

players engaged as we emerged from the cork-screw stairway. Seating ourselves at an observatory distance, my companion commenced (*sotto voce*) to make me familiar with particulars, thus:

"Rybar! notice that undersized player at one of the tables, with spectacles on a rather prominent nose, for he ranks as President of the chess club. He is a person of some note and of marked ability. His name is Weho. He is at the head of the principal educational establishment of this city, and is remarkable for doing well anything that he undertakes. Prominent as a teacher, he is not the less remarkable as a chess gladiator; as one who brings harmony out of that execrating instrument, the violin, he is the acknowledged *beau par excellence*—forgive the wretched pun. As a billiard player he is known to excel—the fact is, in whatever he engages, he becomes conspicuous for the aptitude he displays. His opponent," continued Skinatton, "is a veteran chess-player, and at the game, Professor Skich holds his own with most of those with whom he comes in contact, and at the tournament combat of late years he has been remarkably the favourite of chess fortune, having carried off most of the choice prizes, and that, too, from the strongest of our chess worthies."

"At that other table," Skinatton went on, "you will notice the player who occasionally rests his head on his hand. His name is Krownam. He is one of the most enthusiastic and liberal upholders of the game, and his only fault is said to be a disposition to pass a life-time at the board. His portly opponent is the laureate of the club, and, as a problemist, Mr. Horsenden holds a high position, not only in the circle of the Laertnom Club, but also in the Chess Congress of the country. That quiet-looking person, seemingly interested in the play now going on, is a Mr. Lingerst. He is waiting the arrival of a friend, with whom he has a standing engagement, and seldom plays with another. The gentleman just entering the room is a Mr. Search. Notice the easy, swinging manner of his approach, and the keen, discriminating expression of his face. His play is of a fluctuating character, yet he possesses a knowledge of the game superior to that of many of his brother members. His style is fertile in expedient, and many of his mates evidence masterly conception and strategic merit, and are surprisingly beautiful. He holds the rank of Secretary-Treasurer."

"Why, Skinatton," I struck in, "if you continue as you are going on, I shall become familiar with the entire roll of membership, and shall have the excellencies of them all at my fingers' ends."

"Just so," he replied, "that is exactly my intention. I want you to be interested in this gathering, for you may not have such another opportunity for having redoubtable celebrities pointed out to you, one of whom is that careful-looking man now coming forward. He is Mr. Maphop, at once the Blackstone and Art-Critic of the club. He is the friend for whom Mr. Lingerst has been waiting; there is a kind of chess *Damon* and *Pythias* bond between them, and, as a matter of course, they will now draw together and commence play."

Up to this point great quietness had prevailed, seldom broken by more than a half-heard ejaculation, as some one or other of the players found himself in difficulty—in fact, a dull decorum was the order of the evening, when the spring-trap on the stairs again creaked, and a hasty foot-fall gave notice of a new comer. In a moment or two the number in the room was increased by the arrival of a member, who entered in a noisy, jerking manner and with rapid steps, made apparently without any inflection of the knee-joint.

"Good evening, gentlemen?" he exclaimed. "Good evening. I hope I find you all well and in excellent humour; for you know, gentlemen, on the humour we are in depends very much our enjoyment of our occupations."

My friend Skinatton promptly gave the information that the last arrival was Mr. W., and that probably some new features would now pervade the gathering.

Shortly after, the tables in the room were all occupied, and the playing became interesting. The games were occasionally overlooked by ourselves and a few other bystanders who had gradually sauntered in; but although silence was still observed by the on-lookers, the members every now and again went on with remarks, that at length merged into an endless, desultory kind of colloquy, which, to a stranger, conveyed the idea of the speakers being scarcely *compos*.

"De give us something!" was heard from Krownam's side of the table at which he sat. "Here is my man sitting and sitting, and doing nothing. I can't stand this any longer! Can't you give us a move?" he impatiently exclaimed.

"Move!" responded his antagonist, Horsenden. "You are going to get a move that will astonish you; you think your *Fianchetto* opening something wonderful, but I am going to show you that it is worthless."

"Then why don't you give us the something astonishing?" replied Krownam. "Your astonishing move will be like

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men," that
"Gang aft agley."

"Oh! listen to him," exclaimed his Scotch opponent. "Agle! Who ever heard such pronunciation! Let me give the lines in the true utterance of the greatest bard that Scotland ever produced—

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men
"Gang aft agley."

and if Krownam's chess is no better than his Burns, I'm going to have an easy time with him."

