

THE GERMAN RHINE.

At the present moment there is a revived interest in Nikolaus Becker's "German Rhine" and the reply to it by Alfred de Musset, and the following translation of them may be acceptable:—

It never shall be France's.
The free, the German Rhine.
Tho' raven-like she glances
And croaks her foul design.

So long as calmly gliding
It wears its mantle green.
So long as oar dividing
Its mirrored wave is seen:

It never shall be France's.
The free, the German Rhine.
So long as youth enhances
His fervour with its wine.

So long as sentry keeping.
The rocks its margin stud:
So long as spires are steeping
Their image in its flood.

It never shall be France's.
The free, the German Rhine.
So long as festive dances
Its lover-groups combine.

So long as angler bringeth
Its lusty trout to shore.
So long as minstrel singeth
Its praise from door to door.

It never shall be France's.
The free, the German Rhine.
Until its broad expanse is
Its last defender's shrine.

REPLY:

Your German Rhine has been ours before!
It has served our weasail Lowls to fill.
Can singing its praise from door to door
Efface the hoof prints, legible still,
Of our cavalry charge that bathed its left bank in your gore!

Your German Rhine has been ours before!
On its breast the wound yet gapeth wide,
Which conquering Comd' made, when he tore
Tho' its mantle of green to the farther side:
Where once the sire has ridden, shall the son not ride once more?

Your German Rhine has been ours before!
Of your German virtues what remains,
When across its flood our legions pour
And the Empire overclouds your plains?
When all your men have fallen, have ye other men in store?

Your German Rhine has been ours before!
If ye your annals would fain forget
Your daughters remember the days of yore,
And wish the Frenchman among them yet.
For whom your vintage white they were always blithe to pour.

If your German Rhine be yours once more,
Then wash your liveries in its tide:
But pitch your arrogance somewhat lower!
Can ye recall with generous pride
Your myriad raven-beaks that drank the dying Eagle's gore?

May your German Rhine flow evermore
In peace: and modestly may each spire
Be mirrored fair in its glassy floor!
But oh! keep down your bacchanal fire
Which, else, may rouse to life again the victor hearts of yore.

STRANGE DRINKS.

(From Chambers' Journal.)

"Man, being reasonable, must get drunk!" Many people accept that as an axiom who never heard the name of the poet who wrote it. On that head the most forlorn and stupid of savages are at one with civilized folks; and some extremely curious, let alone nasty concoctions, does human ingenuity hit upon in its desperate desire to produce a beverage that will cheer and inebriate. The cocoa-nut tree is a great boon to thirsty man, giving the weary traveller a draft of pure water, rewarding the early riser with a cup of sparkling toddy, and delighting lovers of strong potations with its potent arrack. The first beverage is contained in the fruit, the less innocent ones are made from the sap of the tree. The operations of the Cingalese toddy-drawer are simple enough. He binds all the shoots bearing embryo nuts firmly together, cuts off the ends, and attaches beneath them an earthenware vessel holding about a gallon, and so leaves matters for four-and-twenty hours—from sunrise to sunrise. When the time is up, the chatty is lowered, emptied of its contents, and replaced; and so the process goes on, until the flow of sap is exhausted. The liquor thus obtained looks like milk and water, and tastes like soda-water and milk slightly flavored with cocoa-nut. In a few hours, rapid acetous fermentation takes place, and by mid-day the sap becomes toddy, resembling a poor acid cider, and from this arrack is made by distillation. The same source supplies the subjects of the Rajah of Sarawak with their national beverage, which is kept in huge jars, and hospitably handed to all comers in cans, bottles, or cocoa-nut shells, whichever happen to be handiest. Mr. Boyle says it looks like thin milk, and smells like five hundred negroes drunk in a slave pen, while its flavour seems to be as unique as its smell.

"When first taken into the mouth, it suggests an idea of cocoa-nut milk gone very sour, and holding in solution a very considerable quantity of brown sugar and old cheese; when it reaches the throat, the agonized novice becomes aware of a hot peppery flavor, causing him to believe that starch mingled with the finest cayenne must have a great share in the composition; and, finally, should it safely reach its destination, and the sufferer be compelled to put his head precipitately through the railings behind, he conceives with astonishing suddenness that he is waiting for the crisis in a rolling vessel at the change of the monsoons."

