

OUR SICK CONTRIBUTOR'S FELLOW BOARDERS.

No. 11.

THE POOR GERMAN—(Continued).

My visit to the unfortunate native of Nuremberg, (not Wurtemberg, as unfortunately mis-printed last week), haunted me. What could I possibly do for him? To help him back to his own country would be useless. He would be at once known and arrested. I determined on consulting the "Captain." If I could only succeed in arousing his dormant energies, I felt sure of his good judgment in the matter. It was with great difficulty that I could persuade him to pay a visit to the old man in his attic. The Captain had, all his life, been swindled by real and sham foreign refugees. He had, therefore, naturally, but little sympathy with this new object of compassion. "His tale," said he, "may be true, but it is one I have often heard used before as a pretext to extort money." He, at last, however, consented to see him. We clambered up the old rickety stairs, when a sound met our ears which made us both pause. "Hush!" whispered the Captain. The old man was playing on his violin some of the grand mass music of Cherubini. I have heard, in my time, some of the great masters of this difficult instrument. I have heard more brilliant execution and more scientific precision; but I never remember to have heard finer tone or more intense feeling than marked the performance of our German friend. He was playing *De Profundis*. The instrument seemed a part of himself. Suddenly he ceased, but, shortly after, began again. This time he was improvising; it was his heart that was speaking through the tones of his instrument. Now a cry of agony, then a mournful wail, and, lastly, changing to a minor key, the sound gradually died away in a sweet melancholy strain, which spoke, as clearly as words, "God's will be done."

The music stopped again, and we heard him putting back the fiddle into its place. We still paused, for a dead silence ensued. He had evidently not returned to his work. We knocked at the door. It was some little time before he heard us and bade us enter. He was sitting on his bed in an agony of grief. Some new misfortune had evidently come upon him. For several minutes he was unable to speak, and he told us frankly and without reserve of his new trouble. His drunken son-in-law had died at last, and his beloved daughter, his Elise and her little "mädchen," (here he pointed to the portrait on the easel), were left alone and penniless in the world. He was still strong, he said, and could work for all three, but where was work to be found? And then his child—she for whose education he had starved himself—she who was delicate and accomplished as a lady—who spoke English and French like a native, and "Ah! Sirs, to hear her play and sing!"—how was she to struggle with the world? Here the Captain interposed, perhaps a little too brusquely, "Could his daughter teach music and languages?" A painful expression crossed the old man's face. She had once lived as a governess in a family in the city, where she was treated as a menial,—where her father could only see her for a short time once a week, and then in the kitchen surrounded by servants, who mimicked his foreign accent and held him up to ridicule. The Captain then told him that, in six months' time, a widowed sister of his was coming out to Canada to keep house for him, and that she was very anxious to meet with a *lady*, (he laid a strong emphasis on the word), to superintend the education of her two daughters—"would his Elise accept the office? Her father should be welcome to the house all day long if he liked, and let any one ridicule him who dared!" The old man was touched, and thanked him heartily. "But you say," said he, "the lady come not here till six months—in six months my daughter starve." Here the Captain, again a little too brusquely as I thought,

made the offer of his purse to supply the wants of that interval. But the old man's feelings were as finely strung as his violin. He was almost indignant. He had never sought charity yet, and never would! He could live on a crust a day, and his daughter should not starve!

The Captain was nettled, but only for a moment. He was a truly charitable man, and to have his bounty refused was to him a novelty. In early life he had known the want of money. When he became better off, he had given of his substance freely—often carelessly. He was too apt to think that all the ills of life could be cured by dispensing what Thackeray called "pills of *Napoleons d'or*." He detested the class of philanthropists who go about

"Sowing hedge-row texts, and passing by."

He, too often, went to the other extreme of throwing money into the ditch, where it produced nothing but dirt. And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, this careless, indolent man of the world could at times give excellent advice. Here is an illustration: He spoke to the old man with deep feeling in the German tongue. He assured him that the money was only offered as a loan, and could be repaid to him when better times came. He was well acquainted with people in the city who had long wanted to find an artistic wood-carver, and he could get him plenty to do. "And remember," said he, still a little sternly, "it is your duty to sacrifice your pride for the sake of your daughter, and," (pointing to the easel), "to protect that lovely child from harm."

He had touched the right chord at last; the appeal was irresistible, and, like a skilful tactician, he followed up his advantage. It was soon agreed that we should all three assemble, that evening, in the Captain's room, after dinner, to talk the matter over, with the assistance of a little tobacco.

As we came down stairs, I could not help remarking a curious expression on the Captain's face. "If," said he, "I do not make that old man happy before he dies, may I be——" Here he shut his door violently, but I fear the expletive was a strong one. This was the first time that I had ever known him approach a profane expression.

May'st thou succeed in thy object, thou strange compound of indolence and benevolence! Of one thing I am certain, the old man has already made *three* happier than thou wast yesterday!

(To be continued.)

MATRIMONY.

DIOGENES is so pleased with the ingenuity of the following advertisement in the *Gazette*, that he willingly gives it a gratuitous insertion:—

"Wanted, a Lady, to superintend the household of a Widower. Remuneration liberal, and no menial labour. A young widow preferred. Address — *Gazette* Office."

The old style of matrimonial advertisement, such as, "A gentleman, aged 46, tired of celibacy, wishes to meet with a lady who," &c., seems to be exploded, or at least it is confined to the London *Weekly Dispatch* and sundry imitative Yankee journals. It is certainly a capital idea to have a lady in the house, as it were on trial. Though doing no "menial labour," one can judge whether she is able to "superintend" menials, and observe whether she drops her "h's," and sundry other more or less important peculiarities. And then, if she is not up to the mark, the widower is in no way compromised, and the widow can be dismissed at a month's warning with no bones broken on either side.

At the same time, the Cynic says to the advertiser, BEWARE! young widows are artful! They may make the sweetest and most amiable of housekeepers before they are wives, but may insist on your dining on "cold shoulder" twice a week ever after. In any case, let not the lady have more than *three* children!