"Well, if dat is not de richest ting I ever heard since I ad de measles," sung out Mukvobon, another player, who, Skinatton told me, was a German, and one of the rising players of the club, "may I be blowed! but whoever heard in a Christian land of such a ting as 'gang aft agley!'"

"O, you!" retorted Horsenden, "mind your game, or Dausers will use you up. If there was any supputation in your being, you would be a better judge of things."

"Dat is an excellent vord," went on Mukvobon—sup—sup—sup—vat dat you said?"

"Sup—sup—sup—mimicked Horsenden; "just like you guzzling Germans,—sup—sup—sup—it is always sup with you, and yet you are never full."

"Gentlemen!" cried out Mr. Wash, "more silence. We should conduct our play with greater observance of the rules of propriety. What is the use of wrangling about words? If Horsenden drags in as a word what was never heard before, what's the use of harping on it?"

"Supputation! a word that never was heard before! Wash's remark only displays his ignorance. Now, I maintain that it is a word, and one to be found in Webster, but I challenge any member of this club to give me its meaning," Horsenden defiantly rejoined.

On this throwing down of the gauntlet, a momentary silence ensued. No one appeared disposed to enquire into the meaning of the word, seemingly fearful of displaying ignorance. The several members had all the appearance of being what is vulgarly termed "stumped," and no effort at solution being forthcoming, Horsenden deigned no explanation, but maintained a triumphant attitude for a while, as if he was the very embodiment of etymology.

The short-lived and somewhat awkward quiet that prevailed after Horsenden's challenge, was broken by Wash getting up and remarking—

"Gentlemen! I hold that our poet has placed us in a most unsatisfactory position. He has introduced a word that is likely to be an element of discord. Yes, gentlemen, I say discord, for a matter unexplained represents mystery; and, gentlemen, until that mystery is grappled, mastered and check-mated, every member of this club—I repeat it—every member of this club may entertain the vague impression that the word contains some unpleasant meaning, that it meant to be applied to himself; and so, gentlemen, to deal with this important matter as it should be handled, I now call on Maphop, our eminent jurist, to express himself."

No sooner was this address finished than Maphop discontinued play and attempted to rise, but Lingerst took him by the arm and endeavoured to restrain him, saying—

"Sit down, man! sit down! don't mind that mad-cap W.—. Go on with your game; I am not going to stay here all night merely to listen to nonsense!"

Headless of this remonstrance, Maphop took the floor, and, assuming a forensic manner, delivered himself of the following, in the most approved judicial tone:

"Fellow members! feel the importance of the task which has been imposed on me; a task of such difficulty as would tax the utmost powers of a *Carracci* or a *Da Vinci* to depict; a task that involves the harmonizing of two antagonistic conditions, for Horsenden has used an expression that he will not explain, and the rest of the club have heard an expression that they do not understand; therefore, *per curiam*, it is the conclusion, that one making use of what he does not define, and the others hearing what they do not comprehend; the conclusion, I say, is, that both propounder and audience are enwrapped in the mazes of palpable ignorance."

"Hear! hear!" ejaculated Mukvobon, "de very best decision possible; a Daniel; a second Daniel come to judgment, as de immortal William observed."

"William! how dare you allude to the immortal bard," chimed in the irrepressible Wash; "no one here has a right to make such allusions, except my friend, Search; for he only of us all has trodden the boards; he only has stood behind the footlights, and with that amazing Roscira ability, for which he is remarkable, he only has held the mirror up to nature."

"Friends!" began Search, who thus prominently referred to, at once gained a hearing; "friends! a genius that the world may well be proud of, has recorded—'there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood leads on to fortune'—and unless I take advantage of such a tide, I may not have another opportunity like this to speak; and there is no subject dearer to my heart than the drama, for it is the magical 'Sesame' that opens up to our ken, all the wonderful workings of human nature; it is the *Mentor* that has taught us

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women, merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts."

But as it is now ten o' the clock—an hour that makes us a privileged party—I propose, that being partial to the fragrant weed, I be allowed to light my Havana.

"And I my companionable pipe," echoed Horsenden, "for I would sing

"Sublime Tobacco: glorious in a pipe,
When tipped with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe,
Yet some are found who more admire by far
Thy naked beauties in the mild cigar."

