

OUR SICK CONTRIBUTOR'S FELLOW BOARDERS. No. 12.

MR. FREDERICK BLOW.

This is a new boarder. The last three weeks having been so fully occupied in describing our German friend, I have not had time to notice the recent arrival. Bald head, but not a sign of grey hair—what locks he has are almost raven black; forehead high, and decidedly intellectual; deeply-set eyes; full of fun, but not trustworthy; scanty moustache, and fragments of whiskers, which would be "mutton chops" if they were able. He is excellent company, and a decided acquisition to our dinner table. He is full of anecdotes of adventures which happened to himself. These he tells capitally. It is true that it is impossible to believe a word that he utters; but, surely, some credit is due to his marvellous powers of invention.

He certainly has been a great traveller,—(the Captain is nothing to him!)—but I can hardly credit that, as he would have us believe, he has been everywhere. For instance, the "Scientific Boarder" has recently received a present of a valuable collection of African beetles. On shewing them to Mr. Blow, the latter gentleman exclaimed, "Oh! when I was in Timbuctoo in 1846, I saw some of this kind as large as mice." The man of science, who generally knows what he is talking about, states that the beetles in question are to be found at the Cape, and nowhere else! Moreover, Mr. Blow's description of the manners and customs of Timbuctoo is strangely at variance with the accounts of a usually-considered veracious traveller, whom Mr. B. familiarly and contemptuously calls "Barth." And then the way he contrasts, antithetically, the different regions of the globe in his narratives! He speaks of Sierra Leo. and Spitzbergen in a breath! He alludes to Bokhara and the Salt Lake City as if they were a short railway distance from each other! There is not a mountain that he has not ascended, be it the Matterhorn, the Peter Botte, or Chimborazo, and yet he came to ignominious grief, the other day, in attempting to scale a fence eight feet high! He has bathed in almost every river in the world! Talk of Byron and the Hellespont!—*he* has swam across it, at least half a dozen times! Strange that he always refuses to accompany the "Athlete" to a morning plunge in the swimming bath, where the young gentleman wants him to give him some lessons! The other day, he was commencing to describe the Antarctic Continent, but a twinkle in the Captain's eye warned him to desist.

He professes to speak all known tongues. He trotted out, the other day, for our diversion, a little Hindustani; but when, again, that *enfant terrible*, the Captain, answered him in the same tongue with amazing fluency, he judged it prudent to desist.

But who is he? What is he?

He will soon satisfy you with great readiness. His ancestor, Roger de Bleaux, was well known in the history of the Crusades,—(which history?) He was one of the celebrated Runnymede Barons; who took such liberties with King John. (Oh, for a list!) As the Norman and Saxon dialects became amalgamated, the name became corrupted into Blow. But still, under this new appellation, his ancestors were always distinguished. "Search," said he, "search through the history of every battle of these times, and, in the thickest of the fight, you will always meet with a *Blow*." "Oh! oh!" from the *enfant terrible*, chorused by the "Scientific," the "Athlete," and the "Old Lady." Mrs. X.—smiled graciously,—said he was very funny, and enquired if he were the author of "Eva Head?"

"Oh! no! Eva Head is written by a lady,—a niece of my old friend, Lord —: she is at present travelling in America for her health. I once wrote a novel of this kind: I regret that it is now out of print, or I would ask your opinion on it. I lost the last copy of it when I was ship-wrecked in 1849, on one of the Feejee Islands!"

But still, what is he? What does he?

He will tell you glibly. Of late years the Blows have turned their attention to mercantile pursuits. They have relatives and branches in all parts of the world. There is, for instance, the firm of Spitz, Koff & Blow at St. Petersburg,—the greatest fur merchants in the world! He is a junior partner in that firm. He has come out here to "develop" the existing commerce between Russia and the Saskatchewan. His nephew will be out here, either by next mail or the mail after, and will proceed immediately to Red River, previous to making an extensive tour in the North-West. He would like to have gone there himself, but he felt that he was older than when last there; besides, he had forgotten most of those Indian dialects, which he used to speak so readily!

It had been observed that, though very polite to ladies in general, he rather shunned the Old Lady, who returned the compliment. We asked her the reason. She told us, in confidence, that she might be mistaken,—but if not, he was an individual whom she remembered in Canada twenty years ago, and who had bolted with thirty dollars from a boarder's trunk. She added, "he has not been heard of since." His name then was Mr. Hard. We enquired of the landlady what baggage he had. "Nothing," said she, "but a small valise and a hat case, with no hat in it." This looked suspicious, but the landlady also informed us that he had left his trunks in New York, for his nephew to bring on with him. A consultation was held, and, as usual, nothing was done except to look up carefully, all our trunks and drawers.

