

# The Adventures of My Cousin Smooth eBook

## The Adventures of My Cousin Smooth

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



# Contents

<a href="#">The Adventures of My Cousin Smooth eBook.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Page 1.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Page 2.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Page 3.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Page 4.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Page 5.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Page 6.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Page 7.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Page 8.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Page 9.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Page 10.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Page 11.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Page 12.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Page 13.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Page 14.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Page 15.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Page 16.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Page 17.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Page 18.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Page 19.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Page 20.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Page 21.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Page 22.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Page 23.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>



[Page 24..... 34](#)

[Page 25..... 35](#)

[Page 26..... 36](#)

[Page 27..... 37](#)

[Page 28..... 38](#)

[Page 29..... 39](#)

[Page 30..... 41](#)

[Page 31..... 42](#)

[Page 32..... 44](#)

[Page 33..... 45](#)

[Page 34..... 46](#)

[Page 35..... 48](#)

[Page 36..... 50](#)

[Page 37..... 51](#)

[Page 38..... 52](#)

[Page 39..... 54](#)

[Page 40..... 55](#)

[Page 41..... 56](#)

[Page 42..... 57](#)

[Page 43..... 58](#)

[Page 44..... 59](#)

[Page 45..... 61](#)

[Page 46..... 63](#)

[Page 47..... 64](#)

[Page 48..... 65](#)

[Page 49..... 66](#)



[Page 50..... 67](#)  
[Page 51..... 68](#)  
[Page 52..... 69](#)  
[Page 53..... 70](#)  
[Page 54..... 72](#)  
[Page 55..... 73](#)  
[Page 56..... 74](#)  
[Page 57..... 75](#)  
[Page 58..... 76](#)  
[Page 59..... 77](#)  
[Page 60..... 78](#)  
[Page 61..... 79](#)  
[Page 62..... 80](#)  
[Page 63..... 81](#)  
[Page 64..... 82](#)  
[Page 65..... 83](#)  
[Page 66..... 84](#)  
[Page 67..... 85](#)  
[Page 68..... 86](#)  
[Page 69..... 87](#)  
[Page 70..... 89](#)  
[Page 71..... 90](#)  
[Page 72..... 91](#)  
[Page 73..... 92](#)  
[Page 74..... 93](#)  
[Page 75..... 94](#)



[Page 76..... 95](#)

[Page 77..... 96](#)

[Page 78..... 97](#)

[Page 79..... 98](#)

[Page 80..... 100](#)

[Page 81..... 101](#)

[Page 82..... 102](#)

[Page 83..... 103](#)

[Page 84..... 104](#)

[Page 85..... 105](#)

[Page 86..... 106](#)

[Page 87..... 107](#)

[Page 88..... 108](#)

[Page 89..... 109](#)

[Page 90..... 110](#)

[Page 91..... 111](#)

[Page 92..... 112](#)

[Page 93..... 113](#)

[Page 94..... 114](#)

[Page 95..... 115](#)

[Page 96..... 116](#)

[Page 97..... 117](#)

[Page 98..... 118](#)

[Page 99..... 119](#)

[Page 100..... 120](#)

[Page 101..... 121](#)



[Page 102..... 122](#)

[Page 103..... 123](#)

[Page 104..... 124](#)

[Page 105..... 125](#)

[Page 106..... 126](#)

[Page 107..... 127](#)

[Page 108..... 128](#)

[Page 109..... 129](#)

[Page 110..... 130](#)

[Page 111..... 131](#)

[Page 112..... 132](#)

[Page 113..... 133](#)

[Page 114..... 134](#)

[Page 115..... 135](#)

[Page 116..... 136](#)

[Page 117..... 137](#)

[Page 118..... 138](#)

[Page 119..... 139](#)

[Page 120..... 140](#)

[Page 121..... 141](#)

[Page 122..... 142](#)

[Page 123..... 143](#)

[Page 124..... 144](#)

[Page 125..... 145](#)