"Well done, Horsenden! count me in two, on your paraphrase of Byron," unctuously exclaimed W.—, as he produced a well-filled morocco cigar case.

"Twas well you mentioned 'paraphrase' W.—, for the Scotchman is 'sublime' enough to pass the whole verse off as his own," cynically growled Krownam.

Then at it the smokers went and ere long the wreathing vapour came issuing from many a mouth, and in a short time the entire room was so beclouded, that all present had that weird, hazy, phantom appearance, that folks, skilled in ghost-lore, tell us is peculiar to spirits in the spectre land.

As the smoking went on, the conversation became expanded into almost an uproar, and from Krownam's table was heard a shout of—

"Order, boys! order, boys! if you hold on in this way you will have the police coming in to ask us what we are about."

"Police! who dares mention that word? What have police to do with chess-players?" rattled W.—; "police! by-the-by, Mr. President, that word to me has the smack of the Greek about it, has it not, Mr. President? the 'po' certainly has, but the second syllable, what does it come from? You are a recognized scholar and versed in all the intricacies of languages; come, tell us what the second syllable springs from."

"I really cannot say," quietly observed President Weho, "I profess no skill in analysis,—as you suggest the examination; but as you are better acquainted with it, I feel quite satisfied that you are more competent to form a correct opinion of the second than I am."

"Mate!" roared Horsenden, throwing himself back in his chair, his huge frame almost convulsed with delight, and as his ha—ha—ha laughingly rolled through the room, he added "and one of the prettiest mates ever seen; now what do you say to your *Fianchetto*?"

"Well, I can't win every game," replied his discomfited opponent, "it is about time that you should win one."

"Time I should win one!" shouted Horsenden; "well that is good. Why, man, you have not won once to-night."

"Gentlemen," interrupted W.—, "another, whom a natural cynicism would almost induce me to say shall be nameless, will shortly have to announce a second victory. I, gentlemen, have involved my adversary in all the embarrassments of a *Ruy Lopez*, and really it is quite painful to witness the wriggling agony that now affects my antagonist's play as he sees defeat looming before him; but, gentlemen, everyone cannot be conquerors, so let the best man take the coveted stakes."

"Continue! your wriggling agony and coveted stakes," retorted his adversary Search, "why man, I have you mated in four moves, do what you will."

"Eh! Eh! What is that you say?" gasped the astounded W.—, "mate to me in four moves! let me see, let me see,—his bishop takes pawn, pawn takes bishop, rook checks, knight interposes, queen checks, and my queen must take queen; then is it possible? Why, then knight mates. So it is *per Jupiter*! Why, bless my soul, who would have thought it? but this, gentlemen," he declaimed, assuming the oratorical pose, "this, gentlemen, is only another proof of the aphorism contained in the well-known adage of 'there's many a slip twixt cup and lip,' and it is also a warning that the chirping progeny should not be too sanguinely counted on before the feathered incubation has fully achieved her maternal duties."

"Federated incubator! dat is fine idea, here is my man wishing he ad a federated incubator to hatch him out of de toils of de *Scandinavian Gambit* dat I have got him in."

"Well and no wonder," muttered Dausers, "if you only played a decent civilized game, one would have a chance, but you always commence with that barbarous Scandinavian monstrosity."

"Ah mein friend! you are like de rest of de world. You can see no beauty in what upsets you. *Wir würden selber was gegen unser interesse ist.*"

"Hullo! what noise is that?" cried out Mr. Vice-President Skich, "is that rumble the din of a coal-cart passing the club-house?"

"De din of a coal-cart! O dat I should ever live to hear such a thing! to compare de sound of de most glorious language in de world to de rattle of a coal-cart. Ah, mein Gott! dat make me sick."

"Who makes you sick, Mukvobon? No one in this club shall ill-treat you, sir. I shall stand by you," volunteered W.—, "for I hold, sir, that to assist and defend the unsophisticated stranger and foreigner, in his emergency, is evidence of some of the noblest qualities of a magnanimous mind, as that great statesman, Lord Beaconsfield, has perorated in tones that electrified the world—'England is not the country.'"

"For a blatant fellow like you," supplemented K.—.

