

OUR SICK CONTRIBUTOR'S FELLOW BOARDERS.

No. II.

THE OLD GERMAN—(Concluded).

Dinner was over, and we adjourned, as agreed, to the Captain's room to hold one of Elector Frederick's "tobacco parliaments," on the subject of the old German. There were several most remarkable changes in the disposition of the room. A folio of line engravings,—views of Nuremburg and the neighbourhood,—lay, as if by accident, on the table; and beside it, a finely illustrated copy of Uhland, the artist's poet, *par excellence*. And, ("Oh, Captain, you hypocrite!") how was it, that, open on the desk of the reading chair, lay an old copy of the rhymes of Hans Sachs, the Nuremburg cobbler,—a book which, I am sure, had not been taken down from the shelf for many a year? All the German pipes from the "museum" had been cleared and lay ready for use. The force of hypocrisy could no farther go! Yes, it could! The Captain's usual tippie, after dinner, consisted of two glasses—(never more)—of old port wine, of a flavour generally unknown to Montreal logwood drinkers. What does this refined humbug do on this occasion but go to the cupboard in the most matter-of-course way in the world, produce a bottle of red Assmanshäuser, sufficiently sour to make any German's eye sparkle with delight! This, then, accounts for the hamper which I saw coming in this afternoon! Well, I forgive you this time! You did your best to give the old man pleasure, and you succeeded.

The preliminaries were soon arranged. It was settled that the old man's daughter and her child were to be moved in next day. It was no use demurring,—the matter was settled. The landlady had already got the room ready. The Captain forced upon the old man the acceptance of a cheque,—of course for a much larger amount than was necessary.—The German was like wax in his hands now. The genial qualities of the tobacco and Rhenish, had artfully opened the way for a torrent of precipitous energy on the part of the Captain, which was alarming to contemplate! The natures of both men seemed completely changed, and for the better. I cannot but think that the world would be none the worse if the rich and poor were to rub themselves against each other a little more than they do.

And then the Captain set himself to work at a task which few could perform better than he. This was to draw the old man out. The gift of oratory is a great one, but that of conversation is greater still. Brethren on the other side of the lines! you are, perhaps, the most fluent *speakers* in the world, and the worst *talkers*! But this is a digression.

The Captain began the conversation by talking of art, and of old Bavarian art in particular. This set the old man going at once. He was soon deep in Albert Durer, Adam Kraft, and Peter Vischer. Then he wandered to Munich and its modern wonders. Then naughty old King Ludwig appeared on the scene, and the talk soon turned on politics, and the vicissitudes of the House of Hapsburg. It is curious to remark the change of feeling that has taken place among the ultra-liberals of South Germany with regard to the Emperor of Austria. Twenty years ago, he was the tyrant and oppressor of his country. He is now the representative of a persecuted Fatherland. The recent reforms have, doubtless, done much to effect this, but misfortune has done more. Bohemia and Bavaria have both been mutilated, and the mutilator does not seem inclined to pause. To hear the old man speak, one would think Prussia a nation of savages, and Bismark a fiend incarnate! And then they chatted on different subjects;—of old scenes and places where each had been, of old national customs and amusements. The old man happened to mention Chess. The Captain inquired if he were a player. "But a poor one," was the reply. The

Captain was about to send to the landlady to borrow a board and men, but the German declared that he would fetch his own.

Now, I knew the Captain to be the best chess-player in the house; and while the old man was gone, I besought him to be merciful on this occasion. "Oh yes," replied the arch-hypocrite, "he must be kept in good humour—he shall win the game." Presently our friend returned with a set of chessmen of his own carving—and what a set! No Chinese ivory monstrosities, such as we see prized by the lovers of the curious and ugly, but real works of art,—quaint in the extreme, but not grotesque. The Castles were old robber strongholds,—the Pawns French and German pikemen. An effigy of Francis the First served for the White King: one of Charles the Fifth was Monarch of the Black. The players began. In the course of a very few moves all the Captain's humane resolutions left him. He had met with a player in every way his match, and he was steadily, cruelly, bent on winning the game. But the German was two Pawns ahead, and looked extremely radiant. Suddenly, by an apparent oversight, he left his Queen exposed. The Captain bounced upon it savagely. "Aha!" chuckled the German, "I make a trap, and therein you fall: six moves yet, and the game is to me!" But this was, surely, all bravado. The Captain was playing his usual steady game, and bringing a perfect phalanx of men to persecute an almost unprotected King. The victory seemed certain, when suddenly, at the very move mentioned, an almost unobserved Bishop crossed the board, and made one of the neatest check mates I ever saw! It was one of those scientific *ruses* which always delight a chess player. The last moves were played over again and again, but no escape could be discovered. This was the first time that the Captain had ever been beaten in our house, and he evidently did not like it at all.

Another bottle of red acid was produced. The liquor was not potent, but not having any alkaline antidote in the house, I excused myself from joining on the ground of my recent illness. It was now the German's turn. He saw that the Captain was mortified by his recent defeat, and, (bold man!) set to work to console him! Whether it was the inspiration of the sour vintage, or the flavour of the most villainous tobacco ever smoked, I know not, but when I went to bed at ten o'clock, the Captain had been *driven out* in his turn and was telling ferociously-energetic anecdotes of tiger hunts and Mahratta warfare.—*Mem. for my note book.* (Whenever I wish two men to take a fancy to each other, I shall always in future, provide for their entertainment, a pound of dried Timothy grass and two bottles of vinegar!)

And the Captain has done his work well! The old man has more work than he can do. Everybody in Montreal seems to want a set of the celebrated Chess men: all the Captain's friends have caught a sudden mania for carved sideboards, and a wealthy gentleman, whose name begins with,—never mind,—has given him a commission for a gorgeous dining-room chimney-piece, wherein the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air and fish of the sea are to be sculptured in the blackest of walnut. And he is happy now: his daughter and grandchild are with him, and are great favorites with the whole house. Mrs. X—, indeed, objected at first, strongly, to associating with the daughter of "a common mechanic" but on a recent occasion,—that of the lady's birthday,—the old man, bowing almost to the ground begged that she would honor him by accepting a small token of his respect, which he had presumed to make with his own hands. It was a little, carved trinket which exactly fitted into Mrs. X—'s work box. She never tries to snub his daughter now. Artful man! you have taken lessons from the Captain! The "Athlete" used to mimic his accents but latterly he has taken to carrying his grandchild up and down