Waifs and Strays.

SOME REMINISCENCES IN THE LIFE OF AUGUSTUS FITZSNOB, ESQ.

CHAPTER I.

It is certain that Mr. Thackeray cannot be a chess-player, otherwise he would have devoted at least one chapter of his instructive "Book of Snobs," to the delineation of Chess Snobs. That the *subject* is one admirably adapted for dissection by the keen and searching scalpel of the great anatomist of man and his meannesses, I think no one at all acquainted with chess and its votaries will venture to deny. Let it not be supposed, however, that I have any intention of attempting to supply the void left thus unfilled, to set my tiny cock-boat bobbing, as it were, in the wake of the powerful steam ship "Pendennis." Not at all: I simply propose to jot down here a few stray memories for the perusal of my brother chess-snobs, or any others that may favour me by reading them.

And, as I begin to consider the matter, the unpleasant thought strikes me that there may, perhaps,

exist a latent seed of snobbishness in almost every human mind, which contact with chess makes to germinate and sprout into life. If this be not the case, how is it that we constantly see persons of upright character, faultless manners, and whose tempers are proof against every common trial, the moment they seat themselves before a chess-board, undergoing a kind of moral metempsychosis, and becoming the very reverse of their ordinary selves—unjust, rude, and quarrelsome—in a word, unmitigated snobs? Perhaps the phenomenon may, in some sort, be accounted for in this way. A game of chess is essentially an argument, the board and men being accessories to the argument; that is, they are the outward symbols of the language in which it is carried on, but they are by no means necessary to it: indeed, I have heard of a saying amongst the Hungarians, who are fond of chess, and in the habit of contesting games while riding together on horseback, that the board and men only spoil the play.

A game of chess then, as I have said, is an argument. Every move is a definite stage in the controversy, and the result of certain analytical and combinative processes of thought. As the mental struggle proceeds, the more powerful debater gradually accumulates his facts and proofs, enmeshing and crushing the feebler reasonings of his antagonist, who at length either succumbs in despair, or is silenced by the inevitable mate. "But, Mr. Fitzsnob, this is exactly what takes place in argumentation of

any kind, and is not peculiar to chess." Not altogether, my dear sir, or madam; there is this difference. In an ordinary controversy it frequently happens that the weaker of the two disputants may possess the greater fluency of speech, and by the employment of logical subtleties, and the aid of dexterous and clever sophistry, may succeed in entirely evading the real point at issue, when he perceives that the argument is likely to go against him. Such a one, I say, will often quite dumbfound his abler opposite; although the latter, to use the words of Hazlitt, "may feel the whole weight of the question, nothing relating to it may be lost upon him, and yet he may be able to give no account of the manner in which it affects him, or to drag his reasons from their silent lurking-places."* Now at chess it is impossible to make the worse appear the better reason, and I submit that the explanation of its producing effects so disastrous on the temper is, that there is no refuge whatever for wounded *amour propre*. When there exists a disparity of force between two adversaries, sophistry will not avail the weaker player one jot. All his fallacies and cunning devices are foreseen, and remorselessly exposed and defeated by his opponent, and he cannot even have the consolation of the last word, because checkmate is the last word. The blow to self-love is complete, and the vanquished one has no option, but either to confess himself fairly beaten, like a gentleman, or to convert himself into a snob,

* Essay on Genius and Common Sense.

by inventing transparent excuses, or, it may be, by losing his temper outright.

I may literally be said to have imbibed chess with my mother's milk, as my first plaything was an ivory chess Queen, suspended to my waist, the smooth knob of which I mumbled with my infantile gums as a substitute for a coral. One of my earliest recollections is my standing by my father and mother while they played chess together. I would fain draw a filial veil over those encounters, but the truth is, that the two used to quarrel like cat and dog over their game. I can see before me now the brow of my respected sire growing black as midnight, and his eye gleaming with suppressed wrath, as his pitiless spouse captured one after another of his pieces. On the other hand, when my dear mamma was the loser, her voice rose shrilly into the air, and she trembled all over with excitement. Grief came to the unlucky urchin, who, on such an occasion, ventured within reach of the maternal arm. I suspect the chess discords of my exemplary parents must have equalled those of Count Ferrand of Flanders and his wife, although they did not result in such unpleasant consequences to my father as befell the unhappy Count.

Miss Wurzel, our governess, who cultivated chess, was kind enough to teach me the moves, and initiate me, generally, into the mysteries of the game. I proved an apt scholar, in fact, my progress was so rapid, that I soon played quite as well as my instructress. One fatal day, I happened, to my

great joy, to win three games running from her. My exultation was, however, but short lived, for, to my astonishment and fear, the fair Wurzel, who had hitherto been always as smooth as oil with me, started from her chair, and lending me a smart box on the ear, proceeded in her wrath to scatter the chessmen all over the floor. After such snobbish conduct I, of course, took care to play with her no more.

I am bound to say, however, that Miss Wurzel is the only female chess snob I have ever encountered. Many and many a score of games has Fitzsnob played in drawing-room and boudoir, and never received from the dear creatures (bless their hearts!) anything but ladylike treatment, and the height of civility. It was at chess that I first had the happiness to make the acquaintance of the lovely and beloved partner of my existence, Mrs. Fitzsnob. It was at chess that, one day, after having announced mate with the Queen in seven moves, unable any longer to restrain my feelings, in a transport of agitation I pushed away the table, and falling at her feet, declared my passion. She, dear soul! blushing like a rose, bent her sweet features over me, and coyly caressing with her hand my curled and oiled Assyrian locks, faltered out, "Oh! Mr. Fitzsnob, there is no resisting you." If any lady or gentleman desires to see the exact counterpart of this interesting *tableau*, let them look at Mr. Frank Stone's exquisite picture called "Mated," and they will behold it represented to the life.

The youthful age of sixteen beheld me a passenger on board the good ship *Toombudra*, bound for Madras, to which Presidency I was appointed a cadet. The *Toombudra* carried within her teak ribs the usual miscellaneous assortment of live cargo that East Indiamen transport to the land of the wavy palm. There was a Major-General Dudadub going out on the staff —a very magnificent personage, and an object of reverential awe to us young military aspirants. There were officers and civilians, married and single, returning to their duty from furlough, two or three mercantile gentlemen, sundry spinsters destined for the "Indian market," and lastly, a batch of some dozen cadets, including my worshipful self, harum-scarum lads just loose from school, and like young bears, with all their sorrows to come.

My principal associate during the voyage was one Captain Phelim O'Shaughnessy, and you may be sure the bond of union between us was chess. The captain was a tall, thin, wiry Milesian, with a saffron-coloured visage encircled by a pair of prodigious red whiskers, every hair of which was dear to him as the apple of his eye. I believe the chief part of his time on board, that was not spent on chess, he devoted to brushing, oiling, and curling these capillary appendages, by which there hangs the following incident.