[Page 126..... 146](#)

[Page 127..... 147](#)



[Page 128..... 148](#)

[Page 129..... 149](#)

[Page 130..... 150](#)

[Page 131..... 151](#)

[Page 132..... 152](#)

[Page 133..... 153](#)

[Page 134..... 154](#)

[Page 135..... 155](#)

[Page 136..... 156](#)

[Page 137..... 157](#)

[Page 138..... 158](#)

[Page 139..... 159](#)

[Page 140..... 160](#)

[Page 141..... 161](#)

[Page 142..... 162](#)

[Page 143..... 163](#)

[Page 144..... 164](#)

[Page 145..... 165](#)

[Page 146..... 166](#)

[Page 147..... 167](#)

[Page 148..... 168](#)

[Page 149..... 169](#)

[Page 150..... 170](#)

[Page 151..... 171](#)

[Page 152..... 172](#)

[Page 153..... 174](#)



[Page 154..... 176](#)

[Page 155..... 177](#)

[Page 156..... 178](#)

[Page 157..... 180](#)

[Page 158..... 182](#)

[Page 159..... 183](#)

[Page 160..... 184](#)

[Page 161..... 185](#)

[Page 162..... 186](#)

[Page 163..... 187](#)

[Page 164..... 189](#)

[Page 165..... 190](#)

[Page 166..... 191](#)

[Page 167..... 193](#)

[Page 168..... 194](#)

[Page 169..... 195](#)



# Page 1

## SOME PARTICULARS RESPECTING COUSIN SMOOTH

No uncommon type of our “Young America” is Mister Solomon Smooth, the individual whose part in these sketches was performed for General Pierce in particular, and “Uncle Sam” in general. Mr. Smooth was born and “grewed” on the extreme south point of Cape Cod—a seemingly desolate spot, yet somewhat renowned as the birthplace of Long Tom Coffin. If I would select one of our nation’s ’cutest sons; if I were called upon to name the kind of man with that in his natural composition to make the safest, shrewdest, and most calculating merchant; if I were called to pass judgment on the man most qualified to sustain the spirit and characteristics of the American nation abroad—one who would never betray our national energy, nor degrade his profession, nor fail to seek that which might promote the interests of those who reposed trust in him, at the same time never forgetting his own—if I were about forming an expedition, and would provide myself with that character of man upon whom the issue of its success most depends; if, I say, I would seek the man possessing those rigid qualities of a moral nature which are a sure protection against doing aught that may degrade the councils of a nation, I would make this sandy cape my starting point, and draw from the upward growth of that stern energy to be found among those flourishing, energetic, and intelligent communities embraced within that circle which terminates at Cape Ann, and between the circling arms of which two capes heaves Boston Bay. But Smooth, though somewhat primitive in his personal appearance, is none of your common Cape Cod coasters, such as your Captain Doanes, and Cooks, and Ryders, and Clapps. Not he! So slender of person is he, that there can be no particular impropriety in our drawing a comparison between him and that peculiar type of person commonly called a Virginian bean-pole. Nor, when he gets himself (as is not uncommon with him) “all over” native brown homespun, does his configuration materially change, there yet remaining, and boldly refusing to be disguised, that face so full of penetration, and those features so sharp. The waggishly inclined have identified them with the wizardry of dividing storm currents. Nevertheless, of this lean conformation, which is better within than the world without is in general willing to admit, is Smooth particularly proud. In manner, Smooth is piquant; and being an acknowledged member of the fast school—that is, a disciple of manifest destiny in particular and Model Republics in general—he accepts the mission so kindly proffered him by his unfortunate friend, Mr. General Pierce, and has no objection to giving the world and kingcraft (the latter rudderless, and drifting on those quicksands of common sense which it were well for nations had they proved destructive centuries ago) a few lessons in the go-ahead principle. What Smooth means to convey by the



