

Il Puttino

Alessandro Salvio (1604)

Translated, with Commentary, by
George Walker**THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS.**

“We passed away, like flames that had shone for a season. Our departure was in renown. Though the plains of our battles are dark and silent, our fame is in the four grey stones.”—OSSIAN.

THERE is a fashion in literature, as in every thing else; and personal memoirs decidedly constitute the ruling passion of the nineteenth century. Man is more and more craving of scandal, and rabid of auto-biography. He writes his life, or leaves it to be vamped by his executors; with a sum of money, specially assigned by last will and testament to defray the printer’s charges. The buffoon who has strutted out his brief part, on the stages of St. Stephen or Covent Garden,—the coxcomb, with or without a handle or tail to his name, who has basked away the best half of his ephemeral existence in the sun of Cheltenham and Belgrave Square,—all pant to print down their doings for the benefit of posterity. The sayings—and sighings—and flutterings, and fussings of a few-score years of—NIL—are recorded with the dignity of Sully, and the exactitude of Boswell.

We are told how the hero of Duck Lane, or Exeter Hall—Ramberlumlong, or the Sandwich Islands—fought, shouted, and sang, dressed, dined, and drank ; what Uncle Peter said when President of the Locomotive Auxiliary Teapot Temperance Association ; how sister Ann mixed the Christmas pudding, and judiciously blended the spices for the gravy. Now, in a Goethe or a Mirabeau, all this were highly pleasant and desirable, but Oh ! for the small things to be told off, like tailors, by nines, whose memoirs would absolutely smother us, were it not for our allies, the bacon-seller and the trunk-maker ! Yes ; posthumous fame, abstractedly speaking, is a very pretty sort of fame, provided it savour not too strongly of bathos. We laugh at its abuse only. In itself, it constitutes one of those creeds which form the salt of the earth. We throw forth this sage paragraph, to prelude a chapter of early Chess biography, interesting to all lovers of this our bewitching recreation.

We need not say, that, personally, we are Chess enthusiasts. That fact has been long known to our gentle Chess-playing public. We love Chess, and all that belongs to it, in the way of retrospect and association ; and we are proud to think that our own humble pen has so materially assisted its march during the last ten years. Our theme to-day is a sketch of two bygone Chess artists,—enthusiasts, and even to be called poets ; for every science hath its poesy, its ardent devotees, the untiring pioneers of their art. Ridiculous, *per se*, as the mere moneymucks may deem them, yet are such men worthy of the respect of the philosopher. Reduce life to a grave, cold, one idea'd reality,—shear it of its azure hope, its faith in the true, its trustings in the imperishable, its yearnings for the immortal,—and we hold, that earth would become one vast lead-coloured series

of counting-houses and cotton mills; connected by gin-shops, little Bethels, union poor houses, potato grounds, and gaols.

We repeat, that every art has its poetry, and that its innermost soul is enthusiasm. Napoleon was the poet of war; the enthusiast in the science of humbling the mighty. Where find we more sublime lyrics than his bulletins?—their every word searching the pulses like the battle-drum. And, so pigmy is poor man, why should the searching eye of philosophy recognise war as a greater formula than Chess?—the one containing equally the fierce spirit of destruction as the other, without its crimson hue. A vast deal of nonsense is talked about “the higher sciences.” Clear your minds, our friends, of cant. Call up the Jins, and the Peris, the Afrits, and the Dives, and demand whether, to the perception of their advanced and celestial intelligences, all earthly pursuits are not equally vanity and vexation of spirit?—whether they place the conqueror of cities above the maker of mud-pies—the sage who poketh out his sight star-gazing, before Mr. Twiddle performing on his German flute? Away with the delusion! Chess, like the olive, hath not the poison of the laurel leaf. The wheat and the vine feed man’s body; Chess finds recreation for his spirit. Indulgence, then, be granted to Chess enthusiasm.

“Great men were living before Agammemnon,” and great Chess Players were in the flesh anterior to Philidor. Of such, there exists so little printed memoir, it is matter of increased marvel that all there is, has not been earlier set forth for the benefit of these latter times. Chess players, generally speaking, are of quiet habits; caring less for notoriety than most other classes of men. The Chess-board is their world, and they look but little beyond its sixty-

four squares; likening them, it may be, to so many different countries. Respecting Ponziani, Lolli, Greco, Del Rio, and many more of the Chess *élite*, we know absolutely nothing beyond the fact that they shone as stars of the first magnitude in their galaxy. In general, when we contemplate in review the long series of ancient Chess names, immortalized by their talent and acquirements, we must, indeed, content ourselves, perforce, with quaint Burton's pertinent reflection,—“Looke how nightingales sang of old, cockes crowed, kine lowed, sheepe bleated, sparrows chirped, dogges barked, so they doe still. We keep our madness still, play the fooles still; we are of the same humours and inclinations as our predecessors were; you shall find us all alike, much as one, wee and our sonnes, and soe shall we continue to the last.” Solomon Ben David expresses the same sentiment, and teaches us that as it was in the beginning, so it is now and ever shall be, and that there is verily no new thing under the sun.

The fragment of Chess history we are about to translate for the first time from its original Italian garb, may be likened by the really warm hearted in the cause, to a pearl of price left unnoticed for above two centuries in its under-wave cavern. It treats of the two celebrated Chess Players, Leonardo and Paolo Boi, so renowned in their day as to have won the names of **THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS**. The biographer of these paladins is Dr. Salvio, whose rare treatise was printed at Naples in 1604. Aided by a subsequent author, Carrera, we now present a narrative, offering features of a peculiar interest, both to the Chess amateur, and general antiquarian. Why should the souls of the heroes always dwell in darkness?—“Let them ride around us in clouds; let them shew their features in war.”

Of Dr. Salvio himself, and Italian players of rather a later date, we may take another opportunity to speak. Let the Neapolitan's own voice now be heard :—

During the pontificate of Gregory XIII., of pious and blessed memory, there was dwelling in Rome a young man, by name Leonardo de Cutri. He was short in stature, of mild and pleasant manners, and from this was known as Il Puttino ("the little lad"). Leonardo had been sent by his parents to the City of the Pope, to study the law; but took up a preference for Chess, in which his progress was so rapid, that notwithstanding his extreme youth, he speedily acquired a degree of force which enabled him to conquer every player in Rome.

Now the first Chess Professor of this time in Europe, was Ruy Lopez, surnamed the learned clerk of Zafra; who being in high favour at the court of Philip II., of Spain, had been recently endowed by that monarch with a benefice, and had been consequently forced by custom to come and tarry some short time in Rome, that his nomination might receive the sanction of the holy Pope. During this space, Ruy Lopez could not resist the desire to shew his skill, and sought out the resort of the first Chess-players; playing with them day by day, and winning of them all, until they confessed their joint inferiority to the then absent Leonardo. At this, Ruy Lopez challenged the Puttino to the field, and they played many beautiful games upon even terms; but at length the wily skill of the youth gave altogether way before the experience of the veteran, and our brave Leonardo was defeated to his great disgust; while to his failure was added much scorn on the part of his adversary. The Puttino hoped next day to take his revenge, but was again defeated with renewed expressions of pride and scorn; and was so mortified, that he suddenly left Rome for Naples.

