

# Story Told of the Historian of Chess

By Dr. H. J. Ralston

The following obituary account is abstracted from the August issue of the British Chess Magazine:

"H. J. R. Murray, the great historian of chess, died May last, at the age of 86.

"Murray was the eldest son of Sir James A. H. Murray, the pioneering editor of the great Oxford English Dictionary, and was born June 24, 1868. He was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, where he won honors in mathematics. Later in life he became Board of Education inspector of schools.

"Murray had become enthusiastic over chess, his interest in the history of the game having been aroused in 1893. In his own words, his aim became to trace the development of the modern European game of chess from the first appearance of its ancestor, the Indian 'Chaturanga,' in the beginning of the 7th Century, A. D.

"Murray's historical researches were largely based upon study of original materials. As an example of his devotion to his task, Murray made a thorough study of Arabic, and it was his knowledge of this language which enabled him to make his remarkable discovery of the chess work of Allajlaj, a Mohammedan chess master of the 10th Century.

"Murray's History of Chess appeared in 1913, published by the Oxford University Press. This great work of 900 pages was lavishly illustrated and con-

tained scores of chess diagrams. It was divided into two main sections, dealing with chess in Asia and chess in Europe. Murray provided evidence that the game of chess, both in play and problems, followed the great political and religious movements in Asia and Europe. Chess probably did not appear in England until the Norman conquest.

"The work is one to browse in through the years. Murray has left an enduring monument, the greatest book ever to be written on the game of chess.

"In 1952, Murray published 'A History of Board Games other than Chess,' and also wrote a shorter history of chess and a history of draughts, both unpublished.

"Apart from his interest in board games and mathematics, Murray was interested in genealogy and local history. At the time of his death he was working on a history of Heyshott, the village to which he had retired."

The three-mover by Heathcote, published in this column two weeks ago, is solved by Kt-B7, etc.

Here is a 4-move miniature by

W. A. Shinkman which should give you a little work:

White (three men): King on QKt7; Queen on QB3; Knight on K4.

Black (four men): King on QR8; Rook on QKt 7; Pawns on KKt3 and QKt3. White to play and mate in four moves.



Task No. 112—By H. E. Knott  
White Mates in Two Moves  
(Value Four Points)  
Answer to Task No. 111: Q-KKt2