In C.N. 881 G.H. Diggle (1902-1993) remarked:

' *The Edge letter is a great " find " , and I think it justifies my estimate of him in the 1964* BCM*, with which it seems Mr Barrett largely agrees, though I was wrong in saying that Edge and Morphy did not separate till April 1859 – the*

rift came three months earlier. It is curious that David Lawson did not publish the whole, which sheds so much more light on his relations with Morphy. (Of course, the letter tells against Lawson ' s rather favourable estimate of Edge.) '

The same *C.N* . item had a contribution from Meadley, from which a brief extract is given here:

' *That certainly was an eye-popping letter of Edge ' s to Fiske, and to some extent it is a pity David Lawson did not publish it in its entirety in his fine book* Paul Morphy The Pride and Sorrow of Chess*. As you know, the extract he did publish on page 148 of that book contains none of the startling material in the letter, and one can assume from that that he wished to gloss over some of the traits of Morphy by not including them.* '

We concluded that *C.N.* item's discussion of the letter with a comment of our own:

'For the record, J.J. Barrett informs us that he received the original Edge letter from David Lawson for inspection. Our correspondent xeroxed it and returned it to D.L. We personally believe that Mr Lawson's decision not to quote the real "meat" of the Edge communication in what aimed to be a definitive biography of Morphy was a grave misjudgement.'

In a subsequent contribution (C.N. 1270) Barrett wrote:

' *Much more light*

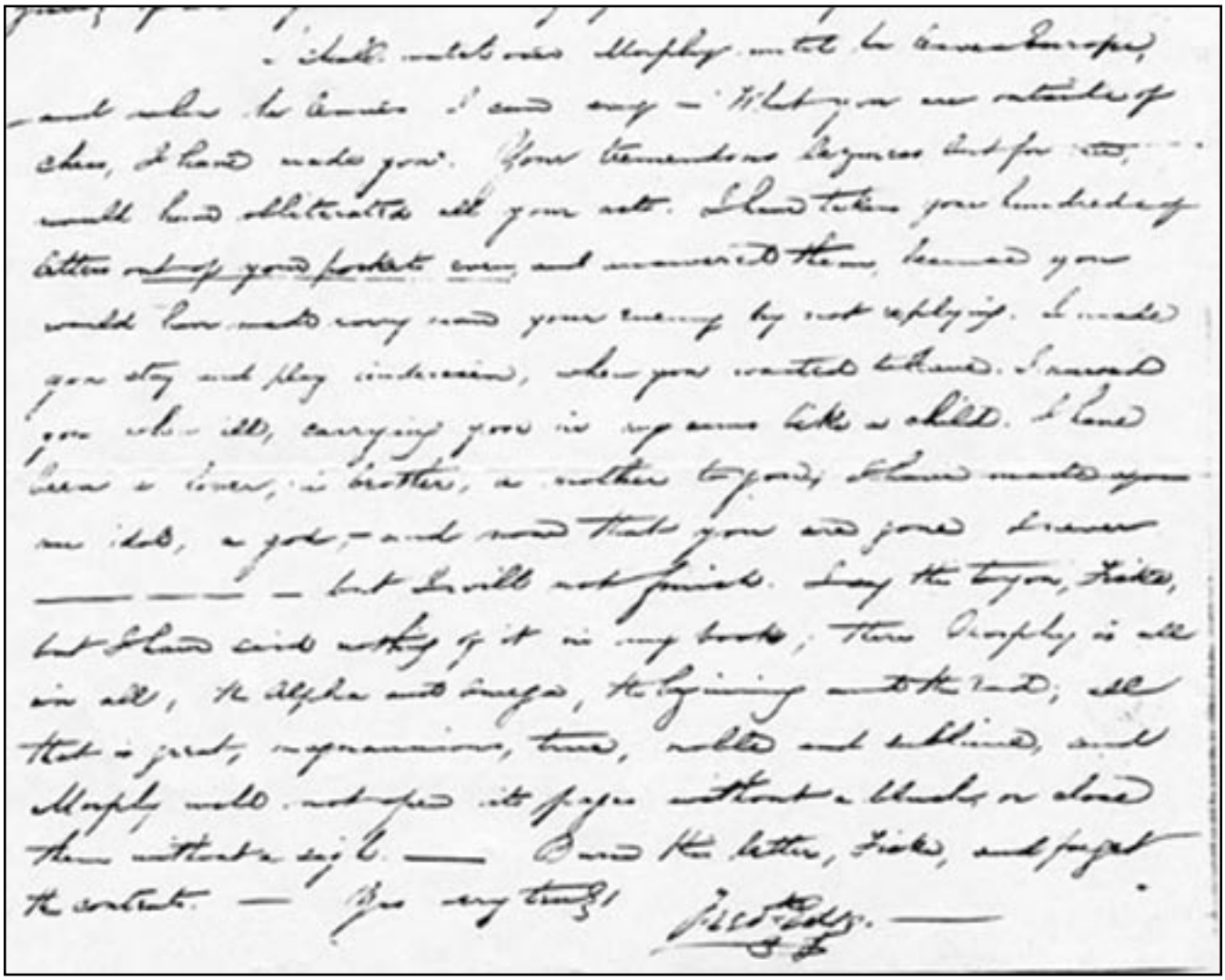
needs to be cast on the "Edge to Morphy" letter quoted in The Oxford Companion to Chess *and referred to in C.N.s 840 (page 111) and 957 (page 55) – "I have been a lover, a brother--- etc. Nothing less than the quoting of the full text will satisfy the needs of accurate chess history. If this letter was ever delivered to Paul Morphy does it make sense that both he and his family would have preserved it if it in any way compromises the man?'*