The next day we met with an unexpected ally in the the shape of

"Yankee," who had been absent for more than a week. During dinner Mr. Blow enlivened us with some whale stories,—hair-breadth escapes in which he, of course, was the principal actor. He informed us that once, near the coast of Greenland, he put off with a party in a very small boat, to try and capture a whale which had shewn itself. At the first stroke of the harpoon the whale elevated his tail and knocked all the oars out of the hands of the boatmen! There was no escape,—up went the tail again and, this time, the boat would have been inevitably swamped had not Mr. Blow, with infinite presence of mind, and by a single stroke, cut off the whale's tail and, using it as a paddle, succeeded in reaching the vessel!!

"Did the whale *blow*, Sir?" enquired the Yankee.

"Of course he did," said Mr. Blow, hardly condescending to notice the interruption. But the Yankee was not to be out-done in his own peculiar element. He could tell whale stories too, and he immediately related one, which, for improbability, beat the others hollow. Mr. Blow was evidently rather uncomfortable. He felt that he was being *found out*.

"Were you ever in Chicago, Sir?" asked the Yankee.

"Never, Sir," was the reply.

This was rather remarkable, inasmuch as only three days previously, he had related to us several adventures which had occurred during his residence in that city.

"I remember," pursued his tormentor, "that, some years ago, there was, in Chicago, a forwarding firm, called Blow, Hard & Co. Nobody ever saw Blow, or knew who were the "Co.," but Hard I knew well. He was a man of about your size, only he wore a wig!"

Mr. Blow visibly changed color.

"They had any quantity of goods consigned to them, and I was fool enough to trust them with a lot. This Hard was 'tarnation smart.' One morning he was nowhere to be found, nor any goods either. If ever I meet that coon again, one of us shall give the other a whipping."

Mr. Blow remained silent for the rest of the dinner hour, and then retired precipitately to his room, locking the door. There could be no mistake now, and taking the American into consultation, we agreed to inform the police on the following morning. But we were too late. During the night there was a mysterious disappearance of Mr. Blow and his hat case. His valise was forced open, and disclosed, to wondering eyes, an old, well-worn, tawdry, circus-rider's dress, with the spangles much faded. He owed the landlady nearly a month's board, and a corner grocery for three dozen of beer!

And we have lost another boarder. The "Exemplary" has departed. He brought home the number of DIOGENES in which he was described, and openly accused the landlady of being the authoress! In vain she protested her innocence. The young gentleman left that night,—which was last Saturday,—finishing up with a row with his washerwoman more violent than any which had taken place before!

DIOGENES ON FINANCE.

A casual observer might naturally suppose that everything upon the earth, or on or beneath the waters, was made to contribute to the United States finances. The Customs levy duty on some 4000 and odd articles; the Inland Revenue Department taxes about as many more. Still, DIOGENES thinks he can give the U. S. "Chancellor of the Exchequer" a hint or two tending to extension and profit. Why should not Filibusters, of which every season produces such a plentiful crop, be made subject to an *ad valorem* export duty? An immense revenue might be derived by a special tax on Anglophobists. And, surely, there is great remissness where Circuses, Nigger Minstrels, and Barnum Museums are highly-taxed, in exempting Fenian exhibitions, which are equally harmless, equally amusing, and much more profitable to the proprietors than any one of the foregoing.

N. B.—The Cynic presents his compliments to his friend Grant, and will devote his gracious attention to further suggestions.

THE "PUFF NATIONAL"

Sheridan gave us, in "The Critic," some amusing specimens of Puffs, which he characterized as the "Puff Direct," the "Puff Oblique," &c.

The Editor of the Montreal *Daily News*, with that yearning after originality which marks his genius, introduced his readers, on Wednesday, to the "Puff National," and, elated with the new-born "happy thought," he has given it form and substance in his editorial columns, where it figures in all the glory of leaded type. DIOGENES here reprints it for the benefit of the public in general, and of country editors in particular:—

"We have recently met with several American gentlemen from New York and elsewhere who express themselves as being much surprised at the brilliant appearance presented by many of our leading stores. 'Why,' say they, 'you have stores on Notre Dame and St. James' Streets which would be a credit to Broadway.' None attract more attention than that of Messrs. ' ' ' ' Notre Dame Street. This firm not only make a splendid display of dress goods, etc., in the windows of their establishment, but have on hand one of the largest and best-assorted stocks that has ever been offered to the Montreal public. They are too well known to need anything like 'puffing' (111) and when we inform our readers that Messrs. ' ' ' ' have \$70,000 worth of dry goods which they are going to sell at unusually cheap prices for cash, we have said enough."