We touched on our passage at the island of Madeira, where Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, in order to divert the *ennui* of a long voyage, had procured a pair of canary birds, which were great favourites with her,

one of her chief occupations on board being to tend and pet them. When we reached the latitude of the Cape, it became extremely cold, and the moss that had been brought from their native home to keep them warm, being expended, these feathered warblers were in danger of perishing from the severity of the weather. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, however, being a woman of resource, was not long in devising a remedy for the theatened evil. Her husband, while tranquilly smoking a cheroot one forenoon on the poop, was summoned in haste down to his cabin, and commanded to shave off his whiskers without loss of time, for the purpose of their being converted into nests for the canaries. Honest Phelim's horror and surprise at this injunction must be imagined, for it is quite beyond my power of description. I believe he would just as soon have shaved off his ears as his whiskers; and although ordinarily the most compliant of mortals to the wishes of his better half, on the occasion of this meditated "most unkindest cut," he proved utterly restive. Entreaties, objurgations, and even tears, were lavished on him in vain, and after a violent conjugal wrangle, which was audible over all the after part of the ship, the captain, still unshorn, rushed up on deck, which he paced with long strides for about a couple of hours, ever and anon passing a hand over his cheeks, as if to assure himself that his hairy honours were still thick about him, and whistling "The night before Larry

was stretched," with the utmost vigour of his lungs.

At first we used to have our chess in O'Shaughnessy's cabin, from which, however, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, not without gentle remonstrance on the part of her husband, soon ejected us. Indeed, the good lady could not abide chess, and once went so far as to say in my hearing that she thought no chess-player could go to heaven; so, during the rest of the voyage, we always fought our battles in my small cabin. When the weather was fine, and the ship going steadily, we sat on two bullock-trunks, with the board on my washstand. When the old craft, tossed by the waves, staggered along in her cups, we ensconced ourselves in the standing bed-place, O'Shaughnessy coiling his long legs up at one end, while I wedged myself in at the other, and we held the large peg-board between us.

The gallant O'Shaughnessy was but a very poor player; so indifferent, indeed, was his skill, that real chess might be said to begin where he left off: but this circumstance did not at all interfere with his intense love of the pastime; in fact, he considered himself a splendid player, and far superior to me, of whom he seldom won a game, which he accounted for by attributing his losses entirely to my good luck. He utterly scorned, however, the idea of taking odds, and one day, when I ventured to hint something of the kind to him, I thought he would have eaten me.

"You young spalpeen!" he cried, "what do you mean by talking about odds? I'm amazed at your impudence. No man, Sir, can give me odds. I wouldn't have taken any from Philidor. It's true enough that you win more games than I do, but that's because you are the luckiest little beggar that ever was born. If you have the same good fortune in your promotion as you have at chess, you will get your company before you can show a hair to your chin."

But, in spite of occasional outbreaks of spleen such as this, old Shaugh and I were excellent friends, and continued so till his death. He was killed at Mahidpoor by a Pindarrie matchlock ball, while leading his regiment into action as a Lieut.-Colonel. I saw him fall, and had the satisfaction, with a thrust of my sword, of letting daylight into the midriff of the ugly black scoundrel who shot him. Peace be with him! he was an honest man in every sense of the word; a staunch friend, a brave soldier, and snobbish in nothing save his chess, and probably his whiskers.

Soon after my arrival at Madras, I was appointed to a corps stationed at the Presidency, and speedily set to work to learn the routine of regimental duty. Having tolerably well mastered this, I thought it time to turn my attention to the native language, and accordingly requested the Adjutant to send to my quarters the regimental Moonshee, under whose tuition I proposed to beg in my Hindostani studies

I was lying next morning on a sofa lazily smoking a cheroot, and hopelessly eyeing the twisted characters of the Bagh-o-Bahar, or "Garden of Delight" (how the book came by such a name I do not know, to *me* it was always a complete "Slough of Despond,") when a tall, dignified-looking native stepped into the room, and making a salaam, announced himself as my Moonshee.

"*Kaisa hye, Moonshee ?*"* said I, willing to show him that I knew something of the language already.

"*Ap ki meherbāni seatchā hong,*"† he replied.

"Hem," said I, "what is your name?"

"Ghulam Kassim, *sahib.*"

"What, Ghulam Kassim the chess-player?"

"*Ho, sahib.*"‡

My languor departed in a trice, and springing up I cast into the air the "Garden of Delight," which volume meeting in its descent the head of my body-servant, Verasawmy, who was removing the breakfast things, carried the turban of that worthy domestic clean off his head. "*Kumbucht!*" § I shouted to him, "bring the chess-board."

As Ghulam Kassim passed several hours daily in my bungalow, I soon got credit in the regiment for being a most diligent student of the Hindostani tongue. I am afraid, however, the time spent at that

* How are you, Moonshee?

† By your honour's favour I am quite well.

‡ Yes, sir.

§ You fellow of little luck!

work, compared with the space devoted to chess, bore much the same proportion that Falstaff's halfpenny worth of bread did to his intolerable quantity of sack.

The famous chess match by correspondence between Madras and Hydrabad was then in progress. It consisted of two games, played simultaneously, and, as everybody knows, both were won by Madras. The chief direction of the Madras forces was in the hands of Ghulam Kassim and Mr. James Cochrane of the Civil Service, an able and enthusiastic amateur, who afterwards published the games, with notes by his native coadjutor. In the latter part of the match they availed themselves of the services of Ensign Fitznob to assist them in the analysis, and that juvenile officer felt proud in being selected to take this minor part in so great a contest.

The Hydrabad braves were led by the renowned Mahratta Chess-Chief, Hurry Punt, and Purneah, a Brahmin, who held some post about the court of Nizam. After making the seventeenth move in the first game, and the sixteenth in the second, poor Hurry Punt made his own last move in this life, being checkmated by Cholera, an adversary whose attacks few have the power to resist, so that it may be termed the Morphy of diseases. The death of his ally left Purneah generalissimo of the Hydrabad troops, and the learned Pundit made gallant and strenuous efforts to stem the adverse tide of fortune: he was unsuccessful, but, like Soult in the Pyrenees, he gathered glory even in defeat. After losing his Queen

for a Rook in one of the games, he fought the termination with unflinching skill and pluck, and was within an ace of forcing a draw. The manœuvring of Ghulam in that ending is a good specimen of his chess ability, and would not discredit any one of the great guns of the present day.