During the next two years Leonardo remained in Naples, constantly employed in the study and practice of Chess; and, finally,—attaining so high a degree of perfection as to be certain of now being able to conquer his ancient enemy, Ruy Lopez,—resolved to seek out the latter, be he where he might. Meanwhile, Ruy Lopez, having succeeded in getting his grant of the benefice confirmed, had left Rome for Madrid; whither Il Puttino prepared to journey, first resolving to visit Cutri, his birth-place; and with this view prevailing upon Don

Fabrizio, the Prince of Gesualdo, a Chess-player of great skill and renown, to fill his place, during absence, in the famous Neapolitan Chess Academy (or Club).

Now it chanced that the famed Chess-player, Paolo Boi, termed from the place of his birth, Il Siraeusano, being himself as yet a young man, and fired with generous ardour at hearing everywhere of the Puttino's fame, had left his country at this time to measure his own force with him; and arrived in Naples resolved to see which was the superior in skill. Boi obtained next day an introduction to the Prince Gesualdo, in whose house he found several games at Chess going on. He concealed his name, and sat down to watch the progress of one of these parties played by Leonardo and the Prince himself, without Paolo's knowing the Puttino was really present. The game appeared to be won by Leonardo, but Gesualdo, who had the move, might have drawn it by a deeply hidden stroke of play, which Leonardo perceived, but doubted its discovery by his adversary. In reality the correct move was overlooked by the Prince, who lost the game. The Puttino then told him there had existed one sole means of drawing it, but that the move was so darkly difficult, it could only be explored by quite a first-rate player. Now our brave Paolo had seen this move, and thereupon remarked, that with the gracious permission of the Prince, he would undertake to draw the situation in question. This consent being willingly accorded, the position was replaced, Leonardo feeling assured of victory, not believing it possible the stranger could have found out this stroke of skill; but at the first move Paolo clearly convinced him that he had seen all. The Puttino then said aloud, "Leonardo, methinks thy foe is correct, but let us watch whether the end correspond with the beginning." Well pleased was he of Syracuse thus to discover he was in the presence of his rival, and replied aloud; "I were not Il Siracusano, had I not perceived this thing, and glad am I to have discovered the move which draws the game thus, and thus and with pleasure I inform the Signor Leonardo that I have come here from Sicily, generously moved by his just fame, to measure myself against him; and I beseech him to grant my request, with the license of the Prince, that it may be proved which of us is the best master of this most *onorevole passa-tempo*."

Il buon Leonardo accepted the challenge with delight, when he

knew from what renowned player it came, and the match was at once entered upon ; the Prince and his honourable lady taking conspicuous seats as spectators, and a crowd of players occupying the space around, moved thereunto by the great reputation of the combatants, and laying heavy wagers of gold on the event. The Syracusian gaining the first move pushed his King's Pawn two squares, and being answered with the same, offered the King's Gambit, playing up the King's Bishop's Pawn. Leonardo took the Pawn and defended it, and the strife was fully engaged in. After playing many games, the parties rested with equal honours ; having each won the same number, and certain others being drawn : the result affording "gran gusto" to the Prince, and the other distinguished players present. Taking leave of the Prince, the renewal of the battle was appointed for next day, and the event was anxiously expected by all. It was agreed by the judges that Puttino shewed immense knowledge of the game, but played slowly, while Paolo directed his blows with greater rapidity.

Evening of this day being come, Leonardo considered that the Prince would not now suffer him to leave for Cutri so quickly as he could wish, and therefore resolved to sail in early morning, leaving excuses for the company. This he accordingly did, engaging a bark for the voyage, and reaching Cutri in safety, where he was joyfully welcomed by his friends and relatives. We must here relate, that after a few days thus happily spent, a certain Turkish corsair landed a band of men at Cutri, and carried away captive many Christians, among whom was a younger brother of Leonardo ; but the pirate announced by placard that the prisoners might be ransomed ; consequently next day a multitude of the relatives crowded on board the corsair's vessel to release their friends. Leonardo, among others, reaching the galley, entered upon terms with the Rais, (the Turkish captain,) who agreed to restore his brother for the sum of two hundred ducats, which Leonardo accordingly proposed to pay, but casting his eyes upon the poop of the vessel, saw to his great joy a Chess-board, and thought that well-known implement would better serve his turn to pay with, than a purse of hard cash. The Rais, carefully following his looks, demanded if he could play chess, and Leonardo replied that he knew the game ; on which the Rais challenged him to engage. They sat down forthwith to the board, and the stake was fixed at fifty

scudi (crowns) per game. Now Leonardo quickly won his brother's ransom, and two hundred ducats besides, to the great wonder of the Rais, who piqued himself on being an excellent practitioner, but whose marvel was complete on Leonardo's shewing him a few of his own peculiar stratagems. The noble Rais hereupon restored him his brother, as agreed, and honourably paid him his two hundred ducats to boot, soliciting Leonardo, with earnestness, to accompany him to Constantinople, with the assurance of generous treatment, and a safe return with great wealth to Cutri. Leonardo gratefully refused the proffer of the Turk, and went home joyfully with his brother, being well content with the adventure. After prolonging his visit yet a few days, the Puttino then sailed for Spain, with Giulio Cesare da Lanciano, but passing Naples by the way, halted for a short space of time at Genoa.

Arrived in this fine city, Leonardo inquired out the Chess-players, and attached himself in particular to one Signor Giorgio, a nobleman of wealth and pleasant conversation, beloved by all who knew him, and particularly by the Chess amateurs; since, although Signor Giorgio did not play chess himself, his wife and only daughter were both of them ardent admirers of the game. Struck by the charms and talents of the young lady, Leonardo felt the most passionate love, and, finding it to be reciprocal, the secret consequence was a solemn promise of marriage on both sides; but it was agreed to defer this till Leonardo's return from Madrid, by reason of his then comparative state of poverty, and the nobility of her father; it being hoped Leonardo's visit to the Spanish court might place him in a position to demand publicly the hand of his beloved. So Leonardo departed for Marseilles, leaving his friend and follower, Giulio Cesare, at Genoa, as a medium of correspondence with his secretly betrothed bride.

Embarking anew at Marseilles, Il Puttino came to Barcelona, where he fell in with Tomaso Caputo, surnamed Il Rosces, a beautiful Chess player; who indeed playing even, was easily overcome by Leonardo, but who, receiving the Pawn and move, conquered our hero. Il Rosces was a countryman of Leonardo's, and a very agreeable man, thoroughly versed in the customs of Spain. He introduced, moreover to his acquaintance, Signor Giovanni Rodriguez, another compatriot, and a fine Chess-player; and as it happened the two friends were

going to Madrid likewise, it was arranged Leonardo should journey thither along with them. But a curious adventure here first presented itself.

In the suburbs of Barcelona dwelt a very skilful Chess-player; hight Il Mucciaccio, who, by concealing his real strength, and other unworthy stratagems, had won at Chess of Signor Rodriguez a very large sum of money. It was therefore resolved, by our new trio of friends, before proceeding to Madrid, to punish this base man for his conduct; and the plot being laid, it was artfully carried into effect as follows:—Rodriguez and Rosces went first alone to the house of Mucciaccio, and be it noted that Rosces spoke the Spanish language so well as to be mostly taken for a Spaniard. The former being then asked by Mucciaccio as to the cause of this his unexpected and speedy return, answered that he had just met with his friend Signor Tomaso, a Chess-player, and that wishing to play together, they had found no fitting place, and had therefore come to the dwelling of Signor Mucciaccio. At this pleasant news, the Spanish Rook felt delighted; resolving to pluck them both, feeling confident of his own superiority, Mucciaccio accordingly furnished the friends readily with Chess-men and board, and these being commodiously placed and arranged, they began forthwith to play, the master of the house looking on, and continuing to converse. Rodriguez and Rosces were content to play a few indifferent games, even, and appearing dissatisfied with the result, appointed to renew the combat next day; thus closing the first act of the drama, the end of which was to be spoiling the spoiler, and skinning the fox.