That was written in 1986, at which time all (or, rather, almost all) *Chess Notes* readers, as well as the Editor, were under the misapprehension that the letter which included the word 'lover' had been written to Morphy himself. The following year the full text of the letter, dated 25 March 1859 and addressed to Fiske, was published in C.N. 1358, courtesy of Skoff. The most significant passage, i.e. the conclusion, reads as follows:

> '... Now, Fiske, I can from the depths of my soul declare, looking God in the face, that had it not been for me, you wouldn't have seen 20 of Morphy's games - the correspondence with Staunton wouldn't have been written, and Morphy would have gone back humbugged and a laughing stock. I made him stay and play Anderssen, and I have stood invariably between him and his enemies; and conspiracies have been dangerous in Paris, I assure you - in the salons - by Morphy's own fault. I can say, never did man more devotedly serve another. I neglected my wife for him, accompanied him to Paris and left her till broken-hearted she came to fetch me back. I put a coldness between myself and all my family which only years will heal, and I don't, even now, know why. I am not a chess-player, I am not an American, I have nothing to hope for from Morphy, and I would not say what I have herein written, to anybody but you, and you will be guilty of an infamous act if you let anyone see this letter.
>
> I shall watch over Morphy until he leaves Europe, and when he leaves I can say - "What you are outside of chess, I have made you. Your tremendous laziness, but for me, would have obliterated all your acts. I have taken your hundreds of letters out of your pockets even, and answered them, because you would have made every man your enemy by not replying. I made you stay and play Anderssen, when you wanted to leave. I nursed you when ill, carrying you in my arms like a child. I have been a lover, a brother, a mother to you; I have made you an idol, a god - and now that you are gone, I never -- but I will not finish. I say this to you, Fiske, but I have said

nothing of it in my book; there Morphy is all in all, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; all that is great, magnanimous, true, noble and sublime, and Morphy will not open its pages without a blush, or close them without a sigh. - Burn this letter, Fiske, and forget the contents.

- Yrs. very truly Fred'k Edge.'



Publication of the letter was warmly welcomed by readers, and in C.N. 1480 Meadley wrote:

' *Again* Chess Notes *has astounded the chess history lovers of the world with the revelations in Edge letter to Fiske, provided by Frank Skoff in C.N. 1358.* ' *s* '

The discussion focussed, naturally enough, on the 'lover' issue, in the light of the brief extract which *The Companion* had published in 1984 (page 217). Regarding the omission of the name of the recipient, making it seem that Edge was writing to Morphy, Whyld wrote in C.N. 1440:

‘ *We were conscious of this and discussed it with the editorial staff of the Oxford University Press. We felt that nobody who knew much about Morphy would be misled, because the date of March was after Morphy and Edge had broken all contact, but the average reader would most likely take it as being addressed to Morphy. The quotation was the epitome of Edge ’ s attitude to Morphy and after careful consideration was judged to be appropriate.* ’

And from the same item:

‘ *The quotation is very clearly metaphorical and not a statement of homosexuality, but possibly it might put the thought into the reader ’ s mind for the first time. I cannot see the benefit of examining Morphy ’ s sexual proclivities.* ’

In C.N. 1569 Whyld wrote:

‘ *From Edge onwards, writers have noted Morphy ’ s effeminate appearance and manner, and obviously the possibility of homosexuality must have been pondered for more than a*

century. Our quotation may have caused some readers to ask this question. That is nothing new.

If I had to make a choice, I would guess that Morphy was celibate. That is hardly likely to please Skoff, because he will probably know that psychoanalysts regard voluntary celibacy as a greater perversion than homosexuality. ′

Further remarks by Whyld appeared in C.N. 1932:

‘ *The quotation needs seeing in full. Edge wrote,* " *I have been a lover, a brother, a mother to you; I have made you an idol, a god ...*″ *. Is it rational to read this as saying,* " *I have been, only in the figurative sense of course, your brother and mother, but I have been literally your lover, and what* ′ *s more, in the mid-twentieth-century meaning of the word and not that of the mid-nineteenth-century* ″ *? Such a perverse interpretation should be too foolish to merit contemplation, and certainly does not deserve detailed discussion. When hero-worship takes over, common sense seems to*

fly out of the window and the eyes mist over, preventing the sentence from being read in full. ′

That item (C.N. 1932) was one of the very few in which we intervened in the debate:

> ‘... we wish to point out that our earliest knowledge of an alleged homosexual relationship between Morphy and Edge was about 18 months before *The Companion* was published. On 25 November 1982 Mr Whyld wrote to us: "I have a great deal about Edge, some of which I have doubts about making available for publication (such as his claim to have been Morphy's lover)".′

Also in C.N. 1932, Louis Blair wrote:

> ‘ *So what is the purpose of the lover quote in* The Companion*? Consider the chronology. 1982: [Whyld] writes to Edward Winter, mentioning that Edge claimed to have been Morphy* ′ *s lover. 1984:* The Companion *is published. In one paragraph, there is the claim that Morphy could have passed for a woman, an Edge quote comparing Morphy to Narcissus, and another Edge quote talking about being Morphy* ′ *s lover. No explanation for the quotes is given, although the authors do find that they have the space to give an (unjustified) interpretation of an Anderssen quote. 1985, 1986: A considerable stir is caused by the lover quote. [Whyld] has nothing to say on the subject. For example,*

he does not tell us that the quote was part of a letter to a third party, not Morphy. 1987: The year that the complete letter is published. Many feel that knowledge of the intended recipient of the Edge letter completely changes the conclusions that might be drawn from the quote. [Whyld] rushes to tell everyone that it was never the intention of [Whyld and Hooper] to suggest homosexuality. Whyld tells us how we could have deduced that the letter was not written to Morphy. (A fallacious argument as the quote sounds like just the sort of thing that might have been written by Edge to Morphy after the break-up.) [Whyld] tells us how we could have deduced that Edge was not using the word lover in a literal sense. (Another fallacious argument as it is clear that Edge is talking about his behavior towards Morphy when he uses the words mother, brother and lover.) *...'*

