

concert of groans and grumblings is struck by some humorous and good-tempered American. He will come and ask you the most impossible questions with an ease and impudence perfectly inimitable. These catechisings are all the more droll because they are done with a naivety which completely disarms you. The phrase is short, without verb, reduced to its most concise expression. The intonation alone marks the interrogation. Here is a specimen.

We have on board the *Celtic* an American who is not a very shrewd person, for it has actually taken him five days to discover that English is not my native tongue. This morning (30th December) he found it out, and, being seated near me in the smoke-room just now, started the following conversation:—

“Foreigner?” said he.

“Foreigner,” said I, replying in American.

“German, I guess.”

“Guess again.”

“French?”

“Pure blood.”

“Married?”

“Married.”

“Going to America?”

“Yes, evidently.”

“Pleasure trip?”

“No.”

“On business?”

“On business, yes.”

“What’s your line?”

“H’m—French goods.”

“Ah! What class of goods?”

“*L’ article de Paris.*”

“The what?”

“The *ar-ti-cle de Pa-ris.*”