

CHAPTER II.

STEALING A SPEECH.

"WELL," sais I, continuin' my confab with the President the next mornin', "the day after the bet, I was up to my eyes in business, gettin' the papers in my charge in order for quittin' the embassy. We all met at lunch; it was our great meal, for it was the hour, you know, we was used to feed at home, and arter all it seems most proper, for natur's dinner bel' rings at onc. Dinner, therefore, was only a matter of form arter that, and used for show and hospitality. Champain was our only liquor, for that's what we use to our hotels, where it is the best and cheapest wine; there it is the dearest, but who cares? Uncle Sam pays for all. I suppose you don't know that gentleman," sais I, "President;" and I gave him a wink. "Well, I'll tell you who he is.

"You have heard of John Bull, it is the gineral name of the English, as 'Frög' is of the French; and a capital name it is, for he has all the properties of that brute. Breachy as Old Scratch, breakin' down neighbours' fences, runnin' off with other bulls' wives, bellowin' at nothin', ready to fight everybody and everything, and so stupid, if he sees red cloth he makes right at it, full chizel, cross-grained, onsartain, and dangerous, you can neither lead him, nor coax him, nor drive him. The only way to manage him is to hopple him, and fortunately he is pretty well hopped with the national debt. It's a weight to his heels that spiles his runnin', and keeps him to home to paw up the dust and roar for his own amusement. Well, Uncle Sam is us. Uncle is a nice word, aint it, Sir? It's a word of kindness and affection. He is a brother of your father or your mother; and if he has no chicks of his own, pets all his nephews and nieces, makes them presents, sends them to school, pays for their visits, and when he dies leaves all his ready rhino to them. There is nothin like an uncle, but 'Uncle Sam' is the president of all uncles. He adopts the whole nation, and pays all the household of the State. He is pretty well imposed upon too sometimes. They take it out of him whenever they can, but pretend all the time that what they do is for his good and benefit, and swear they haint one mite or morsel of selfishness in 'em. It's all for 'Uncle Sam.' They'd die by him if it was necessary, but they had a plaguey sight sooner live by him, that's a fact. Our first uncle was Sam Washington, and arter that we called them all Sam. Sister Sall's children—the little cunnin' ones—call me 'Uncle Sam,' cause I pays for them all. Some of these days I hope I shall be Father Sam,