Next morning they returned accordingly, and were joined by Leonardo, in sight of the piazza, beneath which the Spaniard awaited their coming. Leonardo appeared not to know them, and made as though he had merely inquired his road, as a stranger, and had then joined company as having a passion for Chess. The four being thus assembled, Rosces sat down to play with Leonardo, giving our hero a pawn (as secretly agreed), and thus they played two days, still pretending not to have been previously intimate. At the end of the two days, Rosces came off the winner by many games, and receiving a heavy stake of Leonardo shared it openly with Rodriguez, as if the latter had gone halves in the risk of the wager.

On the morning of the third day, Leonardo, as concerted, came to the abode of Mucciaccio, before his friends, and the Spaniard eagerly seized the opportunity to invite him to play Chess. Leonardo refused, saying that he did not wish to tarry in Barcelona, being a gentleman visiting the court of Spain, and that as he had begun to play with Rosces, he should prefer continuing to battle with him, although merely a casual acquaintance; also, that he did not care to lose above a hundred or two scudi. But, here, Mucciaccio pressed him so strongly, that Leonardo deemed the season was come to ripen the design; so these two sat down to a game at Chess together. After a short space of time came Rosces, and Rodriquez, who pouted and sulked, as if angry to see another snapping up the pippin they had plucked from the tree: our brave Leonardo so managing matters as to have lost a single game to the Spaniard at fifty ducats, in paying which sum forthwith, he took good care to shew a heavy purse of doubloons; proclaiming ostentatiously, that he should give up Chess altogether, when he had lost the contents of that purse. Mucciaccio, cast his thirsty eyes upon the doubloons, and continued to play; yet purposely keeping concealed his full game till he had won in all a hundred and fifty ducats. This done, Leonardo led his victim by feigned discourse to play the next game for double or quits; on fighting out which they made a drawn party, and then a second drawn game. The next party was lost by Mucciaccio, and Leonardo being returned his hundred and fifty ducats, an engagement was made for next day; the Spaniard now secure of gaining a large sum, and many gentlemen being invited to see him pluck his pigeon. On the morrow play being commenced at heavy stakes, Leonardo cunningly put forth his whole art, and won all together on that sitting seven hundred scudi of his adversary, yet still so as to make the latter think he lost each time rather through his own error, than through the superiority of Il Puttino. Quitting Chess for that time, Leonardo and his friends resolved to depart from Barcelona at midnight, fearing to be rendered an ill turn; which flight they safely accomplished; paying their tavern bill, and leaving a letter for the discomfited Mucciaccio, in which they told him he must not be surprised if the crafty fisherman sometimes became himself a fish. Moreover, the scroll redde, that in his conscience the Spaniard must know he deserved his fate for having taken

in the unwary, and that if his unholy gains yet exceeded on the whole his present losses, he ought to make his peace with God, by giving up the balance to the poor. Lastly, Mucciaccio was given to learn the names of his late opponents, and was informed they were suddenly off for Madrid, whither, if he would come, his money should all be returned with their blessing, provided he could win it back.

On this journey of our three friends to court nothing remarkable happened ; save, that sleeping at an inn, the last night on the road, with other travellers, they chanced upon a landlord who played chess well, and being in the habit of thereby fleecing his guests, this man thought craftily to do the same by the present company ; coming off, unfortunately for his schemes, upon this occasion, with the loss of more crowns than paid the reckoning of all the travellers together. Next day, Leonardo and his associates came to Madrid, and took lodgings at the house of one Donna Isabella, a friend of Rosces.

Thus, being fortunately arrived, they rested a few days, informing themselves as to where the great Chess-players held their chief meetings ; and, particularly, whither Ruy Lopez for the most part resorted. Then, on the morrow, they went to the place indicated, and found Ruy Lopez himself playing with an amateur, to whom he could only give the Pawn. Many nobles and gentles were looking on, and a courteous reception was given to the strangers ; the person of Leonardo being forgotten by Ruy Lopez. The visitors were asked if they would play Chess, and Leonardo answered that they had come to Madrid only for that purpose, provided they could find their equals. At these proud words, Ruy Lopez raised his eyes, and contentedly seeing that they were Italians, fancied much was to be made of them, so assured them that he, for one, was ready to play upon their own terms. Leonardo then took up the speech, and declared himself prepared to play Ruy Lopez, without odds, at fifty scudi the game ; whereat the spectators doubted whether he were really strong, or only conceited ; but, being a stranger, they suspended their judgments, and the then opponent of Ruy Lopez, declaring himself content to stop for the time, Leonardo took his seat and began to play at once, gaining the first move. The company anxiously looked on the while, eager to see the result ; and finding the play ran equal, and the first game indeed drawn, began to respect the newly-arrived professor.

Not intending to win that day, Il Puttino made an even fight, and the contest being adjourned to next morning, was content to come off from the second engagement a winner of one game on the balance ; continuing to play day by day, gaining generally one surplus game of each reckoning. Thus went matters, and the fame of Leonardo was bruited through court and city ; many of the first lords attending to witness games so interesting ; some taking part with Lopez, some with the Italian ; Rodriquez and Rosces failing not the while also to play with the Spaniards as they best might. But Leonardo throughout refrained from coming off any one day conqueror, more than in the one game, on the whole ; studying his adversary's tactics, and reserving his full force to be exhibited upon a more interesting occasion.

The news of this Chess tournament flying abroad, came presently to the ears of the brave Girone, the competitor and equal of Lopez ; who, hearing of the hard blows being dealt out to his compatriot, travelled hastily to Madrid from his residence in a neighbouring city, eager to look upon the renowned Italian. Coming to the place of meeting, Girone found a crowd of gentlemen assembled round his friend Lopez, awaiting the arrival of Leonardo, who, with his companions, never came too early, not to betray greed. Girone inquired of Lopez, as to the game of this new rival, and learnt that it was deeply learned. He also received full particulars of past events. The company then besought of Girone that he also would encounter the Italian, to which he willingly consented ; and Leonardo being now in presence, a sort of chess pool was formed for good stakes ; the three great artists playing by turns together, and indiscriminately. Here the superiority of Leonardo over the other two shone indeed confessedly ; and the battle being renewed at intervals, he won a thousand scudi. The Puttino then played against them both together, Lopez and Girone taking counsel ; and the result was, to the great delight and enjoyment of the spectators, that although Il Puttino had the best of it single-handed with either one, yet the two together were strictly his match ; since neither could he win of them, nor they of him ; as proved in frequent and prolonged encounters.

Leaving Il Puttino to rest quietly for a few moments on his laurels, we cannot forbear glancing transiently over

the varied narrative just presented, of what may be termed his toilsome ascent to the very apex of Chess fame. The manner of the narrator, Dr. Salvio, has a good deal of Defoe about it; the simplicity of his details stamps them with an air of profound and literal truth; confirmed by the date of Salvio's publication, so closely pressing upon the heels of his merry histories. Who would think that mirth could be fashioned out of Chess?—but laughter we hold to be one of the chief distinguishing marks between man and brute. Deep thinkers delight in a jest, while the hooded owl wears its all of profundity upon its shaded brow. Our paladins, in the scenes before us, roam from clime to clime, and sea to sea, in quest of adventure, like true Knights errant. Is there a lady's heart to be won at Chess?—Leonardo is the gallant to essay that spell's solution. Is there a pirate to be conquered?—a bearded Turk to be shaven and shorn?—our Youth caps the crescent with the cross, and converts the Chess-board for the nonce into a veritable exchequer,—paying his ducats *out of that*, and charging handsomely for the lesson to boot. Beaten at first by Ruy Lopez, Leonardo naturally feels "great disgust!" and, like the wounded bird, seeks his family nest; bidding patiently his time, till strong enough to *have another shy*. The final issue of this remains to be told.

