

"'I aint a colonel, nor an officer at all.'

"'Well den judge,' sais he, 'just hold on to de rein.

"'I aint a judge or a lawyer either,' said I.

"'Well den bishop,' said he.

"'I am no bishop nor minister either.'

"'Oh den, squire.'

"'Out agin,' I said, laughing, 'I am no squire.'

"Den what de teyvil are you?' said old Rip, lookin' up and restin' on his oars.

"'Nothin',' sais I.

"'Den,' said he, 'I charge you notin' for ferriage. I carry you free gratis, for you are de fust man that has crossed for a week that had no title.'

"'And not a penny would he take, but insisted upon my goin' into his house. Dear me, I am amazed you don't remember those galls! There wasn't too much of the old Dutch build about them. They were—'

"Here Ambassador put in his oar with a quiet larf. 'I didn't say I didn't remember the young ladies. But what question was that you asked about the Latin language?'

"'Why, your Excellency,' said I, 'what sort of Latin was that, that was written in the middle ages?'

"'In general barbarous and poor; but there was some good, and that is but little known; perhaps Dr. Johnson knew more of their literature than any man of his day.'

"'Then it is no great compliment to say of a man's Latin, that it is about as good as that of the monastic Latin of the middle ages?'

"'Decidedly not,' sais he; 'quite the other way. But that reminds me of a curious story. You know the little square-built nobleman, that always sits and looks the peer? (How singular it is, Sam, the Whigs are the haughtiest in private, and most tyrannical in public life, of any folks here!) He goes by the nickname of the 'military critic,' on account of his finding fault with everything the Duke did in Spain, and always predicting his defeat and ruin. Well, when the Reform Bill was before Parliament, everybody made flash speeches, and among the rest, the 'great military critic.' He made a Latin quotation, of which the reporter could only catch the sense, as he had never met with the lines before; so when he came to the newspaper office, he told them its purport—that which is agitated is durable, but that which is unmoved decays. Well, the editors couldn't recollect it; they ran over ever so many indexes, time was pressing, and they had to try their hands at making that meaning into Latin verse. The next year the puzzle was found out; the noble peer was about as much of a scholar as a military critic; he fobbed it from Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' who quoted them out of the fulness of his store of learning. These are the lines,' said