"Mr. K.—, let me tell you," went on W.—, "there is no poetry in your composition; now if you were more like Horsenden, you could better appreciate the beautiful, his finer strong nature would disdain the interruptions you inflict; he is a poet, sir! and let me tell you he is the author of one of the best chess-ballads that this or any other age has produced,—a lyric that has aroused enthusiasm in our noble game, on both sides of the broad Atlantic; here it is, sir,—

"Brave Knights of old, with spurs of gold,
On battle horse, in panoply,—
In Tourney round, or battle ground,
Oft 'bit the dust' most gallantly;
So do we yield, on checkered field,—
Or proudly our success relate;
The foe was brave, but could not save
His king from final check and mate."

"Our royal game, who call it tame,
They do not know its beauties rare,
For in the fight move King and Knight,
With Queens that are both dark and fair,
And where's the man who e'er would ban
The rapture—'tongue can e'er relate,—
The joy who'd miss,—'tis almost bliss,
When we announce the smothered mate."

"Yet some do hate this pretty mate,
And choose instead a stupid stale;
But none you'll find who hate the kind
That Adam chose in Eden's vale!
Then while we toast, and while we boast
Our masters in our sport most rare,
Hold with your cheeks, here's to the sex!
The best of mates—the lovely fair."

The applause that ensued at the conclusion of W.—'s recitation was almost overwhelming; when it had somewhat subsided, the enthusiast addressed Krownam again, saying—

"There, Krownam, if you could only produce something like that, you would be of more value to your age and generation. Now what do you think of it?"

His tormentor slyly replied, "O! it was not so bad; you spoiled it in the rendering, that was the only fault it had."

"Mr. President," W.— excitedly appealed, "I claim your protection, sir, for I am about the worst used member of this club. I cannot exercise the slightest effort to make myself agreeable and entertaining, but I am subjected to snubbing and chaff. Sir, I protest that—"

Here the deep-toned bell of the neighbouring cathedral proclaimed the midnight hour, and lifting my hat and shaking the hand of my friend Skinatton, I wended my way to the quietude of bed; but whether the celebrities are still listening to W.—'s agitated outpourings, or that they dispersed shortly after my exit, is a question on which it is utterly impossible for me to give any information to the readers who may have glanced over this record.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

ADELINA PATTI is said to be worth a round million.

E. A. SOTHERN, the actor, is seriously ill at Birmingham.

A RECENT English play shows a diver at the bottom of the sea.

KATE CLAXTON has shivered through the "Two Orphans" 1,200 times.

MRS. SCOTT-SIDDONS receives, probably, the highest prices paid any reader or lecturer. They range from \$200 to \$250 a night, according to the size of the towns.

LISZT was recently offered his own terms to play in England, but his reply was "Never." He has not forgotten his old reputation in London thirty years ago.

ARTISTIC.

MR. MILLAIS is a candidate for the Presidency of the Royal Academy, London.

MR. RUSKIN, who is now quite well again, has wisely resolved, on the advice of his doctors, to write no political economy, but to devote himself solely to art.

At a sale of pictures at the Hotel Drouot, Rosa Bonheur's "Oxen at Pasture" realized 18,000 francs, and "Heather Land," by the same artist, 20,000 francs.

A COMMITTEE of French artists, together with the Council of the Academy of Fine Arts, propose to erect a monument to Louis David at Père-la-Chaise. For this purpose they have already applied to the Belgian Government for permission to remove the remains of the artist from Brussels.

MR. W. C. HOWELL, the editor of the *Antauga* (Ala.) *Citizen*, has a picture 24 x 30 inches showing the inauguration of Jeff Davis as President of the Confederacy of the South. The scene at Montgomery, Ala., Feb. 18th, 1862, was photographed. The photograph has been enlarged, then a painting made of that, and now a chromo has blossomed out from the painting.

WE hear that Gustave Doré has made up his mind to visit America at an early day, in order to see the country, particularly Niagara, the Mammoth Cave, the Rocky Mountains, and the Yosemite. He also wants to go into Mexico for subjects for his pencil, and hopes to spend some months there. He has time, probably, to do many things, for he is in excellent health, and is only forty-five.

NOTICE TO LADIES.

The undersigned begs respectfully to inform the ladies of the city and country that they will find at his Retail Store, 196 St. Lawrence Main Street, the choicest assortment of Ostrich and Vulture Feathers, of all shades; also, Feathers of all descriptions repaired with the greatest care. Feathers dyed as per sample, on shortest delay. Gloves cleaned and dyed black only. J. H. LEBLANC. Work 517 St. Lawrence.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy, for the speedy and permanent cure for consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive, and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, with full directions for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Sherar, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.