The entrance of Paolo Boi upon the scene is highly and essentially dramatic. He could not repose in his bed for the reputation of Il Puttino. It haunted his waking thoughts; it pervaded his midnight dreams. Earth is narrow for the haughty of soul; it may not hold *two* Paolos. The quiet air with which he first reveals his presence to Leonardo is delightful. "Had I not perceived the *coup*, then were I not the Syracusian!" One can

fancy the sensation produced by these words in an era when feeling and impulse were all in all. The uprising of Byron's Dervise in the Pasha's hall not less "amazed the sight," than we may suppose would be the effect of the Syracusian Chief's thus emphatically dashing away disguise, and proclaiming proudly his identity. The glove, so chivalrously offered, is no less courteously raised; no vain delay is sought for, no respite given. The lists are fixed on the moment, and the Prince and Princess do the honours of the field; preparing doubtless the victor's prize in this interesting tournament. Our combatants do their devoir manfully; shivering their spears like porcelain, and bearing themselves as valiant champions. Neither party gains the ascendancy, and the honours of the day are shared between them. We yearn, nevertheless, slightly toward him of Syracuse, as being the more rapid fighter, and the gallant proposer of the dangerous Gambit. Paolo Boi will re-appear upon the scene. Leonardo sails away in the night; whereat we doubt not a few sharp glibes were cast at morning. We will not—we dare not—believe the Puttino feared to renew the battle; but Ruy Lopez, like night-mare, was sitting yet heavily on the soul of the Italian; and the Spanish adventure, as the first vowed, was the first to be prosecuted to the end. Paolo would keep.

The Scapin-like manner in which poor Mucciaccio undergoes the operation of skinning were worthy of the craftiest Greek at Tattersall's. We *hope* that the Spaniard was only visited by way of retribution, but *fear*, from the masterly strategy of his foes, that they were by no means too particular as to the qualities of their victim. There is a touch of "leggism" about this adventure, which we wish could be effaced from the Puttino's

escutcheon. The white robes of Caissa are dragged through the dirt. Guzman d'Alfarache and Hardy Vaux frequently put their hands into other people's pockets, believing they were their own : and so, in *one* sense of the word, they were. Mistakes *will* happen to the best intentioned men. In our own day, a friend *sometimes* takes a worse umbrella than that which he leaves. We fear the Chess principles of our worthy trio had a good deal of Macintosh in their composition ;—they would bear stretching. Be this as it may, the scene is worthy of Boccaccio; and the parting letter, together with the bolting in the night to avoid a Spanish stiletto, form a retreat as masterly as that of Ney and Eugene through the black forests of the Berezina. The *naïve* fear of being done “an ill turn,” which prompted this step, reminds us of Cellini’s beautiful simplicity of expression when he tells us, that quarrelling with a friend he drew his dagger, “and gave him three or four good cuts across the face.” Oh ! for the old times of our forefathers! Arcadian groves, lambs, nymphs, and swains !

But the time has come when Leonardo shall meet his ancient victor face to face. Ruy Lopez recognises not in the grown man, the stripling who once bearded him so unsuccessfully in Rome. Very proud is the bearing of the Italian. He erects his crest like the battle horse when he hears the trumpet ;—“ I come to play Chess, provided I can find my equal ! ”—salutation simple and stern ; enough to make the company, as it did, open their eyes with wonder. Leonardo aims at creating a sensation. Revenge is a very sweet morsel to us all ; but especially so to an Italian. It will not be enough merely to defeat Ruy Lopez ; but he shall be pulverized and ground to earth; him, and his whole Chess-playing generation. Well, a

good hater is a good thing. We love an open foe. Killing in the dark suits only with souls of muck. Leonardo tosses down his fifty scudi, and at it they go, like two fighting bulls on the mountains of Andalusia. The craft of the Italian now in managing his winnings is admirable. Here, we enjoy the sweet delusion in which he suffers the Spaniard to rock his soul to sleep,—the end thereof bearing an intent above money-catching. “He may be better than I,” thinks Lopez, “but I doubt it, as he only wins an odd game; and after a few more trials, he’ll break down, like most young players, before my experienced patience and skill.” The noble Girone comes to the rescue, but falls by the side of his friend. The result of the Chess-pool, in which Leonardo unmasks his full force, and sweeps away the thousand scudi, reminds us irresistibly of De la Bourdonnais, who first came to the knowledge of his own Chess-strength, playing a similar match with Cochrane and Deschapelles, each staking a Napoleon on the board every game. “When I saw the gold,” said De la Bourdonnais to ourselves, “I felt quite a new man; I went at it in earnest, and out of twenty-one pools, won eighteen!” But let us return to our *buttons*, and resume Salvio’s history.

Now the tidings of these things came to the ears of the good King, Philip II., who would not believe it possible his favourite Ruy Lopez could have found a conqueror; and the Monarch accordingly determined himself to see the two play together. Hereupon the day was fixed, and the champions were brought into the royal presence; Ruy Lopez being introduced by a grandee of Spain, and Leonardo by the Count Crancio. Bending in lowly reverence, the King commanded them to rise, and to play upon a certain table, so that his Majesty might well and clearly overlook the moves; fixing the conditions of the

match that the first winner of three games should receive a thousand scudi. Engaging then upon these terms, Leonardo purposely lost the two first games ; upon which the King rose to leave the apartment, with an unfavourable opinion of the skill of the Italian ; but Leonardo threw himself on his knees, with these words—"I beg your Majesty not to go, for that which I have done has been purposely contrived to display my skill the more clearly. Your Majesty shall behold that of the three following games, I will win them all, and that without much difficulty ; and this I undertake to perform on pain of losing life. Know, moreover, O King, that for this thing came I hither purposely, having been moved thereto by the unseemly deportment of Ruy Lopez, when he conquered me, some time back, in Rome." At this speech, the King consented to remain, and then, indeed, was the proud boast of Leonardo made good ; he winning the three games in succession, and thus honourably fulfilling his bold engagement. The King thereat greatly admired the Italian's skill, and covered him with favours ! presenting him on the spot with the thousand crowns, as also a richly ornamented jewel, and one of the royal ermine mantles ; bidding him moreover ask what boon he would, and it should be granted. Hereupon Leonardo gratefully thanked his Majesty for so much kindness, and demanded that his country should be freed for a certain number of years from all fiscal tribute ; which the Monarch was graciously pleased to accord, fixing the time at twenty years. And thus terminated the meeting, to the great satisfaction of the whole Court. Lastly, it is said by Signor Ricupido Scodes, a famous Chess-player, and friend of Leonardo, that after the death of the latter, the jewelled ornament, bestowed by Philip, fell into the possession of the Signor Don Carlo d'Avalos, whose wardrobe it served to beautify.