When the Marquesans are in the humour for a drinking bout, a number of boys are set to work preparing aroo, by squatting around a large bowl, and masticating cocoa-nuts, which they spit into the bowl when sufficiently chewed. Enough being prepared, the vessel is filled up with fresh water, and stirred, and the pleasant mess left to settle, when the flowing bowl is passed about for the merry-makers to drain to the lees.

Another drink, in high esteem among the South Sea Islanders, is made in a similar manner from the ava root, and ava drinking forms an essential feature of all Feejean ceremonies. In Rewa, when the ava has been duly chewed, as the water is poured in, the expectant spectators, ranged in a semicircle round the chief operator, set up a howl, finishing off with a cry of "Ai seou." Then the operator strains the liquid into an immense wooden bowl, singing all the while; his song being taken up by the company, who, at the same time, imi-

tate his motions to the best of their ability, varying the performances at every important stage of the proceedings by clapping their hands. The brewage concluded, the drinking cups are filled from one having a hole in it; over the hole the ava maker placing a finger when dipping, withdrawing it to let the liquor run out in a stream. The drinking of the king's draft is followed by an extra loud clapping; that of an inferior chief by the exclamation: "Sa mangu!" (It is empty.) After ava, his Rewain majesty rinses his mouth, lights his cigar, and takes his ease on his mat. The royal barber, not being permitted to touch anything with his hands, has to find a friend to hold the cup to his lips while he drinks his allowance. The royal ava drinking at Somu-somu is equally ceremonious. Early in the morning the king's herald or orator cries out in front of his house: "Yango-na li ava," meaning "prepare ava." To this the people reply with loud shouts. The chiefs and principal men assemble immediately with their bowls and ava roots, which are handed over to the younger folks, while they have a palaver about things in general. The ava preparers must have clean and undiseased teeth, and are liable to punishment if they are detected swallowing any of the precious juice. The chewing over, and the water poured on the ava, the herald draws out in the vernacular: "Make the offering." The ava is then strained through cocoa-nut husks—a tedious operation. Then the herald repeats his cry, and the chiefs join in the chorus. Somebody is despatched with the royal ava, and the company go on singing. The orator invokes their god, Tava Sava, and his companions implore their dead friends by name to watch over them. Then prayers are raised for the king's life, or rain, the arrival of ships, for riches, and life to enjoy them. The chorus, "Mana endina sendina le," a sort of "Amen, so be it," is repeated again and again, each time in a higher pitch, until the force of human lungs can no higher go, when the performance ends in a general screech of "O-ya-ye!" which is taken up by the outer mob; and then the king drinks his ava, the chiefs clapping hands while he does so, and when he has finished, setting to work upon their own account, and afterwards to business with what soberness they may. No one dreams of doing anything until the king has emptied his bowl; and if a visitor wishes to keep on good terms with his hosts, he must be careful not to do any work, or make any noise, until the ceremony has come to any end. The picnecore of Guiana and the chica of Chili and Brazil, like ava and aroo, are produced by the masticatory process; the first named being a concoction of cassava bread, saliva, and water; while the principal ingredient of the Brazilian chica consists of maize dough, thoroughly chewed by a parcel of old women.

Among the many strange acquaintances made by Mdu Chaillu was a drunken old chief named Olenga-Yombi, whose head wife favoured the gorilla hunter with the following account of her worthy husband's bringing up:—"When he was quite a child, Olenga Yombi's father used to put him in a big bag, and carry him to the top of a high tree, where he plied him with the intoxicating palm wine. Every day he repeated the dose, till the child came to like palm wine better than his mother's milk, whereat the father was greatly delighted, because he wished him to be renowned when he was grown up for the quantity of palm wine he could drink. 'So you see, Chaillu, you must not be angry with him, for it is not his own fault.' This frightful example was always going to the drink, on the drink, or sleeping off the drink, and must have furnished a nice text for the total abstainers of those parts, supposing they preferred their principles to their heads.

