

manner and tone; "my name is"—here he paused—"Well, it's no matter—I was christened a long while ago. You won't take much interest in my name I'm sure, and I'm afraid when you hear it you may consider it a questionable honor to become acquainted with it at all! However, you shall be informed of it by-and-bye, though I think if you tax your brain a little you will know me—in fact you must certainly be acquainted with me without introduction."

All this sounded very mysterious; I could have taken as solemn an oath as any chess-player could take that I had never seen the fellow before, whoever he was, in the whole course of my life.

"As for my mission," he continued, "it is to have a battle of chess with you."

"I shall be delighted," I ventured to put in hurriedly. At any rate, I thought, there is no problem in this avowal like there was in his last speech.

"I have heard," he went on to say, "that you are a votary of our noble pastime—that, in fact, you are one of the representative players in this part of the world."

I bowed as modestly as possible.

"And I desire to have you among the number of my combatants."

"But, sir," I could not help immediately returning, "do you not know it is somewhat unusual for chess players to engage in conflict without being introduced, or at any rate without knowing each other's names?"

"I am well aware," he rejoined, "of the social solecism I commit in thus veiling my name, yet I have my reasons—and good reasons too when you hear them—for taking this precaution of withholding my card until the proper time arrives. Suffice, let me say, that I am no mean antagonist. My experience in the game has been immense—in fact, *I have been with all the great players of the world since chess was known!*"

"The devil you have!—excuse me, but you don't say so," I quickly broke in. Now, really I was certain a madman had taken possession of my room. I felt my cheeks warming, my forehead cooling, my pulse beating faster and faster, but I strove hard to retain my wonted composure. I succeeded partly. My visitor smiled, a quaint sort of irregular smile. Was he bereft of "sovereign reason?" or perchance related to the spirits of the unseen world—the world of darkness?

"Oh," he continued, seeming to fathom my

thoughts, "no doubt you wonder at this assertion, but nevertheless it is *fact*—devoutly true, marvel as you will. I have been with the transcendental Philidor—at times; occasionally with Ruy Lopez and all his compeers of the sixteenth century; sometimes with Salvio and his Neapolitan adversaries. I am not unknown to Stamma or Carrera, nor to Janseen nor Cunningham. Later on I have sometimes been with McDonnell, also with Deschappelles, and even with the wonderful La Bourdonnais on odd occasions. The more modern chess world have also not been unacquainted with me. Such men as Jaenisch, Bledow, Lasa, Horwitz, Szen, Popert, Lowenthal, Kieseritzky, and other players of their day I have had the honor of knowing slightly."

Good gracious! at what a rate his tongue ran! Talk of a mariner's yarn!—who could follow the thread of such vague, impossible discourse?

"Yes," he continued, "this is unvarnished fact, and more than that too, sir. Why, in the present day such celebrities as St. Amant, Riviere, Staunton, Steinitz, Anderssen, Cochrane, Rosenthal, Kolish, Evans, Blackbourne, Paulsen, Zukertort, De Vere, Mackenzie, Bird, Perrin, have known me at some time or another."

"How about Morphy?" I ventured to ask, interrupting.

"Ah, Morphy, the incomparable—the unapproachable! Yes, I have also been with him, but very rarely."

I began to feel highly amused at the enormous braggardism of my strange visitor in his familiar enunciating of most of the chess masters past and present. My curiosity was roused to an almost insufferable pitch, and I determined there would be no delay in giving him a chance to prove his bold assertions—to give him full play, as it were; so without further remark I invited my unbidden guest to the table, and set up the men.

"Any choice of color?" I asked.

"None in the least; my play is equal with either," was the rejoinder. I selected white; move was tossed for, and he lost. We commenced. I moved—

WHITE (myself.)

BLACK (my visitor.)

1. P to K 4th.

1. P to K B 4th.

a most extraordinary reply truly, but I was determined to play a close game and not accept the proffered pawn, so I calmly moved—

2. P to Q 3rd.

Here my visitor scanned the position closely for a few minutes, and I fully expected his reply