And so the day of retribution has come and gone, and the star of Ruy Lopez has paled and withered before the fiery advent of the Italian meteor. The catastrophe is worthy of its antecedent. When shone chivalry forth more brightly ? The passage of arms between our heroes is a duello to the death ; a striking home with sharpest sword and spear. Like two of Arthur's Knights con-

tending in the listed jousts, each champion has his squire by his side ; the guerdon to be reaped not being merely the thousand crowns, though that be a gift right royal,—but a prize combining name and renown, present and future—a word in the mouths of present men—a fresco on the halls of time,—a writing on the marble scrolls of posterity. To appreciate fully the magnanimity of Leonardo, we must remember that he assuredly could not have rendered his adversary a full Pawn on each game, and played, Damocles like, with the sword suspended over his head. Philip was not a monarch to be lightly sported with. Disgrace was certainly at hand ; a disgrace of the bitterest quality,—should the brain reel and falter but for a single moment, under the intense pressure of this demand upon its powers, while the Court-champion, Lopez, fought upon roses, caring to win but one game out of the remaining three. Glory then to the wreath so gallantly won, and praise to Spain's ruler for his noble acknowledgment of the proud triumph of genius,—and honour—immortal honour to the pure-minded Puttino, who would ask nothing for himself, but claimed a remission of taxes for his beloved Cutri ! O Chancellor of the Exchequer—lord of Downing Street,—what sayest thou to playing us at Chess this very day for our window rate ?

Salvio's graphic chronicle reads on ; and the sturdy Paolo Boi comes to avenge, fate willing, the conquered Spanish Bishop.

Now when Leonardo quitted Naples, Paoli Boi had remained some time in that city, to learn tidings of the Puttino's success at Madrid ; and with that resolved to journey thither himself likewise in quest of fame and glory in Chess. Embarking, therefore, with a trusty follower, the Syracusan departed ; arriving at Madrid immediately after the

foretold passages had occurred between our Puttino and Lopez, undergoing many curious and strange adventures by the way, of which space allows us but to record that our brave Paolo was taken captive, and carried as a slave to Algiers, though instantly released. Great grief was the Syracusian's, on hearing, at the Court of Madrid, of all that had passed, that his coming hither had not been earlier, and he eagerly inquired out where Leonardo might be found. Passing then suddenly to the place, as directed, the Sicilian lighted upon Il Puttino playing Chess with Girone and Lopez ; and not choosing to disturb the party mingled quietly with the witnesses, looking over the play patiently ; until the battle, being drawn, was adjourned unto the morrow. Rising from his seat, Leonardo was then made suddenly aware of the presence of *il buon* Paolo ; and springing eagerly towards him, embraced the Sicilian with such demonstration of lively joy and affection, that all around thought he was a near relative. The first emotions of the meeting over, Leonardo informed the company of the name of the visitor ; describing and commanding his great acquirements in Chess. Paolo thanked our brave Leonardo for this favorable expression of opinion, but being naturally of haughty mien, drew up and coldly replied : — “Signor Leonardo, at the game of Chess I have yet one rival, and I now come to the Court of Spain with no other view but to encounter him, resuming the contest we began long ago in Naples ; determined this time to know which of us two shall wear the crown, and who has made most progress since we played in the palace of the Prince Gesualdo.” These proud words being spoken in the face of the whole assemblage, Leonardo calmly and gallantly replied, that it would be his greatest pleasure to accept the cartel so nobly offered ; and that the next day should decide the event between them. And then for the time they separated.

All the principal Chess-players attended the morrow with especial interest, but an unforeseen calamity frustrated their expected gratification. When Leonardo returned that evening to his dwelling, he found his faithful follower, Giulio Cesare, the same whom he had left behind at Genoa to conduct the correspondence with his so dearly-loved fair one. He had come to Madrid with the heavy tidings that this lady had passed to a better life ; commanding her last words to her adored Leonardo. “Tell him,” said she, “that it pleases Heaven to

break our contract; but that up to the present moment, I have been, since his departure, in every respect his loved and faithful consort." This spoken, with a sigh, she turned to the wall, and said no more words till death.

At this sad news, the now unhappy Leonardo was torn with the most violent grief; weeping a torrent of tears all night, refusing every sort of comfort. Finding himself utterly incapable of playing Chess, he sent word next morning, by his friend Rosces, to that effect; requesting the generous minded company to excuse his apparent breach of promise; alleging, with necessary concealment, that he had just learned the death of his mother. Such being the case, Paolo Boi played Chess with Girone; producing some beautiful games, and finally coming off the winner of the conquering party. The general judgment was pronounced, that Paolo played much faster than Il Puttino, and with greater brilliancy of combination; but on the whole perhaps, less solid and sound; hence the Lords of the Court wonderfully desired to see them matched together. However, Leonardo vanishing for a space from the scene, the Syracusian played alternately with Lopez and Girone, and then against the two united in counsel; coming off with the same success as Leonardo had previously reaped. As for the latter, meanwhile, finding his grief rather to increase than diminish, he resolved to leave Madrid altogether; first placing his gains in the safe custody of Signor Conte Crancioni; and so departing with his follower Giulio Cesare for Lisbon, without being equal even to take leave of the Court. It must be added, that Leonardo here addressed letters of sincere condolence to his dear friends at Genoa; so bereaved of their daughter. Arrived in Lisbon, the Puttino rested some days, his soul still torn with dolour, for love of his lost lady; and finding no relief but in solitude; to enjoy which he frequented constantly the lonely sea-side; breathing his sad thoughts there, at times, in poetic soliloquy.

Now it fell out, that a certain Portuguese gentleman, of congenial mind, frequented the same solitary retreat; and as he appeared to Leonardo to be equally heart-wrung with sorrow, a mutual interest ripened speedily to friendship. The Portuguese Cavalier spoke Italian perfectly well, and Leonardo was courteously received, after kind entreaty on the part of him of Lisbon that it might be so permitted, as a guest in the house of his new-found friend. Next morning having

attended mass, they perambulated the streets of the city, where the Portuguese kindly pointed out those objects most worthy of notice; and then, having dined, besought Leonardo to tell him the story of his so-evident woe, promising, in return, to relate his own cause of present misery of heart. Leonardo consented, and narrated all that had happened since he left Cutri; on which the benevolent stranger much condoled with him, and tendered all the consolation in his power; confiding to the Puttino, that he also was labouring under the affliction of losing a dear lady by death; having previously had to combat with the blow of finding a former love unfaithful. The Portuguese moreover shewed Leonardo many sweet poems he had composed to his solace, upon the ingratitude of the one, and the death of the other. Likewise he congratulated himself on having made the acquaintance of so great a Chess-player as Leonardo; he being himself fond of the game. He said the Puttino would find his account, in Lisbon, in Chess; the King Don Sebastian, being passionately attached to this recreation; and having at court a professor of great repute, called Il Moro. This discourse naturally brought on an immediate game of Chess, the self-same hour, between the two now fast friends; and Leonardo shewing forth his skill, the Portuguese was confounded with wonder and admiration. He promised to employ his best efforts that Leonardo should play with Il Moro in presence of the King; but thought it best the two champions should first try their skill in private; which he did not doubt to effect, being a personal friend of the Moor. Accordingly it was arranged that Il Moro should come to play a match with Leonardo, at the house of the Portuguese.

