

him then, for dinner was served as soon as he arrived, but I managed it in the evenin'.

"Lord Dunk Peterborough, or some such name, sat alongside of me, and took to praisin' our great nation at a great pace. It fairly took me in at first, I didn't see his drift; it was to draw me out, and set me a boastin' and a braggin' I do suppose. And I fell into the trap before I knowed it.

"Arter trottin' me round a bit, sais he, 'Your minister is a worthy representative of your glorious country. He is a scholar and a gentleman. One of his predecessors did nothing but compare. If you showed him a pack of hounds, they were nothing to what hundreds had in Virginia and the southern States. If a fine tree, it was a mere walking stick to an American one. If a winuing race-horse, he had half a dozen that would, as he expressed it, walk away from him like nothing; and so on. Well, there was another who could talk of nothing but satinette coarse cotton, the slave trade, and what he used to call New England domestics. It is refreshing to find your nation so well represented.'

"All this was said as civil as you please, you could not fault his manner a bit; still I can't say I quite liked it. I knew there was some truth in it; but how little or how much I couldn't tell, not bein' much of a scholar. Thinks I to myself, I'm a man more used to givin' than takin' pokes, and never could keep 'em long without returnin' them with interest. So go on, I'll see what you are about, and then I rather guess I can take my part with you.

"Sais he, 'I'm told his Latin is very pure.'

"'It's generally allowed there can't be no better,' sais I, 'there is nobody to Cambridge — our Cambridge I mean — that can hold a candle to him.'

"'It's fully equal,' sais he, 'to the generality of the monastic Latin of the middle ages.'

"I was adrift here: I didn't like the expression of his eye — it looked quizzical; and I must say, when larned subjects come on the carpet, I do feel a little grain streaked, for fear I shall have to confess ignorance, or have to talk and make a fool of myself. Thinks I to myself, if his Latin is good, why didn't he say it was as good as what the Latins spoke or wrote, and not stop half-way at what Minister used, I am sure, to call the dark ages? However, I'll look quizzical too, and put my best foot out.

"'As good as that of the middle ages?' sais I; 'why, that's not sayin' much for it either. Aint he a middle-aged man himself? and hasn't he been at it all his life?'

"'Well, Slick,' sais he, 'that's uncommon good; that's one of the best things I have heard for a long time, and said so innocently too, as if you really meant it. Capital, by Jove! Come, I like that amazingly.'