

MAJOR.—I have just finished the perusal of one of the most idiotically mendacious productions which I have met with for many a long day.

LARD.—Pity upon the delinquent who engendered it. I can predict by the wicked twinkle o' your ee that you are about to lay on the tawse without mercy. Wha is the delinquent, and what is the name o' his literary backsliding?

MAJOR.—The former is Lucian B. Chase, now, or lately, a member of Congress; and his bantling is entitled "*English Serfdom and American Slavery; or ourselves as others see us.*"

DOCTOR.—I marvel, major, that you had the patience to wade through such a conglomeration of filth. The story is as wishy washy as the love tales of a magazine of fashion, and its exaggerations are destitute of point as the top of a darning needle.

MAJOR.—Quite true; but the book possesses a species of importance, from the political position of the author. He is one of Jonathan's "statesmen," and stands high on the bead roll of that Brummagem brotherhood.

LARD.—But ye have na indoctrinated us touching Lucien's misdemeanors.

MAJOR.—Essaying the somewhat difficult task of manufacturing *one white* out of *two blacks*, this flatulent congressman seeks to show that the "peculiar institution" is a species of heaven-upon-earth, *because* some social abuses exist in Great Britain! Insolvent debtors are sometimes incarcerated in England, *ergo*, quoth this *second Daniel*, there is no harm in translating an ebony "*man and brother*" into a chattel!

DOCTOR.—The old story over again. Verily nothing so conclusively demonstrates the essential rottenness of slavery as the flimsy nature of the ablest attempts to defend or palliate the same.

MAJOR.—Nothing could be more wickedly *ideal* than the sketches which Mr. Chase cooks up of Anglican abuses. Take as a sample the following precious passage. Christie Kane, the hero of the romance, having become insolvent, is immured in a cell of the county jail.

It was scarcely three steps in length, and only wide enough for a foul berth, with room to stand.

It was one of the tier of cells under ground—far under ground—being the third tier from the surface of the earth. The merciful law-makers thinking all persons who cannot pay their debts, no better than fossil remains, whom to put out of sight were as much a duty as to bury the dead.

It was not enough, in this charitable and wise estimation, to restrain the debtor of his liberty; to withdraw him, as something that might contaminate society, from its presence; to put him aside as a man would old furniture; to conceal him from public observation, as the hypocritical do their vices. All this would not suffice. He must be *punished* for his misfortunes; for, what right had he to be poor? If tightness in the money market resulted in failure, the victim should have known what was to happen. If the wheat crop failed, he should have sown rye; if oats were blighted, he ought to have sown more potatoes. Not being as wise as Omnipotence, he must be well punished. As thoroughly, at least, as the most depraved villain in the land, because thieves and black-legs occupied adjoining cells. But there is one excuse for the creditor; he will obtain his money so much sooner by keeping the debtor in prison! He can raise such quantities of grain from the productive soil of the stone floor: his commercial pursuits will prove so profitable, beneath the earth, because his ships can tack or run before the wind upon the moisture of the walls; and, laden with the wealth of the Indies, can sail through the channel of darkness which fills the aperture of the door. If the prisoner is a poet, the vanities of the world will not become a rival to the spirit of song with which his soul must be inspired. He will unravel whole acres of barrowing poetry of the Byronic description, (or what is the same, in its effect, whole acres of poetry, the language of which has been harrowed with a painful disregard for the rules of Lindlay Murray* and Noah Webster) which those persons who love to have their feelings wrought up to most intense pitch of agony and despair, may sigh and weep over to their heart's content.

The jailor turned the key and the ponderous door swung upon its hinges—not *rusty* hinges, as the architect of that renowned "solitary horse-man" delights in having it, but plain, unpretending, unromantic hinges, that frequent use had kept free from rust, and a piece of mouldy bread and a mug of unsavory water, which the owner of one of Ham's descendants would think food too mean for a slave, were placed upon the floor.

The jailor scowled at his prisoner as if he thought it a special exhibition of divine mercy that he was allowed to live.

"Can't pay your debts hey?" he said, in accents strongly emphasized by disgust.

Christie Kane made no reply.

"Proud, too. I should jist like to know what a poor man has to do with pride?"

"You estimate the worth of a human being by the amount of money he possesses?"

* Surely Mr. Chase should have corrected his own English before finding fault with the grammar of other folk.—P. D.