I must now mention a piece of tribulation which my weakness for chess was partly the means of bringing upon me. I was quartered at Bangalore, one of the largest military stations in the South of India, where we had a theatre, in which the officers of the regiment gave frequent amateur representations. On the occasion to which I refer they were to enact Colman's play of the "Poor Gentleman," in which the part of Ollapod, the apothecary and cornet of volunteer horse, was allotted to me. There was to be a dress rehearsal of the comedy on the evening before the actual performance, and I, unfortunately, was subaltern of the cantonment main guard on the day of the said rehearsal. What was to be done? I was very anxious to go to the theatre, and yet to leave my guard would be a military offence of the gravest kind. After many doubts and fears, inclination prevailed over duty, and I determined to run the risk of discovery. The only probable danger I apprehended was the customary visit to the guard of the field-officer of the day, but that was not usually made before eleven o'clock, while I could easily be back by half-past nine. Everything turned out as I had hoped. The rehearsal went off capitally, and was

applauded to the echo by a house full of serjeants and privates—Ollapod, let me tell you, coming in for no small share of *kudos*. At the conclusion of the performance, without losing time in changing my dress, I hurried back in high spirits to my guard, which I reached even earlier that I had expected. So far all was well, but, as ill-luck would have it, I found on the table a letter from Ghulam Kassim, brought during my absence, containing a most interesting chess position, which he begged me to examine and report upon to him without delay. Forthwith out came the chess-board, the pieces were set up, and I soon became completely absorbed in their study. In what seemed to me scarcely five minutes afterwards, although, in reality, an hour and a half had elapsed, a Havildar came into the room with the astounding intelligence that the field-officer of the day was close at hand. Here was a predicament! Instead of the modest regimentals of the Catamaran Native Infantry I was accoutred in the uniform of the redoubtable Cornet Ollapod, of the Galen's Head, viz.—a bobtailed scarlet jacket, tastily turned up with rhubarb-coloured lappels, and profusely decorated with cotton lace; *item*, buckskin breeches; *item*, huge jack-boots to mid-thigh; *item*, a pair of enormous spurs affixed to the heels of the jack-boots. Thinks I to myself, "It's all up with you now, Ensign Augustus Fitzsnob; your commission's not worth an anna, my boy." However, as there was nothing else for it, I seized my chaco and sword, and bolted outside, to turn out the guard.

I found the Soubadar had already fallen the men in, and as I went to take my place in front, the diabolical spurs jingling at every step, an audible snigger ran through the ranks at my extraordinary guise, and, by Jove, in spite of my misery, I could scarcely help laughing myself. The field-officer of the day chanced to belong to my own regiment; Tremenheere was his name. He was much liked in the corps, and had more than once befriended and given me good advice in difficulties into which my youth and inexperience had led me. But he was a strict disciplinarian, and I felt certain would not overlook my present offence. The night, however, was somewhat foggy, and as I knew the Major's vision was none of the best, I was not without hope that the singularity of my costume might possibly escape his notice. He rode up, halted his horse just before me, and sat looking in silence over the animal's ears for about a minute. The perspiration ran in streams down my face! At last he said slowly, "Is the guard all right, sir?" "All right, sir," I replied; and sure enough the guard *was* all right, its officer only was in the wrong box. "Good night, sir," and as he spoke he wheeled round his horse, and cantered off in the direction of the fort, to visit the main guard there. As the fumes of my Trichinopoly weed ascended into the air that night, there mingled with them a fervent vow that neither theatricals nor chess should ever tempt me again into such a perplexity.

The next day as I entered our mess-house, Tre-

menheere, who was walking in the verandah, came up to me, and said with a grim smile:—"Well, Master Ollapod, how do you feel to-day? I saw you last night, my lad, but I *wouldn't* see you. Take a friend's advice, young fellow, and don't practice any more tricks like that, or I wouldn't give a dump for your chance of being a lieutenant."

My recollection of the Chess Divan in the Strand extends to nearly twenty years back. In those days it had a much quieter appearance than it wears now, with its velvet settees and multiplicity of mirrors. There was a large self-performing organ in one corner of the room—a dismal instrument, which, under the auspices of the head waiter, Simpson (alas, poor Simpson!) who wound it, and set it going at intervals, croaked out lugubrious melodies to the assembly, and played dirge to many a lost game of the present writer. It was a white-stone day with me on which that infernal machine disappeared for ever from the premises. Daniels was then lord of the ascendant in the place, a subtle and elegant player, with a judgment of position that was rarely at fault. He was a light in Caïssa's firmament too early quenched. Thither came Stanley, of New York, then in the heyday of youth, and full of jest and merriment; also a mighty awkward customer, *me ipso teste*, to encounter at chess. Should these poor lines meet his eye in the country of his adoption, I beg him to accept the cordial salutation of his old acquaintance, Fitzsnob. Tuckett too was a

regular frequenter, a fine player, and a thorough gentleman, without a grain of snobbishness in his whole composition. Buckle was also a *habitué;* his chess star was then just beginning to twinkle above the horizon: it soon culminated, and shone for many years in the Divan with a light brilliant and serene. And there was invariably to be seen the placid face of the venerable *père* Alexandre, his head simmering with problems, and emitting, between the puffs of his cigar, all sorts of old-world talk about the game in which his mind was centred, and to the elucidation of which he devoted the leisure of a life of more than eighty years. Alexandre told me, that on one occasion during an illness of Mouret, he occupied for a month's play the interior of Kempelen's automaton, as conductor of the androïd. He said he did not mind the confinement much, but the necessary deprivation of his "baccy" was a sore grievance, and detracted, he thought, at least Pawn and move from his game.

It was in the Divan that I first met the great German singer, Staudigl, the mellow, sonorous tones of whose matchless voice in the unearthly music of Robert le Diable, like the murmur of ocean heard afar off, again swell grandly on my ear even as I write these words. Staudigl had a perfect mania for chess, which he played with great rapidity and characteristic energy; he would think nothing of dashing off a matter of ten games in the course of two or three hours' sitting. I remember once being

at Brighton, where I had gone to give my better half, and her snoblings, a taste of the sea air, when Staudigl came down to sing at a concert. Meeting him in the afternoon on the Cliff, we forthwith repaired to the chess-club on the Pier Esplanade, and played for several hours without taking any thought of time. In the middle of a game, a breathless messenger rushed into the club-room, and informed my opponent that a crowded audience was impatiently expecting his appearance. Staudigl seemed to think very little of this intelligence, and was rather for finishing his game: at last, however, with a reluctant glance at the board, he went off to fulfil his engagement at the Town Hall. Poor fellow! he died about two years ago, I believe, in a *maison de santé* at Vienna.

Not to be forgotten, either, is a jovial, good-natured Frenchman, M. Pion Coiffé by name, who obtained no small celebrity in the Divan, not for the excellence, but for the badness of his play. The odds for which he always stipulated were Queen, three Pawns and the move, and it mattered not who his adversary was, he would play on no lower terms. Staunton, however, increased these tremendous odds by giving him *four* Pawns in addition to the Queen. "*Monsieur*," he would say, "*vous me rendrez la dame, trois pions, et le trait; je ne bouge pas de là.*" His invariable stake was a sovereign, and he seldom lacked an opponent. He was always ready to back himself freely amongst the lookers on, of whom he generally commanded a large gallery,

from which the remarks of the chief performer, Pion Coiffé himself, as well as the positions evoked by the extraordinary nature of the odds, frequently elicited roars of laughter. A curious peculiarity in this jolly Gaul was, that he would sometimes make half-a-dozen successive moves in a difficult position, quite as well as the strongest player could do, and then wind up by committing some horrible *balourdise* which ruined him.