But the strongest critic of *The Companion* 's treatment of the Edge letter was Skoff. A digest of his comments follows:

' *Now that the full context of the*

infinitesimal quote has appeared in C. N., the air will be cleared (I hope). Nonetheless, though I hate to sound cynical or pessimistic, the smear of Morphy will live on forever in print under the prestigious banner of the Oxford University Press in The Companion*; it has already spread to so many places in the chess world that its eradication will be impracticable. So much for justice.* ′ (C.N. 1417)

‘ *After I was fortunate enough around January 1987 to secure a copy of the complete text of the letter from another source I was astonished to discover it had no sexual material at all; it was not addressed to Morphy as the insinuendo implied. At last the insinuendo was revealed as a gross error in construction, a cunning deception, a phantasm, a hoax, a fabrication, a humbug, a flim-flam, a disgrace* – *take your choice.*

In his letter of 3 March 1987 Whyld made an astounding assertion (also given in C.N. 1417): ‟ *You appear to be the only one who has read a*

suggestion of homosexuality in the quote ″ . Yet he must have known that this assertion was untrue because it was touched on in various media read by him: 1) C.N. 840 2) C. N. 957 and 3) C.N. 1270: also once in the BCM *(January 1985). Knowing of these instances, he was under obligation to clarify the matter, but he chose to remain silent, thereby sealing his guilt. ′* (C.N. 1499)

‘ In C.N. 1569 K.W. stoutly asserts, " There is no secrecy other than the name of the letter ′ s owner ten years ago ″ , a statement that takes one ′ s breath away [...] as it ignores the obvious fact that the contents of the letter itself were kept secret from the scrutiny of the public, misleading it into thinking that Edge was writing to Morphy and thus backing up the desired insinuendo. The secrecy and the insinuendo would have remained so had I not discovered the letter and published it in C. N. ′ (C.N. 1757)

‘ I must point out too that if he [Whyld] had been honest and

given the recipient ′ s name (Fiske), which the letter owner would have permitted, the insinuendo would then have been transferred to him [Fiske] but would have made no sense in the context of the insinuendo paragraph; besides that, F. was not his target. Thus by not giving the whole truth (see C. N. 1417) and by placing only M. ′ s name before the quote, [Whyld] slyly and cunningly shifted the smearing insinuendo on the back of M. And when readers fell into the trap by referring to the letter as being from Edge to Morphy (see C.N. 840 Nov.-Dec. 1984, 957 & 1270), [Whyld] did not correct their mistake, as he was obliged to do, but let it take hold and grow inside the mind of the general public, the basic aim of all smearers, until the spring of 1987 (C.N. 1358), when the full letter was printed and revealed the truth to C.N. readers for the first time. How Machiavellian! ′ (Skoff letter to Chess Notes , 17 November 1989)

In the revised (1992) edition of *The Companion* Edge had an entry of his own, and the 'lover′ passage (19 words) was given there (page 120). Despite the earlier protestations of readers, Fiske was still not mentioned as the recipient of the letter. Moreover, since the full text of Edge′s letter had been given in *Chess Notes* in 1987,

The Companion 's use of the word 'unpublished' was wrong. Nor were these matters corrected in the 1996 paperback edition of *The Companion* .

The second issue of *Chess Notes* (March-April 1982 – C.N. 90) contained this paragraph:

> 'Very little is known about the personal life of F.M. Edge. After his connection with Morphy was severed he returned to general journalism/book-writing, but we have never even been able to find a notice of his death. It seems that his prolific pen dried up in 1869, his final book being *Great Britain and the United States: A Letter to the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone M.P.* , published by William Ridgway, 1869. The end of the letter reads: London, November 15th 1869. How did Edge's life finish?'

The September-October 1983 issue of *Chess Notes* (C.N. 524) included some information from Whyld. Edge's death certificate stated that he died on 28 May 1882 (i.e. about two years before Morphy) at King's College Hospital, London, aged 52. He was described as a literary author of 14 Hanway Street, Oxford Street, London.

Following the increased interest in Edge resulting from the publication in C.N. 840 of a letter to Fiske, more delving was called for, but there was little of substance to report in the January-February 1985 issue of our magazine (C.N. 881):

> 'Our attempts to find out more about Edge have so far been crowned with failure. A hasty (but, we hope, accurate) check of British marriages between 1846-1858 has revealed only one Frederick Edge, definitely not our man. Armed with the information in C.N. 524, we looked without success for a reference to Edge in the 1881 and 1882 Registers of Electors. Nor could we find a note of his death in the main local newspaper, the *Camden and Kentish Towns Gazette* . Finally, the 1881 Census lists eleven people living at 14 Hanway Street, but Edge is not amongst them.'

