

The fact that the words for the 'bishop' and 'knight' are the ordinary words for 'elephant' and 'horse' seems to me to be some evidence that those pieces were fashioned to represent these animals when the game was introduced into the Malay-speaking countries; while the unintelligible name of the 'rook' seems in the same way to show that even at that time its original meaning had been forgotten. The game is, I believe, played by Malays according to the rules prevailing in India; but on that point I cannot speak as an expert.

It may be worth while to add that chess is referred to in the well-known *Sajarah Malayu*, a historical compilation of the early years of the seventeenth century, which, however, embodies traditions, and possibly records, of considerably older date. In the eighteenth chapter of that work mention is made of the visit of one Tan Bahra of Pasei (in Sumatra) to Malacca, and the record adds: "Now this Tan Bahra was a very skilful chess-player, and one that was unequalled at the game in that age, and he played at chess with the men of Malacca . . . and beat them all: but Tan Pakarma, son of the Bandahara Paduka Raja, was able to make some resistance . . . and if Tan Bahra threw away a pawn at the corner, then he was beaten by Tan Pakarma." The passage is of some interest as indicating that the practice of giving odds in this way was known centuries ago to Eastern players, though as "a pawn at the corner" would presumably be a rook's pawn, the method seems to have differed in detail from the modern practice.—I am, yours sincerely,

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7. PALK'S BAY AND STRAIT.

DEAR SIR,—In Sir W. W. Hunter's "Imperial Gazetteer of India" (xi, 11) "Palk's Bay and Straits" are described as a "gulf and channel between the mainland of India and the north part of Ceylon, named by the Dutch after

Governor Palk." That the strait and bay were called after Sir Robert Palk, who was Governor of Madras from 1763 to 1767, is doubtless correct; though when the naming took place I have failed to discover. (The earliest English map of India in which I have found the name is one of 1773.) But what had the Dutch to do with the conferring of Palk's name on the strait and bay? They had no cause for gratitude towards the authorities at Madras; for the latter had had the meanness to despatch secretly, in 1762, an ambassador to the King of Kandy, who was then at war with the Dutch in Ceylon, to endeavour to gain from that potentate some concession to their own advantage and to the prejudice of the Hollanders, with whom they were supposed to be on terms of amity. When the Dutch took Kandy in 1765 they discovered there documentary evidence of the treachery of their good friends and neighbours, in the shape of a letter to the king from Sir George Pigot, the former Governor of Madras.

The Geographical Glossary in the Schlagintweits' "Results of a Scientific Mission to India and High Asia" (iii, 231) has the astounding entry: "Palk, a strait between the Karnátik and the north-western end of Ceylon. Singhal. 'The whirl.'" This has been copied into Dr. J. J. Egli's "Etymologisch-geographisches Lexikon," on the authority of Hermann Schlagintweit. I cannot imagine whence the latter obtained his derivation. 'Palk' is certainly not Sinhalese; and there is no word like it in that language meaning 'whirl.' In Portuguese times the Gulf of Mannār was known as the *Baixos de Chilão* ('shallows of Chilaw'); the Sinhalese name of Chilaw is Halāwata; and *halāwa* in Sinhalese means a whirlpool or eddy. This may explain Schlagintweit's erroneous statement.

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February 12, 1898.