M. Pion Coiffé for the most part carried on his combinations, not like other people, mentally, but aloud, so that his opponent had the benefit of his ingenious ideas, whatever that might amount to. He would say, for instance, pointing to a Pawn *en prise*, "I think I shall take dat leetle fellow; why should I not? But, stop; why, why did you leave him dere? Aha! you *want* me to take him; I will dees-appoint you, I will not take him." On first coming to England, M. Pion Coiffé made zealous but not very successful attempts to master our language and pronunciation. Once, at the Ruy Lopez chess-club, wishing to speak in praise of an absent member, for whom he had conceived a liking, he thus delivered himself:—"He is a very nice gentleman, Mistare Smeeth; I am so fond of heem; bot (with a melancholy shake of the head) I fear he is *bloody fool!*" Those present stared with surprise, until it came out that the worthy fellow only meant to express an apprehension that his friend Mr. Smith's constitution was too sanguineous, or full of blood.

Those jocund times have glided into the irrevocable past, and the Divan is now filled by another generation of chess players, that knows not Fitzsnob, who can now only gently babble of bygone hours, a mere *laudator temporis acti*, and too surely sensible that

"His days are datyd,
To be chekmatyd."

CHAPTER II.

VARIOUS are the aspects in which it has fallen to my lot to regard the game of chess. It has been played by me in many places, and with all sorts and conditions of men. On the summit of the Neilgherry Hills, at an altitude of eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, amidst some of the finest scenery ever beheld by the eye of man; where, from a sheer height of five thousand feet, the view extends over the fertile districts of the kingdom of Mysore, itself a table-land three thousand feet over the ocean level, taking in the ruined battlements of Seringapatam, the ancient stronghold of Hyder Ali, full seventy miles away, with the majestic river Cauvery winding through the plains, and reduced by distance to the size of a shining thread of silver.—In the palace of Tanjore, with the Rajah of that principality, a man of education and enlightened understanding, whose youth had been carefully trained by Swartz, the most apostolic and devoted of all Christian missionaries. His dusky highness, let me tell you, was a tough opponent at *Shatranj;* and besides that, was a better classical scholar, and possessed more general knowledge of European science and literature than many a white face of my acquaintance.—At Trichinopoly, a

locality famed in Anglo-Indian story for the exploits of Lawrence, the stout-hearted soldier, under whose eye, and stimulated by whose example, the budding military genius of the great Clive put forth its first shoots. My principal chess competitor there was a Brahmin priest from the neighbouring pagoda of Seringham. This expounder of the Shaster and Puranas was a saintly personage, whose body exhaled a fragrant odour of cocoa-nut oil, and who rarely opened his oracular jaws save for the reception of a quid of pawn and betel, or to say "check" or "checkmate;" which last word issued pretty frequently from his lips, for my cow-cherishing friend, I must avow, was considerably beyond my then chess fathom.—At the Cape of Good Hope, where I spread my chess-board in the blushing vineyards of the Paarl, to do battle with an elephantine Dutch wine-farmer, at whose house I boarded for some time, and who mightily affected the noble game. Mynheer Cloëte weighed eighteen stone, and was by no means a despicable adversary; but his mind, sharing in the ponderous nature of his body, made his ideas flow sluggishly, and he was in consequence a very tedious and inert player. I recollect one day, when he was more than usually tardy over a move, that I went out to take a turn on the *stöep* in front of the house, leaving him staring at the pieces in a profound "cogibundity of cogitation." On going in again shortly afterwards, I found my man mountain with his head placidly reclining on the board, and fast asleep!

With a provident care, not uncommon among the Cape Boers, my host had his coffin (and a sizeable one it was, too) ready in the house against the time he should want it. He has taken possession of that final abode, I doubt not, long ere this, for I am writing of a quarter of a century back, and honest Cloëte was no chicken even then.—At the Edinburgh chess-club, as a member of which, my late excellent friend Baillie Donaldson put me through my facings, and made his chess rattan whistle about my ears—not unprofitably, I hope. The worthy Baillie was a great leveller of pretension, and taught me something of the precept "know thyself," a knowledge hard to attain in chess; indeed, it is my belief there is no chess-player in the world who does not rate himself at least Pawn and move above his proper strength.—In a May Fair *salon*, where, inhaling the sweet perfume of flowers, and with, mayhap, some dying strain of Meyerbeer or Rossini from harp or piano thrilling in my ear, I have sat opposite a fair being, whose jewelled ivory fingers sparkled over the pieces, while her still brighter eyes made sad havoc of my fine combinations.—In the frowsy cabin of a Hull steamer, where, indifferent alike to unsavoury smells and the groans of the sea-sick, by the aid of a Hebrew chess-brother with a velvet waistcoat and most unclean digits, I extemporised out of soda-water corks (blackening a moiety of them with ink) a handsome set of chessmen, with which the Israelite aforesaid and myself played fraternally during the passage on

the exterior of a ragged old backgammon board.—At the "St. George's," in King Street, St. James's, where you may cross Pawns with the upper crust of London society. At the "London," in Cornhill, the oldest chess-club in England, but still flourishing in pristine vigour, as in the days of Lewis,* Cochrane, Fraser, and Mercier, under the shadow (may it never be less) of the Prince of Presidents, Mongredien. Finally, at the "Shades," in Leicester Square, which, if its name be taken in conjunction with the heat of its atmosphere, may be termed the Chess Orcus of the modern Babylon.

These are but an insignificant fraction of my chess experiences. Were I to run over the whole of them, I suppose that many numbers of the *Chess Monthly* would not contain what I should have to say.

Behold me now, embarked in the fast-sailing vessel *Burrumpooter*, Josiah Hornblow commander, from Calcutta to London. I am going to Europe on sick furlough, as thin and as yellow as a bamboo, and with a slightly congested liver. But what of that? I have a furious appetite; every gulp I take of the bracing salt-sea air has the effect of champagne on

* I speak of Mr. Lewis in the past tense only as regards chess, which he has long ceased to practise. He is still, I am happy to think, with us in the flesh; and long may he continue to survive, the sole remaining link between this generation and the knot of fine old English chess-players who adorned the early part of the present century. Mr. Cochrane, too, I believe, still keeps up his favourite game in distant Calcutta, with no diminution of his ancient strength and brilliancy.

my spirits, and there is "home, sweet home," with all its old endearing memories, beckoning to me in the distance. For three years to come, at all events, there will be for me no more turning out at four in the morning to the summons of the bugle for drill or parade; no more hot and weary marches; no more treasure escorts; no more wigging from pompous commandant, or surly adjutant; no more jabbering of Hindostani to Soubadars and Sepoys. Hurrah! for England. Our gallant ship throws the foam from her bows, gracefully courtseying to the azure sea, as she glides like a swan through its dimpling waters.

