



# Carmelo Coco

## The chess quotations of the books of Sir Walter Scott

Quotations - Volume 1

The articles in this book:

- The chess gift of Queen Elizabeth I, in **Kenilworth**;
- Two chessboards in the inventory of the furniture of the castle of Kenilworth;
- The notation on Napoleon, in **Journal**;
- The pensive game of chess, in **Guy Mannering**;
- The amusements of the Highlanders, in **A legend of**

## Montrose;

- Game at Chess of Caxton in the story of Jonathan Oldbuck, in **The Antiquary**;
- The minstrel who knew the game of chess, in **Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border**;
- The domestic spirit that suggests the moves of the game of chess, in **Letters of Demonology**;
- The rider that saved the future King Charles II from the hate of Cromwell, in **Woodstock**;
- In politics the treasurers and the ministers are moved as in the game of chess, a tower or a pawn is captured, in **Bride of Lammermoor**;
- The only company Scott had during his indisposition: books and chess, in the preface to **Waverley**;
- The chess and Napoleon, in **The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte**;
- The strange inheritance of the Spanish game, in **The Black Dwarf**.

A page:

Game at Chess of Caxton in the story of Jonathan Oldbuck, in **The Antiquary**

The antiquary Jonathan Oldbuck, (Laird of Monkbarns), in the third chapter of the second volume of the romance **The antiquary** (1) tells a story about the book of Caxton, Game at Chess:

*- Davy Wilson, - he said, - commonly called Snuffy Davy, from his inveterate addiction to black rappee, was the very prince of scouts for searching blind alleys, cellars, and stalls for rare volumes. He had the scent of a slow-hound, sir, and the snap of a bull-dog. ... Snuffy Davy bought the Game of Chess, 1474, the first book ever printed in England, from a stall in Holland, for about two groschen, or twopence of our money. He sold*

*it to Osborne for twenty pounds, and as many books as came to twenty pounds more. Osborne resold this inimitable windfall to Dr. Askew for sixty guineas. At Dr. Askew's sale, - continued the old gentleman, kindling as he spoke, - this inestimable treasure blazed forth in its full value, and was purchased by Royalty itself for one hundred and seventy pounds! - Could a copy now occur, Lord only knows, - he ejaculated, with a deep sigh and lifted-up hands - Lord only knows what would be its ransom; and yet it was originally secured, by skill and research, for the easy equivalent of two-pence sterling.*

In a note, Scott confirms that Wilson is a person who really existed: *This bibliomaniacal anecdote is literally true; and David Wilson, the author need not tell his brethren of the Roxburghe and Bannatyne Clubs, was a real personage.*

Note:

**1) The Antiquary. By the Author of "Waverley" and "Guy Mannering". In Three Volumes. Vol. I (II-III).**

Published in 1816 in Edinburgh (James Ballantyne and Co. For Archibald Constable and Co.) and London (Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown).

(San Gregorio, 08/20/2007)

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