However, later the same year (July-August 1985 *Chess Notes* – C.N. 1012) it proved possible to provide substantial information about Edge:

> 'We have been trying to piece together a little more about Edge's private life, the starting-point being King's College Hospital, where he died on 28 May 1882 (C.N. 524), the cause of death being extravasation of urine. It was a painful end, as the record of the post mortem examination makes clear. We are not authorized to offer copies of this report, but interested (non-squeamish) readers may apply direct to: Mr A.J.B. Mussell, Archives Assistant, King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS, England.
>
> The case-notes on Edge have not survived, so that might have been the end of the

trail. However, although we had contacted King's College Hospital only in connection with Edge's death, Mr Mussell, with exemplary thoroughness, made a spontaneous check of King's College's academic records. By a remarkable coincidence, it emerges that Edge was a student there over 30 years previously, the archives revealing the following:

Frederick Milns Edge entered King's College on 2 October 1850, being aged 20 on 29 May of that year. His parent or guardian was Mr Thomas Edge of 39 Vincent Square, Westminster, where Frederick was then also living. His previous education had been with the Rev. John Richardson, M.A., of Guernsey. The course for which he was entered was General Literature and Science, which could, if the student wished it and was prepared to undertake the extra work, lead to the Associateship of King's College (AKC), a qualification which may be seen as being equivalent to a degree. At the same time, he was also entered for an additional course in chemistry, as an Occasional student. On 19 March 1851 he was further entered for the Matriculation course, which suggests that his previous education had not provided him with sufficient grounding for the curriculum of King's. He left after a year (the normal attendance was three years) without any qualification, although this in itself was not unusual at that time. His reports for the year have survived, and are as follows:

Michaelmas Term 1850 :
Divinity: R(egular), Imp(roving)
Chapel: R(egular)
Classics: D(iligent) & A(ble)
Mathematics: V(ery) A(ble) & des(irou)s to Imp(rove)
English Literature: Freq(uently) abs(ent) for ill(nes)s

Lent Term 1851 :
Divinity: R(egular) at Lectures, ab(sen)t from several Ex(amination)s
Chapel: Freq(uentl)y Abs(en)t
Classics: fair
Mathematics: fair
English Literature: Often Absent

Easter Term 1851 :
Divinity: Absent from every Examination
Chapel: Has not attended
Classics: Irregular
Mathematics: Not Regular
English Literature: Generally Absent

(The letters in brackets have been supplied by Mr Mussell.)

One other note in the records: Edge did not return his locker key until 31 December 1853, and thereby forfeited his 5/- deposit. It was not usual for keys to be returned after a student had gone down, but to return one so long afterwards is perhaps a little out of the ordinary.

However, what is more striking is Edge's age at entry; at 20 he was rather old, the

average age at the time being 16-18.

King's College also has correspondence from F.M.E.'s father, Thomas Edge. We have photocopies. Edge *père* was a manufacturer and installer of gas-lamps, and in the early days of the College seems to have been one of their principal contractors. His business was variously called the Gas Light Office, the Lamp and Chandelier Manufactory and the Gas Fitting Manufactory, but the address remains as 59 Great Peter Street. It will be recalled that it was from there that Frederick wrote the letter to Fiske given in C.N. 840.

The Archives Department of the Victoria Library (City of Westminster) has confirmed that Thomas Edge "appears to have begun as a Brassfounder and Gas apparatus manufacturer". Various London directories show that in 1826-7 he was listed as a Brassfounder at 58 Great Peter Street and a Gas apparatus manufacturer at 59 Great Peter Street. By 1863 he was listed at 16 Regent Street (near to Horseferry Road), but the following year Thomas Edge Junior appears to have taken over the company, at the same address.

The 1851 and 1861 census returns for the Edge family home at 39 Vincent Square are of interest. Combined, they mention that Thomas Edge Senior (born 1792 or 1793) had six children who lived there at one time or another: Thomas, Mary Ann (b. 1823 or 1824), Frederick, Emily (b. 1831 or 1832), Alfred (b. 1832 or 1833) and Elizabeth (b. 1835 or 1836). Frederick is listed only in the 1851 Return: aged 20, Student, born Middlesex St John, Westminster. It has not, however, been possible to trace his baptism in the St John, Smith Square parish registers (St John, Westminster) in the year following his birth. [We subsequently found that Edge was christened at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Westminster, London on 19 July 1830. His mother's name was recorded as Eleanor.]

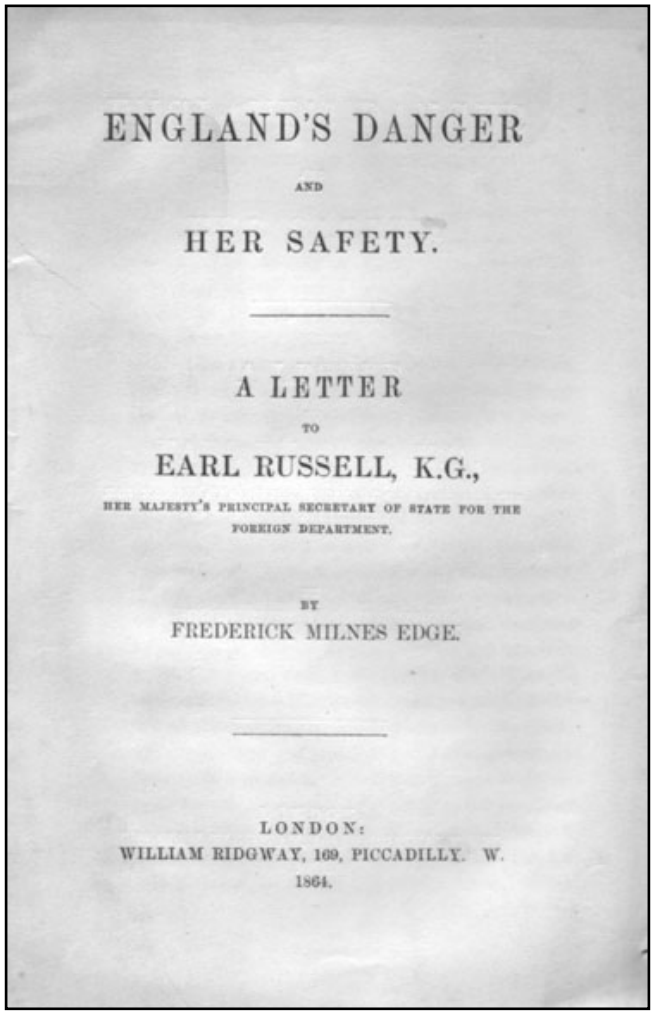
The census returns indicate that Emily was born at St Helier, Jersey, the second link with the Channel Islands. This seemed unlikely to be a coincidence, given that the total population of Jersey and Guernsey in 1851 was under 87,000.