> " Forth to the breeze she unbosoms her sail,
> And her pennon streams onward, like Hope in the gale."

My first business after settling myself on board was to look out for a chess antagonist. I was not long in discovering two, in the persons of Mr. Macwhirter, the surgeon of the vessel, and Mr. Mulligrub, a Bengal indigo planter. The latter gentleman, however, for the first week or so, eschewed chess altogether, confining himself to simple arithmetic, and diligently cast up his accounts, gazing intently the while at the bottom of a pewter basin. Macwhirter was a shrewd, long-headed Scotchman, with a pretty wit, and a thorough knowledge of his profession. He had seen much of the world, and was a companion both instructive and amusing, but perhaps addicted a little overmuch to the discussion of what he called *metafeesics*.

He was desperately enamoured of chess, and soon inspired me with considerable respect for his play, He had no acquaintance with the books; indeed, had never opened a work on chess in his life, and was consequently deficient in the openings; but after having fought his way through the commencement to the middle game, his natural aptitude for the thing soon became apparent. He had a good imagination, calculated accurately, and when he happened to gain an advantage in the shape of either piece, pawn, or position, clung to it with desperate tenacity. We played together nearly every day while the voyage lasted, and during all that time we never had a difference of any kind. My opponent was one of those rare chess birds who are always pleasant and kind in their manner, and possessed an equanimity which neither success nor defeat had power to disturb.

Mr. Macwhirter had an amusing peculiarity connected with his chess, which I must not omit to mention. He was a very fine performer on the violin; indeed, quite a master of the instrument, on which I have heard him play in a manner "to wile a bird aff a tree," as they say in Scotland. It was generally his custom to retire to his cabin for the half hour preceding dinner, and recreate himself with a tune on his fiddle. On a day when he had been victorious at chess, which was not uncommonly the case, there would be heard to issue from his retreat strains of triumph and rejoicing, such as "Rule Britannia,"

"Sound the loud Timbrel," "The De'il came fiddling thro' the Town," &c. But when Fortune had shaken her swift wings, and deserted the good *medico*, "Oh! leave me to my sorrow," "The Land o' the Leal," and such like dolorous melodies floated from his den through the ambient air; so that the word always went through the ship, "The Doctor has won," or "The Doctor has got the worst of it to-day," according to the style of his music. By the way, what a curious thing it is that a predilection for music should be so often found in alliance with chess power. It would certainly at first sight appear that there is little or nothing in common between the two, and yet the fact is indisputable. Instances innumerable might be adduced to prove that fine chess-players have almost invariably a strong natural turn for music. I believe phrenologists account for the circumstance by stating that the organs of number and time are largely developed in the crania of the followers of both Caïssa and Euterpe.

Mr. Matthew Mulligrub, cultivator of indigo in the district of Azimgeur, was a chess snob of purest ray serene, and also a bore not inferior in power of annoyance to either the Ancient Mariner or the Old Man of the Sea, the two greatest bores, I fancy, upon record. He was a personage of wondrous self importance, with a paunchy development of body, a large head, short thighs, and diminutive legs. His obese appearance was a very sore point with Mr. Mulligrub, and being one day rallied on it

by us wags, he asked Dr. Macwhirter, who was standing by, whether he considered him to be at all stout. "Stoot!" replied the doctor, "stoot! "Man, ye're a pairfect swine! He had a large stock of stories, all turning on the wonderful things he had achieved in shooting tigers and other wild animals in India, and these dreary narratives he inflicted indiscriminately on every passenger on board, until we were all thoroughly sick of him. His voice was pitched in a high key, and he spoke with a slight stutter, and an indescribably wearisome drawl, clinching every thing he said with "What d'ye think of that?" Here is a compressed specimen of one of his veracious exploits.

Mr. Mulligrub happening to be out one day shooting jungle fowl, somewhere in the neighbourhood of his station, suddenly espied, not more than a hundred yards off, a tremendous Bengal tiger, crouched down in the very act of preparing for a spring at him. His fowling piece contained only small shot, and to fire therefore would be worse than useless. A death, immediate and horrible, stared him in the face. In this dreadful extremity, however, his usual fortitude and high presence of mind did not forsake him; a resource, whereby his life might be saved, flashed through his brain, and he lost no time in putting it into execution. Throwing his piece on the ground, he wheeled swiftly to the right about, and stooping down with his back to the tiger, placed his head between his legs. In

this position, looking full at his terrible foe, he began to twist his features into a series of the most hideous grins he could devise, shouting all the while at the top power of his lungs the Irish "coronach," or death lament. The experiment was perfectly successful. The savage animal sprang to his feet, stood gazing for a moment or two, (which appeared hours to the inverted Matthew) in mute astonishment at the singular phenomenon presented to his view, and then, with a fierce roar of disappointment and affright, fairly turned tail and made off. The valiant Mulligrub, instantly resuming his perpendicular, caught up his gun, and triumphantly peppered the rear of his retreating foe with its contents. He experienced no other inconvenience from this adventure than a tingling in the ears and a sensation of fulness in the head for a few hours afterwards, the effect of the unnatural posture he had been compelled to assume.

Our commander, Captain Hornblow, a bluff, outspoken old seaman, conceived an intense dislike to Mulligrub from the very first. A day or two after we had sailed, he came up to me as I was walking on the poop, and said, pointing to the tiger-slayer, who was at that moment in grief, with his head over the side of the ship,—

"D'ye see that chap there, catting to windward like a lubber, as he is? I hate him, Sir; I would give five shillings to have him hove overboard, Sir."

"Why," said I, laughing, "what has the poor fellow done, Captain? He seems harmless enough at present; has he given you any offence?

"No offence at all," answered the jolly skipper, "but I don't like the cut of his jib; and I'm mistaken if he turns out anything but a bad lot."

I continued my walk, repeating to myself, after Martial,—

> "Non amo te Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare,
> Hoc solum novi, non amo te Sabidi."

Touching his chess, I really think Mulligrub was the most ineffable snob I ever met, and that is saying a good deal. I do not know whether it was most unpleasant to beat him, or be beaten by him. If he happened to have the best of a game, he would make sneering comments on his opponent's play, with a patronising air of condescension that was very trying to the temper; and when he was losing, he used to growl and snap over his pieces like a dog with a bone that another dog is looking at. I never saw him lose a game which he did not declare he ought to have gained at some particular point, where he "made a mistake." He could manage to win perhaps one game in eight from Macwhirter or myself, and that solitary victory was a complete salve to the wounds inflicted in his self-esteem by the seven defeats. It is hardly necessary to say that he repudiated as an absurdity the notion of accepting odds, and proved to

Macwhirter syllogistically that he could not give him any. Says he to the Doctor,—

"There are the board and men. You can see them, and I can see them; but you cannot see them any better than I can: therefore, you cannot give me odds. What d'ye think of that?"