Like wildfire, the news flew over Lisbon, that an Italian Chess-player had the hardihood to encounter the famed Il Moro on equal terms; and the appointed spot for the meeting was thronged, at the time fixed, by eager spectators. Whither also, the Moor being come, Chess commenced; the parties playing even, and both chivalrously disdaining less fierce modes of assault than the Gambit of King or Queen. Leonardo not caring to win the first day, the result was perfect equality; which being reported to the King, Don Sebastian, that monarch was graciously pleased to desire the valorous champions should play in his presence. This being effected, Leonardo

manifested indeed his prowess ; beating Il Moro in many games ; which gave the King very great content, by reason of the pride of the Moor ; who would never allow his equal in Chess could be met with, and now demanded his revenge of Leonardo. The contest being renewed on the morrow Leonardo again came off the decided conqueror ; on which the King heaped many favours upon him, and gave him the title of *Il Cavaliere errante*, because, like the Knights of old, he went about over the earth, to humble the proud, and lower the repute of those of rival pretensions.

Leonardo dwelt some months with his friend at Lisbon, and then returned to the Court of Madrid ; recruited in health and spirits, and eager for the promised encounter with the Syracusian. His reception was enthusiastic, and the narration of his doings while at Lisbon gave universal pleasure. Many lords and gentlemen awaited the coming of Leonardo to the Chess "conversazione" at Madrid ; and every obstacle being removed, he sat down seriously to play with Paolo Boi, in presence of the first amateurs and professors of Spain and Italy. The battle continued during three whole days, night alone dividing the sittings ; during the two first days the champions were even ; but the third day Paolo was conquered ; which was, indeed, ascribed generally to his being unwell, or some similar cause. However this might be, stung with defeat so unwonted, Paolo Boi suddenly left Madrid next day for Italy ; telling no man that he was about to go.

The Syracusian having thus departed, Leonardo remained yet a few days more at Court, and then left, accompanied by Rodriguez and Rosces, both in high spirits at the result of the campaign ; and Il Puttino having with him a considerable sum of money. Unequal to again beholding Genoa, Leonardo would not stop there, but went straightway to Naples, where the party arrived in safety. Here they met with those great players, Michele de Mauro, Il Beneventano, l'Ametrano, Il Traino, and Il Genovini ; all perhaps slightly inferior to Rosces, except Michele de Mauro, who played fully equal to him ; and thence many friendly battles between the two. Leonardo remained permanently in Naples ; having the honourable appointment of agent to the Prince di Bisignano. We must here be pardoned for anticipating the history of Paolo Boi, to relate, that after the latter subse-

quently became released from his captivity in Algiers, he returned to Naples; and played again many times with Leonardo, in presence of the Vice Roy, the Duke d'Ossuna; making always even games together. Leonardo finally left Naples to return to Cutri, his birth-place; and there, at the Court of the Prince di Bisignano in Calabria, was miserably and unhappily poisoned unto death, through jealous envy, in the 45th year of his age. Leonardo and Paolo Boi were styled the Light and Lustre of Chess.

And this, then, was doomed to be the ultimate reward of genius—a poisoned chalice! Thus was the Light of Chess to be extinguished in the pride of life;—hopes yet unblown—roses but newly budded—laurels barely wreathed. Surely an existence devoted to a sport harmless and innocent as Chess, deserved a better fate. We had not thought the hot breath of the aspic would seek to taint a flower so hidden as the lowly violet. Poison, given in the good old times, generally soared at higher game, and left the dagger for the vulgar. But Envy thirsted for the peaceful blood of the Puttino, and drugged the draught; and Destiny willed that Italy should thus lose her younger chosen son of graceful Chess. Peace to thy manes, gallant Leonardo; we love and venerate thy memory. Be thy Calabrian tomb planted with the cypress and the willow; and may the night-bird warble thy dirge through long, long centuries of rest! Peace to the good and the chivalrous—Envy itself respects the tranquillity of the grave. Our historian, Salvio, dwells not on this foul murder, life being ever rated at a low price in Naples and Calabria; but continues his narrative of the deeds of prowess done subsequently by Paolo Boi. Him, too, as Chess enthusiasts, we love in all reverence and honour, and will forthwith follow in his Knightly wanderings.

In the brief history we have just run over, it is worthy of note in what romantic vein Fate displays her heroes in conflict; poising their merits so as not to depress all for the sake of one. The second coming of the Syracusian to battle is admirably delineated. Salvio works in chalk only, but to the adept, what expression is there in his rough crayon outline! There is no ambiguity, *no mistake*, about Paolo. He springs upon the scene with the vivid reality of a thunderbolt. His pride is the honest, sublime, emanation of a genius conscious of no superior. Paolo comes prepared to mount the victor's car of triumph, or to die in the amphitheatre. There is nothing of shiftiness about the Syracusian; *shuffle* lives not in his strong simplicity. He will neither take nor render grace; he never *plays pretty* with a rival. The speech of Boi runs in the simple phrase interchanged between the Douglas and the Percy at Otterbourne,—“One of us two must die.” Homer's deity covering her favoured hero with a cloud to snatch him from the spear-stroke of Achilles, appears again to interfere upon the present occasion.

The never-erring archer bends his bow, the death-shaft falls in Genoa; and Leonardo is abstracted from Chess and worldly cares, by the sudden and irremediable loss of her he had loved in life so well. We sympathize with his position; but nature's voice insists on being heard; the scene thus closing in the spirit of true poesy. The warriors are sundered for a season. We care not; knowing they will meet again. The throne of Chess awaits the conqueror; but his chariot wheels must tarry for the nonce.

In some odd out-of-the-way French book, or another, we once met with the startling assertion that “*pigeon is a cure for grief*; “*for*”—proceeds Monsieur, the author—

“ whenever I fall into very serious trouble, JE MANGE DEUX PIGEONS, ET JE ME CONSOLE !” The Chess-board is the “pigeon” to Leonardo ; he plays Chess, and is comforted. O bounty of Nature, and O virtue of Chess ! Be not too severe upon him of Cutri, O ye admirers of broken hearts, and charcoal-choked lovers. The heart of man is inexplicable, and at times most pliable. It may not always rend asunder. In the case of Leonardo, there openeth in his breast a safety-valve, and his grief vents itself in passionate outbursts of rage upon the turbaned Turk. The haughty Saracen, “Il Moro,” sustains the shock of Leonardo’s fierce sorrow, and falls, like a tree upthorn by the storms of the West. The Othello of the exchequer lies low ; and the enemy of the true faith is humbled in his pride. Joy to the conqueror, and to Sebastian, the judge of the field; who subsequently fought, himself, in sterner scenes, so well for Christendom.

Diana’s pale lamp wanes, suns rise and set, and Leonardo returns a “wiser though a sadder man,” to Naples. His reception is kind ; and as though his departure had been but of yesterday. Foremost in the throng to greet his arrival is the valiant Paolo. Not a moment of time must be wasted. Fate may again cruelly separate the brave. The proudest hour of life has dawned for the heroes of Syracuse and Cutri. Their ready blades are at once crossed ; Paolo and Leonardo confront each other at the Chess-table. Madrid looks on in silent admiration, at this battle of the “glorious three days ;” during the first two of which the issue is so evenly balanced—the scale so nicely poised. The third evening gives victory to Leonardo. “At length the strength of Swaran fell ; the King of the groves is bound.”