Genuine palm wine is obtained from the palmyra palm, and is far superior to that of the cocoa-nut tree. As the trunk of the tree is too rough for hands and knees to be used in climbing, the wine drawer adopts another mode of ascent. He passes round his body and the stem of the tree a hoop of bamboo, which serves to support his back. Pressing his feet firmly against the trunk, and grasping the hoop as firmly with his hands, he draws slightly forward, keeping his foot steady, and slipping the hoop up a little higher, advances a step or two with his feet; and so he goes up some fifty or sixty feet, till he reaches the leafy crown of the palm. He then bores a hole in the trunk, about half an inch deep, and inserts a leaf rolled up funnel-wise into it, the other end being inserted into the mouth of a calabash, which he sends down as soon as it is full. A tree will yield a quart of wine twice a day for a month; and if the hole is afterwards carefully stopped with clay, wine may be drawn from the same tree for many successive years. Captain Burton says the oil palm yields the finest wine of all, a drink surpassing the best of cider. His Majesty of Dahomey, however, with an eye to the oil trade, prohibits his subjects from drawing their liquor from this source, because, like the Kroomen, they fell the trees first; so that the thirsty souls of Whydah have to content themselves with bamboo wine, tasting like soapsuds laced with vinegar.

Dr. Livingstone found the Magenja of the Zambesi the possessors of a grateful beverage, which satisfied the cravings of fever at one draft, and almost justified the advice of a friendly chief: "Drink plenty of it, and as it gets in it will drive the fever out." This beer is made from vegetated grain dried in the sun, pounded into meal, and gently boiled. When a day or two old it is fit to drink, and is then a pinkish, sweet, acidified liquor of the consistence of gruel. It only intoxicates when deep and long-continued potations are indulged in, and then even no permanently evil result follows, for the Magenja are, for Africans, a very long-lived race, although, in contempt of European sanitary not ons, they never wash themselves unless by accident. Drink is the one enjoyment of their existence, and the completion of a family brewing an occasion of merry-making. Sometimes a selfish couple will pretend to be ill, and shut themselves up in their hut until they have put away all their brewage; but they generally invite their friends, who in return praise the beer as so good that the taste reaches to the back of the neck, or declare that it will make their stomachs cry "Tobu, tobu, tobu!" at every step on the road home.

Abyssinian beer, known as sona, tallah, or donqua, according to its quality and strength, is made by mixing Dagbusha flour into a dough, and leaving it two or three weeks to ferment, when the dough is made up into cakes and baked on hot iron. These are put into a large jar of water, with a mixture of barley meal and water, and a small quantity of a bitter herb called "geso," growing abundantly upon the plains. After remaining quiet for a few hours, the beer is considered fit for consumption. Mock, made from this beer by boiling it with eggs, honey, butter, and spice, is declared by a traveller to be a drink fit for the entertainment of the gods, when in the good old Abyssinian times they used to pay that land an

annual visit. But the favourite beverage among our whilom foes is tedge or honey wine, which was praised years ago by the Jesuit father, Foncet, as a delicious liquor, pure, clarified, with the colour of Spanish white wine. The process of manufacture is a simple one. To one part wild honey is added five or six parts of cold water; this is well stirred and put into a narrow-mouthed jar, with a little sprouted barley, some biccalo or taddoo bark, and a few geso leaves. After three or four days' exposure in the sun, this ferments, and is generally drunk as soon as it has nearly lost its original sweetness, being even then a muddy sort of liquor. Mr. Parkyns speaks disparagingly of it, and quotes Bruce against it; but the natives appreciate it highly, and drink inordinately of it when they have the chance. In Shoa, the manufacture of tedge used to be a royal monopoly, and it was not allowed to be sold in public. Of course it was to be procured by bribery, but even then, Mr. Johnson says, the purchaser probably got the rations of some economically disposed guest of the king, who had poured his daily allowance into a large jar instead of drinking it. A superior sort, made for his Shoa Majesty's own use, was prepared by adding kuloh berries (resembling our elder berries) to the other ingredients, and allowing the liquor to be undrawn for some months. This was called "barilla," from its being handed to guests in small Venetian bottles of green glass, the accidental breakage of which was a serious offence in the monarch's eyes. Mr. Henry, the war correspondent of the *Standard* newspaper, describes the taste of tedge as resembling a mixture of small-beer and lemonade made from mouldy lemons. With three comrades, he went into a native public-house at Abtegrat fair, and called for tedge. It was brought in a flask resembling a Lucca oil-flask, but rather flatter, and with a larger neck. As it did not hold more than half a pint, the hot and thirsty customers soon called for more, but were made to understand they must wait for it to be strained, an operation they witnessed with dismay. A large jar was brought in; the wife of the proprietor put a part of her very dirty garment over the mouth, and poured the liquor through it into the flask. Luckily, Mr. Henry and his friends had learned not to be over-squeamish, and were able, spite of some qualms, to satisfy their thirst; he does not say whether the straining process improved the flavour of his honey wine, or otherwise.