"What do I think of it?" quoth the Doctor, with much gravity; "why, man, that's just the same kind o' seelogism as the famous one, *Qui dormit non peccat; qui non peccat salvabitur: ergo, qui dormit salvabitur.*" *

"Exactly" replied Mulligrub, who did not understand one word of Latin, "that is just what I mean."

Let me here mention that our excellent Doctor had a large repertory of old-world Scotch incidents and anecdotes, which he told with a dry humour peculiar to himself. I recollect two good ones, which I don't think are to be found in Dean Ramsay's collection.

A philosophical old farmer, who dwelt in the kingdom of Fife, when misfortune or ill luck of any kind overtook him, was wont to console himself with the reflection, "It micht hae been waur," and this phrase was invariably on his lips in the event of mishap to himself or his friends. It chanced that his wife was taken suddenly ill and died, on which melancholy occasion it was represented to him that he could not now say "It micht hae been waur," as

* "He who sleeps does not sin; he who does not sin shall be saved, therefore, he who sleeps shall be saved." (This for the benefit of the one thousand and one lady readers of the "Chess Monthly.")

no worse evil can befall a man than to lose a good wife. "It micht hae been waur," responded the afflicted widower, "it micht hae been *mysel!*"

In the town of Aberdeen there practised a certain writer or attorney, whose roguish practices had acquired for him the unenviable *sobriquet* of "scoundrel Grant." In the same place there also resided an outspoken old gentleman, Mochrie by name, who was possessed with a mortal antipathy to the aforesaid Grant. This senior, being a guest at a large dinner party; after the now happily exploded fashion of the time, was, in his turn, called on to propose a toast when the cloth had been removed. "Well, gentlemen," said the old boy, "I'll give ye a *tost*, here's "high hanging to scoondrel Grant," which was solemnly drunk by the assembled *convives*. A day or so afterwards Messrs. Mochrie and Grant met in the street, the latter having been previously made aware, by some kind friend, of the compliment that had been paid to him at the dinner. Angrily accosting Mr. Mochrie, he said, "is it true, sir, that you gave as a toast the other evening, 'high hanging to scoundrel Grant?'" "Yes," replied the other, "ye have been rightly informed; I did give that tost." "Then, sir," said Grant in a fury, "I suppose you are prepared to take the consequences of such a proceeding?" "God bless my heart! sir," answered Mochrie, cocking his eye at his interlocutor with an air of surprise, "are ye scoondrel Grant?" "No!" roared Grant, "I am not." "Then," quoth

the veteran, deliberately helping himself to a pinch of snuff, "if ye're not scoondrel Grant, I should like to know what ye have got to do with my tost?"

We touched at the Mauritius, where we spent a few days very pleasantly, and picked up there, as a passenger, no less a personage than Theodore Hook, who was going home on account of some difficulties connected with his office as Treasurer of the Colony. He told Lord Charles Somerset, at the Cape, where we remained a week, in reply to a question of his lordship, that a complaint of the *chest* was the occasion of his voyage to England. Hook was then in the prime of manhood, a fine-looking fellow, with a head of dark curly hair, and a pair of black eyes that sparkled with vivacity and intellect. He was always up to any kind of fun, and his overflowing spirits seemed to infuse new life into our jaded and bile-devoured society. A few days after we sailed he did us the great service of shutting up for some time our Old Man of the Sea, Mr. Mulligrub. That estimable individual, to the no small disgust of his victim, had joyfully fastened on Hook when he first came on board, as a new auditor and receptacle for his dreary rhodomontades.

One Saturday evening we were all in the cuddy, drinking our grog, and toasting sweethearts and wives, with the snob of snobs in greater force than ever. After spinning one of his eternal yarns he turned to Hook, and said,—

"What d'ye think of that, Mr. Hook?"

"Why, sir," said Theodore, blandly, "if you ask my opinion, I think of it exactly as Sandy M'Craw did of the minister's sermon."

"Indeed, sir! and pray what was that?" asked the other.

"Well," returned Hook, "you must know that the minister of Auchtermuchty was a divine in the habit of preaching discourses, considered by himself marvels of pulpit eloquence, but which his obstinate Scotch hearers persisted in regarding as little better than froth and fustian, an opinion in which they were quite correct. One Sunday, after giving his congregation a screed of doctrine, as he thought, of more than common unction, he began to fish for a compliment from his clerk, Sandy M'Craw, who was taking off his reverence's gown in the vestry, but not a word could he extract from the impenetrable Sandy. Tired of beating about the bush to no purpose, he at last said,

"Well, Sandy, what d'ye think of my sermon today?"

"Ou," grunted Sandy, "nae doot ye're muckle the better noo that ye hae got a' that blether aff yer stamach!"

We all roared with laughter: poor Mulligrub looked as if he had got an attack of the plural of his own name, and Captain Hornblow, next to whom Hook was sitting, after exploding with a loud guffaw, further expressed his delight by slipping his hand below the table, and seizing the calf of the wit's leg with a grasp that made him wince again.

CHAPTER III.

After leaving the Cape we bowled away for St. Helena with the south-east trade right aft, and reached it in twelve days. The attention of the whole civilised world was then concentrated upon this spot of rock in the Atlantic, as being the prison of Napoleon. The appearance of the place, as you approach it, is desolate and repulsive in the extreme. Not a trace of vegetation is to be seen, but only precipitous masses of the volcanic rock of which the island is composed, piercing the sky with their jagged edges, and seeming to present an impenetrable barrier to all access. And yet this husk, so rough and uninviting, encloses a kernel of rare beauty. The interior of St. Helena abounds in scenery of surprising loveliness. From the great basaltic ridge that forms the back-bone of the island, narrow valleys radiate towards the sea, refreshing the eye with the verdure of grassy slopes, variety of foliage, and springs of the purest water. Passing Rupert's Bay and Hill, the latter bristling with cannon, we rounded into the anchorage before James Town, where were riding the flag-ship of the Admiral commanding the station, two or three Indiamen, and some smaller craft. In the offing we could see men of war cruising on the look-out for suspicious sail.

I lost no time in going ashore, and engaged an apartment at the boarding-house of Mr. Abraham, an Israelite without guile, who *took in* visitors at the moderate charge of two pounds sterling per diem. After strolling a little about James Town, Hook and I agreed to ride together to Deadwood, where the gallant 66th Foot, in which regiment we both had friends, was encamped. We had some difficulty in procuring horses, owing to the great demand for them, but at last a pair of very sorry hacks were brought to the door for our use. Hook, as he bestrode his Rosinante, compared him to Arthur O'Bradley's celebrated mare, and we started from our hostelry, he singing,—

"She was windgall'd and spavin'd and blind,
And lame of the off-leg behind;
She'd got such abundance of bone,
That he called her a high-bred roan;
He chose her because she was blood,
And the pride of his father's stud,
And a credit to Arthur O'Bradley," &c.

