

But of far greater variety and complexity than the sets and boards designed by men through the years are the actual games themselves. Chess is part art, part science, part robot, one former world champion described it as a "struggle".

Chess has been called an intellectual sewer", "the athletics of the brain", "elaborate frivolity"; H. G. Wells criticized chess as "... this most absorbing of occupations, least satisfying of desires"; Montaigne declared it was "too serious a diversion". But whatever chess is, or is not, its unique lure cannot be denied. It has attracted men of all races and cultures; it has witnessed the goings and comings of rulers, dynasties and empires, and there is every chance that it will continue to enchant men long after the last "Sputnik" sputters out.

In Russia, chess is almost a religion, with millions of players, a daily chess newspaper, dozens of periodicals, books, clubs and federations, all devoted to the study and play of chess. Devotees of the game all over the world play it by mail, by radio, telephone, by word of mouth. Its appeal is truly universal, like that of music.

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One day, a constable stationed at a detachment in the far West, learned that the Patrol Sergeant was due in town. He badly needed a haircut and as he knew the NCO would want to see him, he hastily departed for a barber shop. Presently the Patrol Sergeant arrived at the detachment, asked for the constable and when told he was getting a haircut, set out to canvass the local barber shops. In due course he found the right shop, with the constable neatly dressed in uniform undergoing the expert ministrings of the barber. After some preliminary small-talk, the NCO asked the obvious: "What are you doing in here?"

"I'm getting my hair cut," replied the constable.

"What, on duty?" asked the Sergeant.

"Well," said the constable, "it grows on duty."

"It doesn't all grow on duty", retorted the NCO.

"I'm not getting it all cut off either" returned the constable.

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