From the Guille-Allès Library, St Peter Port, Guernsey we learned that Frederick's tutor, John Richardson (died 1856), was the Classics master at Elizabeth College, Guernsey from 1845-1847 and then, for an unknown period, Mathematical master. Later, he became curate of the Castel Parish Church. The Elizabeth College register, however, lists only Frederick's brother, Thomas: "born at Westminster, November 24, 1818; son of Thomas Edge; left 1831. Gas engineer and gas meter and apparatus manufacturer". Frederick may have become the private pupil of Rev. Richardson after the latter left the College.

The search for further details continues, but in the meantime there remain two discrepancies. Firstly, the death certificate appears to be in error in stating that Frederick Edge died at the age of 52**,** though in error by the slenderest of margins. The college archives say that he was born on 29 May 1830, while the death certificate records his demise as occurring on 28 May 1882, i.e. when he was 52 less one day. Secondly, the spelling of his middle name. While the death certificate has "Milnes", the college records (for his education) give "Milns", which also appears in the text of his Morphy book [page 112]. We increasingly feel that Milns is likely to be

the correct version.'

In this connection it may be noted that the 1984 edition of *The Companion* (page 217) gave 'Frederic Milnes', the 1987 paperback version (page 217) had 'Frederick Milnes', and the 1992 edition (page 119) put 'Frederick Milns'. The front cover and title page of the Dover reproduction of Edge's book used Frederick 'Milne'. It is certainly difficult to know how his second forename should be spelt. The title page of *Slavery Doomed* had 'Milnes'. So did, for instance, *England ' s Danger and Her Safety* , another Edge work (London, 1864). 'Frederick Milnes Edge' appeared on both the title page and page 31.



ENGLAND'S DANGER

AND

HER SAFETY.

A LETTER

TO

EARL RUSSELL, K.G.,

HER MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

BY

FREDERICK MILNES EDGE.

LONDON:
WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY. W.
1864.

With the above biographical basics about Edge in place, the September-October 1985 *Chess Notes* (C.N. 1030) was able to add a few extra details regarding his father:

> 'The 1851 census makes it clear that Thomas Edge's company was sizable since it is stated that he employed 7 Clerks, 2 Foremen, 77 Men and 20 Boys. We have, in fact, now learned that he was responsible for the introduction of gas-lighting to both Jersey and Guernsey. This information comes from *Gas in Jersey 1831-1981* compiled by Roger Long (published by the Jersey Gas Company Ltd in 1981). It records that T.E. was President/Chairman of the Jersey Gas Company from 1831 to 1856. From page 9 of the book: "In his English affairs Thomas Edge became bankrupt and on 30

> September 1850 a receiver sold the St Helier gasworks to local trustees". (N.B. 1850 is an error for 1856.) An article noting T.E.'s major contribution to gas-making in Guernsey is to be found in the *Guernsey Evening Press and Star* , 25 November 1980 (150th anniversary).'

Since the above was written (i.e. in the mid-1980s) no further biographical information of substance about Frederick Edge seems to have come to light.

David Lawson's book *Paul Morphy The Pride and Sorrow of Chess* (New York, 1976) is one of the most detailed biographies of a chess master. It contains a large amount of information about the abortive attempts to arrange a match between Staunton and Morphy and the involvement of Edge. Lawson made use of many of Edge's letters to Fiske:

- 6 July 1858 (page 106)
- 6 and 13 August 1858 (pages 108-110 and page 112)
- 16 September 1858 (page 158 and page 165)
- 18 November 1858 (page 163)
- 6 January 1859 (page 185)
- 10 February 1859 (page 115 and page 188)
- 25 March 1859 (page 116)
- 3 April 1859 (page 148).

On page 115 Lawson assessed the relationship between Morphy and Edge:

> 'There has been some talk that Morphy was unduly influenced by Edge, especially on the matter of the Staunton match, but we have seen that Edge was more confident than Morphy that the match would ultimately take place. In any case, Morphy was a self-willed person, and he made his own decisions. Edge always played a subordinate role in Morphy's affairs, and chess historians are greatly beholden to Frederick Milne Edge for his factual accounts of the events which occurred while he was with Morphy, which was practically all the time Morphy was abroad. This writer would agree with Philip W. Sergeant, who states in his book *A Century of British Chess* "that my own reading of Edge did not lead me to think him a liar".
>
> Edge was in effect Morphy's shadow, acting as his secretary and companion. It is evident from his letters to Fiske and from his books that Edge was ever solicitous of Morphy, attending him in health and sickness, helping him with his correspondence, and even serving as his valet, carrying his underlinen to him, etc.'

The extract in Lawson's book (page 188) from Edge's letter to Fiske of 10 February 1859 gave Edge's account of his break-up with Morphy:

> 'You will perceive that I have quitted Paris, leaving Paul Morphy alone. The fact is – since his match with Anderssen he has quite forsaken chess and feeling that there was no longer any chance of his playing anyone, I knew I was of no further utility.'