Emerging from the steep acclivity that leads out of James Town, we came upon some lovely upland scenery, and passing Hutts Gate with Longwood on our right, we reached Deadwood, where the 66th were housed in comfortable wooden barracks. Hook went to look for his acquaintances, and I soon found my friend, Captain Lacy, by whom I was kindly received, and invited to stay and dine that evening at mess. I was naturally all curiosity to

hear something about Napoleon, of whom Lacy gave me some interesting details. Formerly he used to ride about a good deal, and they frequently saw him, but of late he had secluded himself almost entirely, and was hardly ever visible. He and his suite were at perpetual variance with the Governor, who found it impossible to please them, do what he would. General Gourgaud told Sir Hudson Lowe, before leaving the island, that if an angel from heaven had been sent there as Governor, they would not have been satisfied with him. "*Enfin,*" said he, "*il a été Empereur, il ne l'est plus, et voilà ce que c'est.*" He passed his time, for the most part, in dictating his memoirs, reading, and playing chess and billiards. He took exercise in rather an eccentric way, by means of a saddle fixed to the end of a moveable beam in his billiard-room, to the other end of which was attached a weight; and Bonaparte, mounting the saddle, moved himself up and down by touching the ground with his feet.

I asked Lacy, who was himself a chess player of much skill, if he could tell me anything about Napoleon's proficiency in the game. He replied that the Emperor was excessively partial to chess, and by no means an indifferent player. He disliked acting on the defensive, and when he got the attack into his hands would push it rapidly and with vigour, sacrificing Pawns and even pieces for the sake of a showy attack. This habit of play of course often involved him in difficulties, from which, how-

ever, he generally contrived to extricate himself, and come off victorious in the end. Count Bertrand, from whose conversation these particulars were gathered, Lacy had played with, and spoke of him as a strong, though very cautious player, and superior, he thought, to himself. The Count once showed him a little game which Napoleon had won of him. Lacy afterwards took it down from memory, and allowed me to have a copy of it. As it is very characteristic of the Emperor's peculiar style of play, I give it here :—

Napoleon.	Bertrand.
1. P to K fourth	1. P to K fourth
2. Kt to K B third	2. Kt to Q B third
3. P to Q fourth	3. Kt takes P
4. Kt takes Kt	4. P takes Kt
5. K B to Q B fourth	5. K B to Q B fourth
6. P to Q B third	6. Q to K second
7. Castles	7. Q to K fourth
8. P to K B fourth	8. P takes P (dis. check)
9. K to R square	9. P takes P
10. B takes K B P (check)	10. K to Q square
11. P takes Q	11. P takes R (Queening)
12. B takes Kt	12. K B to K second
13. Q to Q Kt third	13. P to Q R fourth *

And Napoleon forces mate in five moves.

Lady Malcolm, the wife of Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm, played two games of chess with Napoleon

* This seems a courtier-like move on the part of Count Bertrand. He ought now to have taken P at K fifth with Q, having the exchange and two Pawns in return for a formidable attack.

in March, 1817, winning the first and losing the second. Lacy heard from Lady Malcolm that the great man at first appeared rather put out by his defeat, but immediately recovering his good humour began to replace the men for another game, with one of those fascinating smiles which he always had at his command when pleased. On rising from the table, he said to his fair opponent,—

"Miladi is fond of chess?"

Lady Malcolm replied that she was very fond of it, when he gallantly rejoined,—

"We all take pleasure in doing that which we know we can do well."

"From what you tell me," I said to Lacy, "I fear there is little chance of my getting a peep at Napoleon, which I was in hopes I should be able to do."

"I am afraid not," he replied; "but if any one can manage the business for you it is Captain Norris, the orderly officer, who is a great ally of mine; and, by good luck, here comes the very man."

As he spoke the door opened, and there entered an officer with extremely muddy boots, and an anxious, weary look.

"How are you, Norris?" said Lacy. "Allow me to make known to you my friend, Lieutenant Fitzsnob, of the Madras army, who is dying to have a look at the General. Can you help him to gratify his desire?"

Captain Norris bowed to me with a "very happy

to make your acquaintance, Mr. Fitzsnob,"—and then throwing himself into an arm-chair, said,—

"Faith, I tell you what it is, Lacy; I would give a trifle out of my own pocket if I could see him myself. You know it is part of my duty to look him up twice every day, and I give my word I haven't been able to set eyes on him for a fortnight. I have been walking and dodging about the Longwood House and grounds for eight hours this blessed day, trying in vain to get a sight of him. The fellow, sir, takes a pleasure in hiding himself from me, and has got small holes in his window curtains, to which he puts his spyglass, and can thus see without being seen. I met Bertrand just now, and told him that I have the Governor's positive orders to see General Bonaparte within twenty-four hours, and that, come what may, it *must* be done to-morrow; so the count was obliged to promise that he would contrive it somehow or other. The last time I saw him was by Bertrand's connivance, who told me to look in at the window of his bath-room one morning, when I saw him up to the neck in water, his countenance as white as that of a corpse, and attended by his valet, Marchand."

"Yours must be a very unpleasant kind of duty," I remarked to Captain Norris.

"There is no mistake about that," he answered, lighting a cheroot, and laughing. "One day, about a month ago, I asked Montholon if I could see

General Bonaparte. He assured me, with a mournful air, that the Emperor was ill in bed. He must have recovered pretty quickly, however; for not half-an hour afterwards I caught sight of him in the garden, in full fig—cocked hat, green coat, breeches, and silk stockings—leaning against a tree in converse with the Countess Bertrand, (who, by the way, is a very lively and agreeable person) and chaffing with her children."

"I suppose there is no hope for me, then," I said.

"I am not so sure of that," he replied; "at all events, meet me, if you can, at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, at Hutts Gate, and I will show you the Longwood grounds. You must come in uniform, mind, otherwise you won't be allowed to pass the guard."

I gladly accepted Captain Norris's kind offer, and promised to be punctual to time at the place he named.

As it was a public night at the 66th mess, there were present several strangers, besides Hook and myself, including the Marquis de Montchenu and Count Balmain, the French and Russian Commissioners, also Sir Thomas Reade, and Major Gorrequer, of the Governor's staff. The party was a very agreeable one, and I hardly ever remember to have enjoyed myself more. Friend Theodore was in high feather, and kept the risible muscles of those who had the good fortune to sit near him

on the continual stretch with his flashes of jest and wit. He delighted us all by exhibiting his incomparable talent for improvisation in a song, every verse of which contained a personal application to some one of the company present. A stanza on your humble servant I recollect ran thus,—

"There's Lieutenant Fitzsnob,
With a scar on his nob; *
He's the King of Checkmaters, I guess:
It is well known, begad,
How, in Hyderabad,
He floor'd all the natives at chess."