## Page 2

go-ahead principle, is simply that when common sense triumphs universal in a nation, sycophantism dies, and with it that pest of peoples, kingcraft! So, with the most amiable intentions, does Solomon set out for Washington, to have a first talk with General Pierce: this talk he hopes will be a prelude to putting straight the nationalities now drifting on the rock of intrigue, without that safety-valve which a people fully conscious of enjoying their rights can give. And while thus employed, Smooth does not forget that it is a well laid down rule that many small Presidents may talk very large and yet cut very ridiculous figures: hence his first talk with Mr. Pierce, who is well known for general and very respectable characteristics, may be productive of great good to mankind in a mass. In New England educated, (that land where niggers may be white men, and white men too often turn niggers), loving universal rights, peace to consolidate a nation's good, and keep down that martial spirit which is its cankering curse—being tenacious of freedom in its broadest acceptation, and commercial prosperity with a general diffusion of its results, it is Mr. Smooth's candid opinion that ere another century rolls into the page of time America will whip, feed, civilize, and republicanize the great American continent. Could this be done at an earlier period, so much the better for mankind in general. Smooth was borne out in this opinion from the fact that Europe had got into a great fuzzle, the result of which was an equally great fight. Kingdoms and empires had become disordered, their craft was stranded; potentates were turning their people into minions of slaughter. Nicholas (modest god of all the Russias) thought his murdering a few thousands an act most pious: it was all for the sake of Christianity and a very small holy *rite!* On the other hand, there was Mister John Bull, so dogged at times, and yet so hard to hold once his propensity for fighting somebody was excited, hurling very unchristian lead and steel into. Nicholas's subtle-headed serfs. But the thing most wondrous was, that Uncle John, now foaming with the fever of war, had got Johnny Crappo at his back instead of his belly—a fact that would be recorded on the strangest page of history. Strange fighting companions were they; but as pig and dog do now and then become bed-fellows, who can give too much expression to his surprise at this strange Anglo-French combination? Let the world say what it will with reference to our worthy friend Uncle John fighting the battle of Mohamedanism—let it lay at his door the grave charge of degrading himself by seeking to make firm the rotten props of one of the most debased governments that has stained the history of the world with its crimes, John will humanely acknowledge the charge while forwarding to Turkey a copious edition of his "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge."



## Page 3

We hope with Mr. Smooth, that Master Bull and Cousin Jonathan may war only in words. Both are sensible gentlemen; both are keenly alive to that inspiration called fighting for one's rights; both are for ever finding a small bone to snarl over; but peace is found the greater bone, which, by preserving, affords the best picking. Indeed, we must all admit, that if polite diplomatists and small politicians had their way, their naughty recriminations would give us plenty of war, with only bows and smiles to pay for the blood and treasure wasted. But Mr. Bull is considerate with his power; while Jonathan shrewdly calculates how much being embroiled in war will disturb his tin business. May our discretion continue to form the best defence against war between the most enlightened governments of christendom.

At home our negro question bids very fair to get political parties into an interminable snarl; which said snarl is made worse by the singular hopes of those having friends who would like to be next President of the United States. The "white house," (that shrine of patriotic worship!) having its avenues strongly bolted and barred with formidable niggers from Virginia and Carolina, has become a mammon of faith before which politicians are making sad niggers of themselves. Mr. Solomon Smooth lamented this; and, in order to ascertain what could be done in the way of finding a remedy, he determined to plainly introduce the matter during his first talk with General Pierce;—in a word, to see what could be done in the way of straightening things ere he tried the quality of his cigars and Bourbouin whiskey, a large stock of which the General was known to keep on hand. The party to which Mr. Smooth belonged, "Young America," enrolled among its numbers many young gentlemen whose spirits were fast, and young ladies whose talents were fast increasing; hence it was that he was a firm believer in the elastic principles of a go-ahead government: such an one, albeit, as would republicanize Russia, knock Austria into a smash, or make her declare herself something—revolutionize Europe in general, and in particular teach kings of the christian faith how very unchristian it is to wage savage wars. In addition to this, he would have the world in general more enlightened, and kings made to know that their highest duty was to mould their conduct after the example of good citizens. Were this not enough, he would go for annexing to these "United States" all the rest of creation; Mexico and Central America in particular, to aid which object he would have the moon perform a specific part on behalf of manifest destiny.