Lawson then commented:

> 'Of course Edge now had much more time to himself. But it would appear that there were other reasons for Edge's leaving Morphy of which the former never spoke. Nowhere in Edge's letters to Fiske or elsewhere is there any satisfactory explanation for Morphy's coolness toward Edge, who had labored so diligently and faithfully for him. In the letter to Fiske of February 10 mentioned above, Edge says that toward the end of January he had begun work on a book about Morphy. Without doubt he wanted primarily to give the world the story of Morphy's trials and triumphs in Europe, such that he knew no one else could furnish.
>
> But Morphy disliked publicity of any sort, especially when it dealt with his chess activity. It is probable that Morphy had seen some of Edge's manuscript and, disliking its treatment of the Staunton affair, had refused to sanction its appearance in book form. And Morphy also apparently objected to Edge's treatment of other matters.'

No picture of Edge is known to exist. Below is a seldom-seen sketch of Morphy in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 31 October 1857, page 345:

David Hooper (1915-1998) voiced a number of criticisms of Edge in a review of Lawson's book (*BCM*, January 1978, pages 33-34). There follow some excerpts from the review:

> 'A journalist, Frederic Milne Edge, stirred up a dispute. This led to a myth, enshrined by a psychoanalyst, Ernest Jones, to the effect that Morphy's retirement, and subsequent decline, was caused by Staunton's refusal to play. However, the author points out that before Morphy went to Europe he had already decided to give up serious play when he returned home.'

'One discerns the scheming hand of Edge, who made a handsome profit reporting Morphy's exploits. Edge also found it profitable to invent baddies (Staunton, Harrwitz). As a consequence Harrwitz lost his job at the Café de la Régence. Staunton took Edge's insinuations like a man, and never allowed them to influence his high opinion of Morphy's skill.'

'It is regrettable that Morphy should have been so misled, but he came to Europe alone, and Edge was helpful to him in many ways. In January 1859 the Morphy-Edge "friendship" was broken. Edge had got what he wanted, and he hurried home to be first in the market with a book about Morphy.'

'In hindsight, he [Morphy] must have greatly regretted Edge's influence which caused him to act so uncharacteristically.'

Hooper's review called Lawson's interpretation 'biassed, with unfortunate results'. Whyld, his *Companion* co-author, also reviewed Lawson's book, on pages 42-45 of the January 1980 *CHESS* . One passage follows:

'Edge was a proven liar whose book on Morphy ("No gentleman would have written it" page 189) is often relied upon for unsubstantiated facts. No-one seems to have investigated the later life of Edge. Surely Morphy was not his only victim? The evidence against him is conclusive.'

For the record, the 'gentleman' quote from page 189 of Lawson's book was written by W.H. Kent. However, Lawson wrote immediately afterwards: 'The book hardly merits such utter condemnation.'

Hooper also set out his views on Morphy in the course of correspondence with us, and we subsequently reproduced some extracts. See C.N.s 3227 and 3235.

An historian who worked hard to rehabilitate Staunton up to and including the 1970s was R.N. Coles (1907-1982). *Howard Staunton, the English World Chess Champion* by R.D. Keene and R.N. Coles (St Leonards on Sea, 1975) had the following remark on page 21:

'Morphy's ardent but polemical supporter, F.M. Edge, a reporter for the American *Herald* , published his version of the letters between the two men [Staunton and Morphy] in a form most damaging to Staunton and one which is by no means devoid of bias. The great majority of American chess writers since then, with the notable exception of Bobby Fischer, have suffered from what may be termed the Morphy-Edge syndrome.'

Whether Coles' co-author shared that view is another question. At all events, 1975 was also the year that this appeared on page 174 of *Chess Olympiad Nice 1974* by R. Keene and D. Levy:

'We feel that the actions of the FIDE congress at Nice and those of the President, Dr Euwe, in particular, represent the biggest scandal the chess world has seen since Staunton refused to play a match with Morphy.'

Coles, for his part, reiterated to us in a letter dated 11 March 1978 that Lawson suffered from the Morphy-Edge syndrome, '*like most American writers on Morphy's relations with Staunton*'. That viewpoint may be contrasted with an observation by Dale Brandreth on page 141 of the July 1985 *APCT News Bulletin*:

> '... the fact is that the British have always had their "thing" about Morphy. They just can't seem to accept that Staunton was an unmitigated bastard in his treatment of Morphy because he knew damned well he could never have made any decent showing against him in a match.'

Making a general point about *The Companion*, Fred Wilson wrote on page 114 of the 1992 *American Chess Journal*, 'There appears to be a clear anti-American bias in the book'. The issue of national bias does, unfortunately, require consideration in the Staunton-Morphy affair. In an attempt to achieve balance in our own book *World Chess Champions* (Oxford, 1981), for the Staunton chapter we picked Coles (England) and, for the Morphy chapter, David Lawson (United States).

It will be noted from the present article that the main criticism of Edge (an Englishman who was undeniably anti-Staunton) has come from his fellow countrymen. On the lack of a match against Morphy, Staunton has, over the years, been berated by writers of many nationalities, but the strongest *general* attacks on him have undoubtedly come from the United States, particularly from neo-historians of past generations. For example, in the Preface to his book *A Treasury of British Chess Masterpieces* (London, 1950) Fred Reinfeld wrote (page v):

> 'There is no Staunton game – it takes too much time to find a game by him which one can *enjoy*.'

On page 9 of Napier's *Paul Morphy and the Golden Age of Chess* (New York, 1957) Reinfeld wrote:

> 'It may be true, as a noted psychoanalyst has claimed, that Morphy's life was ruined by Staunton's contemptuous rebuffs; but while Staunton's tomes moulder in provincial libraries, Morphy's masterpieces still continue to delight every generation of chess players.'