Early next morning I went off to the ship to get my uniform, having donned which, I mounted my poor jade of yesterday, and was at Hutts Gate by the appointed time. I found Captain Norris waiting for me, and as we were walking about the grounds, he told me that he had already seen Count Bertrand, who had requested him to be somewhere near Napoleon's bed-room window about eleven o'clock, and that he would endeavour to engage the Emperor at chess, placing him, if possible, in such a manner that the orderly officer might approach the window without attracting his notice.

* An allusion to the cicatrix of a wound on my forehead, inflicted at Seetabuldee by a Mahratta sowar. My swarthy friend was down upon me *en passant* with the cut "St. George," and had not his horse swerved at the moment of delivering his blow, so as to weaken its force, these Reminiscences would probably never have been penned.

"Lacy tells me that you are a chess-player, Mr. Fitzsnob," said Captain Norris. "He once tried to teach me the moves, but after one or two lessons, informed me that, in his opinion, my talents, though considerable, did not lie in that direction. To my thinking it's a desperate slow game, and not to be compared with whist. Lacy sometimes plays dummy games, one hand against the other, and in this way will muddle his head over a chess-board for hours together. It's the only fault he has."

"There," continued the Captain, "is the new house they are building for the General: it will be a handsome thing enough when finished, but I doubt much whether he will ever be persuaded to inhabit it."

We were now close to Longwood House, and while walking past a sort of wing that projected from the main part of the building, Captain Norris suddenly stopped, and taking hold of my arm said in a low whisper,—

"There he is! follow softly, close behind me."

I did so, and he sidled cautiously up towards a small latticed window, on either side of which Venetian shutters were turned back to the wall, one of the lattices being half open. Norris peeped warily in; I looked over his shoulder, and sure enough there was Napoleon playing chess with an upright soldierly-looking man, of about five-and-forty, in a military undress. I gazed on the great captive

almost breathlessly, and with a feeling of indescribable interest. He was attired in a white dressing-gown, not over clean, and had a red handkerchief tied round his head, the ends of which, fastened in front, were disposed so as to give them a fanciful resemblance to a laurel crown I had seen on one of his busts. The Emperor's face was turned to us, so that I could see his profile distinctly. His figure seemed to be enormously corpulent; his face bloated, and pallid even to ghastliness: his jaw large, deep and strongly set—an unfailing characteristic in those who possess great courage and force of will. I could not see his eyes, which were fixed on the chess-board, but his forehead was singularly massive and capacious —a fit "palace of the soul" for the mighty player

> "Whose game was empire, and whose stakes were thrones,
> Whose table earth, whose dice were human bones."

The floor was strewed with a litter of books and manuscripts; a marble bust of his son, the Duke of Reichstadt, was placed on a table near him; and almost opposite the window of the narrow apartment stood the small camp bed on which he always slept, and where he expired on the 5th May, 1821, his dying lips murmuring "*tête d'armée*," as the vexed spirit of the warrior fled from its earthly tenement, to mingle itself with an awful hurricane which on that day swept over the island, uprooting large trees, and shaking houses to their very foundations.

The two players appeared to be intently occupied with their game, and after they had exchanged some moves Napoleon exclaimed, in a tone of triumph,—

"*Bertrand, mon ami, enfin vous voilà attrapé!*"

"*Vraiment, Sire?*" replied the Grand Maréchal.

"*Oui, échec!*"

"*Encore échec!*"

"*Echec et mat!*"

"*C'est juste,*" remarked the Count, regarding the board with an air of some dissatisfaction; and he then added,—

"*Ah! Sire, vous êtes toujours vainqueur.*"

A pleased smile broke over Napoleon's face; he took a vehement pinch of snuff, and then leaning over, gently squeezed his follower's ear with his right hand. At this moment Bertrand's eye glanced towards the window, and seeing Norris, he made a hardly perceptible nod, on which the orderly officer instantly moved away, and we retreated out of sight as expeditiously as possible.

"That's well over," said my companion; "for to-day, at least, I shall have some peace, and not be kept on the tramp for hours, or obliged to hang about doors like a footman. Did you observe the chessmen he was playing with? They are a magnificent Chinese set of exquisitely carved ivory, marked with eagles, and the initial 'N,' surmounted by the imperial crown. They were sent here by the Hon. John Elphinstone, as a token of gratitude to Bonaparte for having

saved the life of his brother, Captain Elphinstone, of the 15th Light Dragoons, who was severely wounded and made prisoner the day before the battle of Waterloo. You sail for England to-morrow, do you? Come to my quarters, and have a sardine and a glass of sherry before you ride back to town. Wish I was going home with you," concluded the honest Captain, "for I am dead sick of this sort of work, and shall apply to be relieved before long."

My next visit to St. Helena occurred several years later, and Napoleon, "after life's fitful fever," was then sleeping tranquilly in the pleasant valley that sinks abruptly down from the left of the road, just before you turn off to Longwood. A pair of willow-trees flung their branches over his lonely grave, the turf around which was kept green by the waters of a beautiful little stream that bubbled cold and clear from the earth hard by. After lingering for some time about the spot I went on to Longwood, and there beheld a sight for the contemplative moralist. It was possible to approach the building only by going through a pig-sty; a threshing-machine occupied the bath-room, and the bed-room in which Napoleon breathed his last was now a stable. The pretty garden, in adorning which the Exile had whiled away many weary hours of his captivity, was all desolate, and the flowers and shrubs he loved to tend grubbed up to make way for a crop of potatoes.

Perhaps a passing notice of the character of

Napoleon, a man who, in his generation, towered so much above other men, "infinite in faculties," may be allowed even in these chess memoranda, to which it has properly no relation.

The modern Charlemagne has bequeathed to France the glory of his imperishable military renown, and also the more substantial legacy of the code that bears his name; but neither the splendour of his many victories, nor the profound acumen and knowledge of civil polity he displayed as a law-giver, can obscure the fact that, on the whole, he must be regarded as a scourge to his species. One cannot reflect on the unspeakable sufferings he brought on millions of his fellow-creatures; on his insatiable lust of power, which, for a long succession of years, deluged the plains of Europe, from Moscow to Cadiz, with torrents of human blood, without being forced to this conclusion. I never think of him but I recall to mind an anecdote of Nadir Shah, which may be found in the delightful pages of the Robertson of Eastern historians, Orme.* Nadir crossed the Indus in 1739, at the head of a large army, and desolated the provinces of Hindostan with fire and sword up to Delhi. In the very midst of his victorious career a dervish had the courage to present to him a paper, couched in the following terms:—"If thou art a god, act as a god! if thou art a prophet, conduct us in the way of salvation; if thou

* "History of India," Vol. I. p. 23.

art a king, render the people happy, and do not destroy them." To which the barbarian replied, "I am no god to act as a god, nor a prophet to show the way of salvation, nor a king to render the people happy; *but I am he whom God sends to the nations which He has determined to visit with His wrath.*"