Yes; the Syracusian is overborne; but exult not too much, O people of Cutri! Bear your triumph with modesty, brave Leonardo. Not you, but destiny, has conquered Paolo. Malaria of the marsh, mist from the fen, have stricken Boi. He is out of health, and hence comes unwonted defeat. Light and Lustre of Chess! Brothers in Arms, Paolo and Leonardo, ye are equal in force, as shall be thereafter proved by many a stubborn contest. Neither one of ye is better than the other. Widen then the sculptured frame, ascend the throne of Chess, formed to receive ye both, and rule its denizens in peace and amity; bound together for your lives by bands of most enduring friendship. Of the two, if made to pronounce, we should even give our voice for the noble Syracusian, that he take the higher place upon the dais. Sympathy with misfortune is so justly due to Paolo's long-tried qualities of excellence. The Syracusian, however, scorns all sympathy. He forsakes the haunts of man for a season, and refuseth to be comforted. Our limits narrow. Leonardo is murdered at the age of forty-five. His name alone remains, bright as the Syrian star. We follow forth the fortunes of the Syracusian, now incontestably sole lord of the ascendant in Chess.

Paolo, the Syracusian, having departed, as spoken, came to Barcelona, and there, embarking in a small vessel, was taken captive by certain Algerine pirates in the Gulf of Lyons; together with some other Christians, who were in his company. Being then, by God's will and good fortune, at once led away to Algiers, he had the felicity to be made over to a Turkish lord of great rank, of gentle and amiable manners. His master carried him at once to his palace, informing him, that all he and a fellow slave would have to perform in the way of duty, was to receive, and usher in, his numerous visitors. Here, to

the great delight of Boi, many nobles came to play Chess continually, and finally, Paolo, seeing that his master constantly lost large sums upon the game, drew him on one side, and told him in a few words that if he would grant him his liberty, he, Boi, in return, would put him into a certain way of winning much wealth (*molti danari*). The noble Turk agreed, provided Paolo could prove his assertion ; and requested first to know what he purposed. Paolo then developed his Chess-skill, to the very ravishment of the Padrone ; and their subsequent plan was thus arranged, and carried into effect. The conversazione being thronged with amateurs, Paolo and the Turk played together at the odds of the Knight ; which brought all those quickly around, to admire the great skill of the stranger, and naturally induced many others to wish to encounter the Syracusian. The latter thus had the opportunity, of which he skilfully availed himself, to win a few hundred scudi, before the whole force of his game was appreciated ; and, then, allowing freely the most immense odds, Paolo won a much larger amount. The Padrone and Boi then made the tour of the Kingdom of Algiers, realizing many thousand scudi ; subsequently to which, the Turk freely allowed the noble Syracusian his liberty ; presenting him to boot with two thousand zecchini, and a pass of safe conduct. Quitting Algiers thus in triumph, Paolo returned to Syracuse, and thence to Naples, where, as has been narrated, he resumed his battles with Leonardo, and other leading "artistes ;" taking up his residence at the mansion of the Duca d'Urbino, from whom Boi received the yearly fee of three hundred scudi of silver. This continued some time ; and not only Rosces, the Mauro, the Beneventano Domenico de Leonardi (not the Puttino), and others now contended constantly with Paolo, but I, too,—I—Salvio, entered likewise the lists ; being then a young player of promise, and receiving like the others a Pawn as odds. Anon, a curious adventure befel the great Syracusian at Milan. He there chanced to engage in a certain Chess-match with one, a stranger, who at first was the gainer ; upon which, our Paolo, not being able otherwise to divine the reason, ascribed the matter justly to necromancy, and pronounced certain prayers before renewing the fray ; which orisons were duly efficacious, as Boi then came off the winner. Finally, the very last time, I, Salvio, played Chess myself with Paolo, he rendered me no odds whatsoever ;

and it so chanced, that during one very complicated and difficult game, he saw that he could forcedly win my Queen in five moves ; I observed this also, but further remarked that in two moves more, I could also force his Queen in exchange for a Rook, and come off with a drawn game. And so, even as I have said, was the stroke played out ; Paolo gravely observing thus :—“ Youth hath greater capacity than age. Thou, O Salvio, art in the very flower of life ; for me, I am above seventy years of age, and will therefore henceforth tranquilly repose upon mine already acquired honours.” Three days only after this, it came to pass that Paolo the Syracusian died, being poisoned by his servant for the sake of his money. Paolo Boi was then buried with all due honours at the church of San Luigi, near unto the Palazzo Reale.

Poison again ! Foul work, my masters !—These were then the “good old times” of which our grandsires vaunt ! Envy walks the earth in every age ; but at least has now learned to respect the life of the body, strive as she may with her foul fangs to tear and rend the spirit of man. Well, the curtain has fallen, the play is done. Leonardo of Cutri has gone before—Paolo of Syracuse followeth after. The light and lustre of Chess are for ever quenched and sunk in deepest ocean night. Youth could not save itself from—age might not avert—the dastardly hand of the assassin. We dwell no longer on this, but proceed to eke out Salvio’s portrait of the noble Paolo, from the subsequent sketch written by Carrera, in the year 1617.—Carrera speaks :—

In the time of our fathers, we had many renowned Chess-players, of whom the chief in estimation was Paolo Boi, the Sicilian, termed equally the Syracusian, from the place of his birth. He was born of a noble and wealthy family, highly endowed with the gift of letters

and the capability of acquiring knowledge ; whence it came to pass that he made a rapid progress in Chess, and soon dismissed to the rear all other Syracusian players. Seeking, then, fresh foes to conquer, Paolo visited Spain, then the resort of the greatest Chess professors ; where he was honoured by the bounteous favour and countenance of the chief lords of the kingdom ; as well as of the King, Philip the Second, himself no mean lover of this recreation. As I have said, Paolo was already superior to every other player in Sicily, and could also play well without seeing the Chess-board ; in which art he was indeed remarkably eminent, conducting three games at once on as many different boards, conversing pleasantly the while, with the company, upon general subjects. Before going into Spain, Boi travelled through Italy, contending everywhere with the principal Chess-players, and especially with the far-famed Puttino, Leonardo, with whom he may be classed as equal, seeing that Salvio terms them the Light and Lustre of the profession of Chess.

Paolo was beloved of many Italian Princes, and especially of the Duca d'Urbino ; he was also especially esteemed by several Cardinals ; as well as by Pope Pius V., who offered, indeed, to endow him with a rich benefice, if he would don the robes of the Church. Paolo refused this offer ; preferring to indulge in a less rigid mode of life, and not choosing to be restricted by the sanctity of clerical rules. It came to pass once in Venice, that Paolo Boi met with a stranger, with whom he strove in Chess, and to whom he unaccountably lost. Having then subsequently examined the play minutely, and finding that he certainly ought to have won, Paolo was smitten with wonder to perceive that he had been defeated contrary to all rule ; and thence naturally suspected that his adversary had used magic art, or by some other supernatural means thrown a shade upon the Syracusian's power of sight. Hereupon, Paolo, being of good and virtuous habits of life and possessing a very rich "corona" of Paternosters, the holy reliques of departed saints, took a fancy to play Chess once more with his late victor, first arming himself with this sacred chaplet, and also devoutly receiving the sacraments both of Penitence and the Eucharist. Hereby he conquered his adversary altogether ; who, indeed, addressed the Syracusian, in the act of surrender, in these words—"Thine is more potent than mine."