That is not to say that divisions have been on strict national lines. Many, though not all, historians have striven for objectivity, and some of the sharpest anti-Staunton barbs have come from England. The chapter devoted to him in Hartston's *The Kings of Chess* is entitled 'The Pompous Years'.

The first article specifically devoted to the Morphy-Edge relationship appears to have been by G.H. Diggle. Writing on pages 261-265 of the September 1964 *BCM* under the title 'The Morphy-Edge Liaison', Diggle stated:

'Patrons of Edge's book received undeniable value and entertainment for their money. Edge never wrote a dull sentence, or bungled a good story. His style is breezy, though somewhat coarse-grained, and the adulation of Morphy is sometimes bumptiously overdone.'

And a little later:

'Unhappily, however, Edge is all too often more of a menace to a later historian than a help. For the book, with all its merits, is in certain parts one of the most venomous and untrustworthy in the whole of chess literature.'

In reply to Skoff's criticism of his *BCM* article, Diggle said in C.N. 1012:

' *When I wrote "The Morphy-Edge Liaison" in 1964 I was a "fiery youth" of only 61, a lifelong admirer of Staunton who for four decades had witnessed my hero denigrated in potboiler after potboiler not only as the "cowardly evader of Morphy" but a producer of "devilish bad games". As I considered that the main source of all this was Edge, I launched forth my "counterblast" in an attempt to redress the balance. If I have now lived to be myself "counterblasted" out of my "wheelchair", I must accept this as one of the hazards of indiscreet longevity.* '

The Staunton-Morphy-Edge debate in *Chess Notes* continued until the magazine closed down in December 1989, and summarizing here the multiplicity of points discussed would be an impossible task. The contributions – often of outstanding quality – did not always make for easy reading, but there can be little doubt of the material's importance for all future writers on the nineteenth-century trio. For ease of reference, the numbers of the *C.N.* items in the debate are: 840, 943, 957, 1012, 1031, 1124, 1149, 1172, 1228, 1269, 1270, 1358, 1416, 1417, 1439, 1440, 1480, 1499, 1569, 1570, 1633, 1642, 1643, 1669, 1700, 1722, 1757, 1758, 1818 and

1932. Moreover, Skoff submitted a 16-page letter dated 17 November 1989 which arrived too late to be included in the final issue of the magazine; copies were made available upon request to interested readers.

In that letter Skoff wrote:

> ' *I have found Edge more reliable than Staunton: Edge did not cut out any crucial paragraph in any letter, as Staunton did, nor explode inaccurately in an Anti-Book statement, nor unfairly abuse his opponents, etc.* '

Time and again, in *C.N.* and elsewhere, commentators have returned to the question of Edge's truthfulness. The word 'liar' has been applied to him by a small number of (English, notably) authors, but what is the precise basis? That he was anti-Staunton is incontestable, but was being anti-Staunton a sign of mendacity, prejudice or, for that matter, clear-sightedness? Nor can it be denied that Edge's prose was racy and anecdotal, yet that does not necessarily entail dishonesty. Edge unquestionably made factual mistakes and misjudgements, but if that sufficed to prove him a liar the queue in the chess world to cast the first stone would be short indeed. Can four or five thumping examples, absolutely clear-cut, of Edge's alleged mendacity be set out on a single page of paper or screen (as they so easily could be regarding many other chess players and writers, past and present)? [This question was asked in 2000. The requested examples have not yet been forthcoming.]

In his final contribution to *Chess Notes* (C.N. 1932), published in the magazine's last issue, Diggle drew the strands of the affair together and reported that he had begun to wonder ...:

> '... *whether Edge* ' *s book did Staunton as much harm in the nineteenth century as what Goulding Brown called P.W. Sergeant* ' *s* " *tremendous indictment* " *did to his memory in the twentieth. Edge* ' *s book came out after the whole* " *Staunton Affair* " *had been chewed over by the Chess Press* –

interest was evaporating and faded away over the years. Indeed, when Staunton died in 1874 and Morphy followed ten years later, the respective obituaries scarcely mentioned their abortive match, apart from a brief unfavourable reference to Staunton ′ s conduct in the City of London Chess Magazine *by W. N. Potter. But in 1916, with Edge half a century out of print, Sergeant revived the matter in his great classic which remained the standard work on Morphy for the next 60 years. In his findings he leant heavily on Edge, and he also recounted with some gusto Morphy ′ s juvenile joke about Staunton ′ s " devilish bad games ″ , a jest which so appealed to him that he repeated it both in* Morphy Gleanings *and* A Century of British Chess*. The result was that for several decades " prolific ″ chess writers (not having time for too much research) took their cue from Sergeant, and depicted Staunton not only as a " craven ″ (Reinfeld) best known as the man who avoided Morphy, but so weak that " it is just too incredible that ... he could have achieved such success and*

exerted such influence for so long ″ (Horowitz). But at last a very great voice spoke and turned the tide. Bobby Fischer in a famous article included Staunton as one of the ten greatest masters of all time. Ray Keene and R.N. Coles followed ten years later with Howard Staunton, the English World Chess Champion*, where his brilliant combinative powers were belatedly recognized. Since then Staunton ′ s fortunes have fluctuated; in David Lawson ′ s massive work (1976) he sinks somewhat, in* The Companion *(1984) he rises again, and in* Chess Notes*, stimulated by fresh discoveries, the Staunton-Morphy-Edge battle has raged ever since. But now that C.N., to whose pages the belligerents owe so much for their new material, is alas! coming to an end, will they agree to a " draw by repetition ″ or resume the fight elsewhere? Time alone will tell. ′*

Those words were written in 1989, and Diggle died some three years later. Throughout the 1990s the 'Staunton-Morphy-Edge battle' stood more or less adjourned, but around 2000 there were distinct signs of a revival of interest. The present article has provided a substantial quantity of information and views about the least-known of the protagonists, Frederick Edge, the aim being to ensure an informed debate on one of chess history's most engrossing controversies.

