



The Famous Robot Chess Player — Which Defeated Napoleon Among Other Famous Personages — Was Really a Fake. The Robot's Brain Was a Tiny Dwarf Who Crawled Inside the Base, as Seen in the Diagram, and Operated the Robot's Hands to Make the Moves.

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Perhaps the most famous of all automations was the wonderful Turkish chess player created by the Austrian Baron de Kempelen. About the time the American Colonists were fighting for their independence this robot chess player was the rage of Europe. Even Napoleon played against the mechanical master and — like everyone else — was defeated.

The secret of this chess playing automaton was hidden for many years. Only after a

1769

long time was it discovered that in the base of the robot could be concealed a tiny crippled Polish nobleman who was a fabulous chess player. It was he who controlled the moves made by the automaton and who could watch the progress of the game from carefully hidden openings. The famed Turkish robot chess player later came to America and is said to have been destroyed by fire in 1848 at Philadelphia. Diagrams at the bottom of this page show how the dwarf was concealed in the base.

1854