Besdon, a drink in high esteem in some parts of Africa, is made like tedge with honey, but in this case the only addition is some millet, the beverage being brought to perfection by being exposed for ten days to the action of the sun. The Soosoo extract a tolerably palatable liquor from "yin-ying" root, by burning it and infusing the ashes in water. The people of Unyon think it wasteful to eat the plantain. They bury the green fruit in a deep hole, and keep it covered with earth and straw until it ripens. It is then peeled and pulped into a large wooden trough well mashed, and thoroughly stirred; in a couple of days it is fit for use. The Bulloms go a different way to work; they let the fruit ripen naturally, remove the skin, and bruise the rest in hot water. In twelve hours or so, this mixture is strained and bottled, being corked closely for a week, by which time it has become a beverage of moderate intoxicating power. The folks of Taboga find their wine all but ready-made. When the flower stalks of the American agave begin to sprout, the heart of the plant is cut out, and the juice collects in an artificial well formed by the operation. One plant will yield as much as three pints a day for a month; and when the juice has fermented, it will cause intoxication, and the end of the collector is attained.

Dampier relates how his friend Laut, Rajah of Mindinao, with all his courtiers, got as drunk as swine upon rice drink, which must have been a similar beverage to saki, beloved of the Japanese, who make it of all degrees of strength, from that of weak wine to potent spirit; and much the same sort of thing as the Chinese samshu, and, in the opinion of Sir R. Alcock, quite as good or bad. Marco Polo, perhaps because he had not tasted it, is much more complimentary. He says: "The greater part of the people of Cathay drink a wine made of rice and many good spices, and prepare it in such a way that it is more agreeable to drink than any other liquor. It is clear and beautiful, and makes a man drunk sooner than any other wine." This is praise indeed. But of all curious drinks, commend us to Ladakh beer, which possesses the great merit of portability. It is made of parched barley, ground, mixed with rice and the root of an aromatic plant, pressed into a hard solid cake. When wanted, a piece is broken off, and thrown into a vessel of water to ferment. This resembles gruel in appearance, and has a sour spirituous smell. What a boon it would be to our soldiers and sailors if the beverages of Bass and Whitbread could be thus solidified? Where is the inventive genius, not above taking a hint from the savage, who will make it possible to carry a pint or two of Burton ale or London porter in one's waistcoat pocket?

Dr. Louvel, of France, has discovered a method of preserving grain which quite transcends the antique method of preserving it in pits. A sheet-iron cistern, occupying little space, and which will contain upwards of 275 bushels, an air-pump that may be worked either by hand or steam, and a pressure-gauge, to indicate the degree of vacuum, comprise the whole hermetic apparatus of preservation of Dr. Louvel. With this apparatus some curious experiments were made at Vincennes. After a detention of seven months, the wheat, the flour, and the biscuit inclosed in the apparatus of M. Louvel were withdrawn in a state of perfect preservation. Bread has been made of that flour, and it was excellent. The cost price of preservation per year for 300 bushels, interest on the apparatus, and hand labour, is very trifling, and less than that of a granary or storerooms. The cylinders of M. Louvel (standing on tripods) are impermeable as the pits, require no masonry, can be placed anywhere; the wheat, &c., is safe from fire, from fermentation, insects, and cryptogamic vegetations. One very important effect, and which results from the numerous and continuous experiments made, as well by the inventor as by a committee appointed by the minister of the Emperor's house, is that the vacuum not only kills the parasitic insects and prevents fermentation, but it dries the grain at the same time. The adoption of this system would allow farmers to borrow at all times largely from their reserves.

Though apparently in a state of rest, the atoms or molecules of all gases are always vibrating. Like the motion of gnats in a sunbeam, the molecules of oxygen gas are moving at the rate of 1,500 feet a second; those of hydrogen gas at 6,000 feet a second.