Afterword (26 June 2005):

From Louis Blair (Urbana, IL, USA):

> *'As regards G.H. Diggle's claim (in C.N. 881) of justification for his 1964* BCM *article "The Morphy-Edge Liaison", he acknowledged after further discussion: "I did not pull my punches and one or two were arguably 'below the belt'." (C.N. 1012) and "There is indeed a sort of 'no man's land' between fact and fiction into which I sometimes strayed, playing Edge by ear rather than from the music". (C.N. 1228)*
>
> *David Hooper's assertion in the 1978* BCM *that "Edge also found it profitable to invent baddies (Staunton, Harrwitz)" is quoted, but Diggle acknowledged in C.N. 1012 that Staunton's "conduct in many respects cannot be excused"; moreover, Staunton himself ridiculed Harrwitz's behavior (Lawson, page 132). Hooper's review in the* BCM *identified no specific inventions by Edge that caused Harrwitz to lose his job at the Café de la Régence.*

In the same review Hooper referred to the Morphy-Edge friendship being broken after Edge "had got what he wanted", but the available evidence (Lawson, page 189, for example) is that the friendship was broken by Morphy. Hooper's review also gave no source for his assertions about why Edge "hurried home".

Addition on 16 July 2005: A separate feature article giving the complete texts of two letters from Edge to Fiske discussed above.

Afterword (7 September 2006):

Regarding Edge's letter to Fiske of 25 March 1859, below are some extracts from our correspondence with K. Whyld:

K.W. to E.W.: 25 November 1982:

> 'I have a great deal about Edge, some of which I have doubts about making available for publication (such as his claim to have been Morphy's lover).'

E.W. to K.W.: 26 February 1983:

> 'As you know, I take an interest in F.M. Edge. A few letters ago you mentioned a claim he made that he had been Morphy's lover. I wonder if you would be prepared to give me further details of this, not necessarily for publication.'

K.W. to E.W.: 5 March 1983:

> 'About Edge, I can say no more at the moment. I was given sight of some letters to help in writing the *Companion*, but I undertook not to publish anything or reveal their whereabouts. In the next few months, when I am up

to date with much that has been neglected because of "the book" I will re-open the topic and see if I can get permission to release anything I find.'

K.W. to E.W.: 18 April 1985:

'... I agree with Skoff that the word "lover", in 1859 – perhaps even in 1939 – did not necessarily imply anything carnal. (Just as "having intercourse" meant simply holding a conversation).'

K.W. to E.W.: 14 March 1987:

'It seems that Skoff had interpreted the quotation in the *Companion* as some sort of claim to a homosexual relationship. This was astonishing to me. Obviously the whole quote was metaphorical in that he was not saying he really was a brother or mother or that Morphy was a god. And as he well knows, in Victorian times the word "lover" did not imply a physical relationship. As I said to Skoff when I wrote to him 3 iii, our quotation showed that Edge had an unbalanced view of Morphy and the conclusion should be that any evidence from him that has no independent support should be treated cautiously.'

E.W. to K.W.: 23 March 1987:

'I am surprised by your comment that "obviously the whole quote was metaphorical". Your letter of 25 November 1982 referred to Edge's "claim to have been Morphy's lover". Was that based on something other than the Edge-Fiske letter?' (No reply to this question.)

E.W. to K.W.: 5 July 1987 (pre-publication discussion of a submission by K.W. to C.N. 1440):

'Your point 2). Unless I am misreading your words, aren't you on dangerous ground here? You seem to be saying that you knew in advance that the average reader would misunderstand the letter quote, but you didn't consider it necessary to avoid that misunderstanding.' (No reply.)

E.W. to K.W.: 13 August 1987:

'Although I have not yet mentioned it in C.N., there is still the outstanding question (top of page 2 of my letter to you of 23 March) on the "lover" matter. Yours of 28 March did not answer it.'

K.W. to E.W.: 27 August 1987:

'I cannot remember what was in my mind when I wrote to you on 25 xi 1982, but I doubt very much if I implied anything other than that Edge had made astonishing claims.'

E.W. to K.W.: 6 September 1987:

> ‘Edge: here you’ve rather lost me; I am puzzled as to what you could have had in mind in 1982 other than the now-published Edge letter.’ (No reply.)

K.W. to E.W.: 20 October 1989 (in response to debate material for C.N. 1932, in which we revealed publicly for the first time what K.W. had written to us on 25 November 1982):

> ‘I regret that you have “moreaued” a light-hearted remark not intended for publication into a part of a serious discussion, although it does make clear why you had the inclination to consider the “homosexual” suggestion in the first instance. I have not checked, but did you respond to my letter of 25 November in any way that led to a fuller and more considered treatment of the Edge letter?’

(By ‘moreaued’, a private allusion, K.W. meant: taking an obvious joke and treating it seriously.)

E.W. to K.W.: 25 October 1989:

> ‘Your Edge question: it must be as easy for you to verify our correspondence as it is for me. If you do so, you will find that I alerted you to the possibility of my publishing your 1982 comment.’ (No reply.)

By that time we had, in any case, all but given up with K.W., on account of his persistent muddling and distortion of many matters, quite apart from the Edge-Fiske letter.

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