When the Syracusian was in Spain, he had the gratification of playing Chess in the presence of Philip the Second; who rewarded him with a pension of five hundred scudi per annum, charged upon certain revenues derived from Syracusian cities, and to be paid by them to Paolo. Boi in early life displayed great personal valour, and love of adventure. He testified to Philip his wish to serve the King's brother, Don John of Austria, and the Spanish Monarch accordingly furnished him with written credentials in his own royal hand, worded in terms of the highest grace and favour. From this we know that Boi served the King as a military officer, and it is believed in several campaigns; but regarding the past, our Syracusian was ever of a taciturn disposition; permitting nothing to go forth. Paolo visited, among other countries, Portugal, and playing Chess there, with certain noble lords, won in a single day eight thousand scudi. He played also there with Sebastian, the King, who not only delighted much in the game, but was acknowledged to be himself a good Chess-player. Don Sebastian and the Syracusian frequently played as much as three or four hours at one time, and upon one occasion, it chanced that the King, playing in a standing posture, and Paolo Boi, kneeling according to etiquette, with one knee upon a cushion (*un' origliere*); the latter was so fatigued with the length of time during which he had maintained this attitude, that he sought relief; observing which, the King assisted him with his own arm, to change his position, and to kneel upon the other knee.

When Kings thus publicly displayed their admiration of the Syracusian's talent, it is not much marvel that the chief lords of Sicily, Rome, Naples, and elsewhere, more than shared in the same feeling. Paolo forgot not to shew himself in the country of Hungary, where the Turks and Hungarians were wont to play Chess on horseback without Chess-board or pieces. The Syracusian dwelt twenty years in foreign countries; during which time his compatriots believed him dead. Returning then to Sicily, he yet could not rest tranquil, but was ever changing from place to place. Finally, being in Syracuse he went to Naples, at the pressing invitation of the Princess di Stigliano, who highly esteemed him; and in Naples, our Paolo was attacked with a certain disorder of the stomach, which removed him to a better world, in the year 1598, at above seventy years of age. His body was interred in the Church of San Francesco di Paolo; and

the funeral rites were conducted with sumptuous magnificence, in the presence of the Prince di Stigliano, and many other Neapolitan cavaliers and nobles.

I myself (*concludes Carrera*) knew Paolo in my youth, when at Palermo, in the year 1597. His head was then white as snow, but his appearance was brisk and gallant ; being attired like a young man, in the gayest fashions of the age ; and manifesting, with the dress, the caprices, also of youth. He was not the less adorned with the most estimable qualities ; so chaste, and modest, he would never even marry a wife. He gave largely to the poor in alms, spent much in splendour and show, and affected the highest pomp and dignity. He heard Mass every day, always contributing munificently to the collection made by the priest ; confessing himself, and regularly receiving the Sacrament. He was consequently much beloved by the devout. Paolo would never suffer his portrait to be taken ; hence such likenesses as exist, must have been sketched without his knowledge. He was in height above the ordinary stature of men, but finely proportioned, and of handsome features. He was vivacious, prompt at reasoning, cheerful, and affable, with all persons. He left some writings on Chess, which I have never been able to see ; and I have thought it right to give a full description of this great man, that his name may be known to posterity."

Truly a fine and noble creature was this Syracusian, and worthy, perhaps, above every other warrior, to stand forth in Chess-history, as the Hero of all time. Paolo, Boi was, indeed, not one of Carlyle's vividly depicted race of "Shams." He was not merely the learned doctor of an art, who can practise that one specific thing, and none other ; whose slender soul dwells ever contentedly in its nutshell, and becomes irredeemably lost, should it be temporarily lifted into a larger circle. Paolo was a man of the world, a Chess-player, and a gentleman, in the best acceptation of the terms. With him, Chess was merely one of the numerous outlets of the brain ; wherein

mental power delights to shew its superiority over surrounding clay-cldos. Paolo Boi was a warrior, a student, a man of letters;—to the poor, an ever bounteous friend—with the rich, most chivalrously gallant. With all, be it summed up, the pious Syracusian had sufficient courage not to be ashamed of his Maker.

The religious faith of Boi, as developed in his romantic Chess-encounter with the assumed fiend or magician, is a curious trait of character, highly natural in a temperament so ardent, and in an organization fashioned and matured in the “Sunny South.” The manner in which the Syracusian “walks in” to the wizard, by the aid of his own more potent charm (the bits of holy bones, or whatever else might form its elements), is quite as it should be, and *all over admirable*. Satan tries to “take a rise” out of our champion, but goes back to his darkness howling. There is a beautiful grandeur of simplicity in the possessing so firm an assurance of one's own pre-eminence, as to entertain honestly the conviction that successful rivalry can be based but upon the supernatural and the unhallowed. Alas ! for the printing-press, which has dis-encumbered our souls of so many happy illusions ! In the nineteenth century we have nothing of the sort to fall back upon, and when beaten at Chess can plead no stronger excuse to ourselves than “headache.” Such a feeling as this of Messer Paolo Boi's, we hold to be assuredly the loftiest pitch to which real Chess-faith can soar !

An incidental reflection presents itself as interesting to those who love to watch the workings of the vital spark, which dwells in frail mortality. From the constant patronage of Chess evinced by Philip, one can hardly believe him to have been the gloomy bigot pourtrayed by

every historian ; though still the fact may not be contradicted. Be the love of Chess, then, to his memory, the one redeeming trait—the solitary humanizing point—which ALL, even the worst of us, we trust and believe, possess. The very speckled toad, we learn, bears a jewel in its head, though our dim eyes may not see it bodily. The mode in which Paolo is to receive his pension, we like hugely. The Monarch quarters the recipient, in the highest style of financial skill, upon his native city, Syracuse ; instead of keeping quarter day at Madrid. “We hear and we obey,” was, doubtless, the response tendered by the slavish Sicilians to the royal mandate. The stroke is worthy of the biggest-bearded Oriental despot that ever sported turban of sacred green. A second amusing bit of King-craft presents itself in the miraculous condescension of Don Sebastian, the chivalrous ruler of Portugal, who, when poor Boi has all but lost the use of *half his understanding*, by kneeling for several hours consecutively, absolutely demeans himself to the point of tendering his own sacred right-hand digits, that his fellow King, the Sovereign of the Chess-field, may arise—and kneel upon t’other knee! The kings of the earth, in latter generations, would have thought but little of handing Paolo a chair. As our right dear friend, St. Amant, has so well remarked upon this very passage of history, “people who have been kneeling down before kings, now arise of themselves !”

THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS!—Our story is done, our tale is told ; and this brilliant recollection of the past fades away like the mists of June at sunrise. Centuries have revolved, seasons have passed away, revolutions swept over Naples and Calabria, and the graves of the

great, whose deeds we have just brought to view, lie hidden from the traveller's ken. Light and Lustre ! Glory and Splendour of our Kingly Recreation ! Were not these titles well bestowed ?—fairly and honourably won—and as gallantly maintained ? They were ; and fame and name thus held though life, shall never pass away, while the chronicles of Chess endure in the soul of the enthusiast. Paolo and Leonardo, like Castor and Pollux, reign as the two bright stars in the history of Chess, with which no third immortal may pretend to vie. They shine out from the age in which they breathed, as pillars of flame in the desert of life, and mark the way for the humble pilgrim seeking to bend him lowly at Caissa's shrine. Beacons are they to light the haven for the bark ; eternal examples of the noble and the great—the excellent and the chivalrous :—not to be profaned by the shallow sneer of the scorning fool, glorying in his folly, but to be thought upon, and pondered over, and received into the innermost hearts of those chosen spirits in the cause, who have feeling to conceive—souls to sympathize with—enthusiasm to enshrine—and intellect to comprehend their deeds of great, and brave, and glorious daring. Light and Lustre of Chess ! Paolo of Syracuse—Leonardo of Italy !—be your names immortal !