

チェスと社交

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The Game of Chess and Sociability

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The game of chess has a long history in various parts of the world, and each society has its own emphasis. In the case of Caroline Howe (1721-1814) chess provided a locus where her sociability and intelligence were actively engaged. One of her matches resulted in a literary piece of 120 lines in heroic couplets. The game between Howe and Valentine Morris of Piercefield was described by Morris's sister, Sarah Wilmot. Wilmot, beginning with the build-up with strategies, followed by attacks, defenses, anxieties, premature rejoicing, despair and final triumph, describes the match, which inspired epic grandeur. She also resorts to the Greek mythology as well as local myth and legendary figures.

On another occasion, chess helped to open the door of acquaintance between an enlightened man and an intelligent socialite. Benjamin Franklin enjoyed chess games with Caroline Howe during the difficult time just before the War of Independence. Accordingly she prepared meetings between Franklin and her brother, Richard Howe, later the First Lord of Admiralty and first Earl Howe.