The reader must remember that our hero Smooth is a man most unpolished, though never so bad as he seems. But we will let him speak for himself, and as his letters are addressed to Uncle Sam, of course those may read who will.

*Enough from the Editor.*

*White house, Washington, D.C.,  
June, 1855.*



## Page 4

### CHAPTER I.

*Mr. Solomon smooth in Washington.*

“Dear Uncle—Once upon a time you were called Sam; but now that the reign of Pierce is upon us it is difficult to tell what you may not be called. Not long since you were the son of greatness, you are now the shadow of Pierce—the man whose little light posterity will snuff out. I have thought of you frequently, Uncle: I have seen you in sorrow looking back upon the past, and my heart has beat with sympathy as I saw you contrast it with the present. Once patriotism stood on manly feet, now Bunkam reigns. Politics are turned into drum-sticks, parties are lost for want of a policy, principles are buried in the market-place. Mr. Smooth has been long accustomed to hard knocks and crooked places; but anything so crooked as Mr. Pierce staggers his digestion. If the concentrated wisdom of the nation riots here (thought I as I entered the city) who can gainsay my coming? I knew the atmosphere I entered had foul malaria in it; the city I found as straight as the face of parties on the other hand was deformed. But being in the federal city, I became forcibly impressed with the fact, that your smallest man has the largest expectations, though he will not object to become the nation’s drone. Having made this wonderful discovery, I took up my line of march for the National Hotel, a gorgeous palace where an uncouth million meet to revel in cheap luxury. So large was the house that a pilot to guide me through its thousand galleries to bed was an indispensable necessity. I was fatigued, and cared not where I hung up. Large as was the establishment, everything looked so costly that I became cautious lest what I sat down upon might become soiled, in which event I might be compelled to pay the shot with a short locker; or, should the case go before Pierce, he might in the profundity of his wisdom exile me to some remote spot on the Mosquito coast. I walked into the establishment like one who feels himself an independent citizen, and then commenced looking at the place and the people, as the people commenced looking at me. Returning looks, and question-asking, seemed the fashion. ‘Stranger!’ said a well dressed but rather inquisitive individual, ‘you must, to be anybody in this place, smother yourself in dignity, and eat dough-nuts of Southern make. Large quantities of this diet are made now at the White House; in fact Pierce has turned the establishment into a factory, where that article is manufactured *ad libitum*, and all are expected to eat.’ I thought the person who thus accosted me had large experience of matters in general, for he gave me a slanting wink and a cunning nudge, which I rendered into an insinuation to stand treat. I affected not to understand him, and edging aside a pace, made a bold effort to gain the long and very expensive mahogany counter that stretched half across the office, and behind which



## Page 5

glowed out the figure of a fat citizen, whom I stared right in the face. You cannot get cleverly through this world without brass; if in your face you have enough to establish a foundry, so much the better. It is indispensable in political matters; and, whether right or wrong, the reader can best judge. I have thought the smaller the politician, the larger were his dealings in the article. No one could be more cautious how they scandalized their neighbours than I am; this, Uncle Sam, you well know; but I question the policy of being delicate during the reign of Pierce, whose cabinet recalls to my mind the story of the clacking hen, that forever kept up a noise without laying one egg. To make your way in Washington, you must storm and put to route a whole platform of valiant gentlemen, who have become political images in brass. As they love you, Uncle Sam, so also would they live upon you, die upon you, be buried at your expense, and their friends be very angry were you not a mourner at the funeral. This I, Smooth, declare an honest fact, notwithstanding the high respect I entertain for all those patriotic gentlemen who would take such care of my Uncle's affairs.

"Now, this very phlegmatic and good natured citizen, who stood: behind the mahogany, had a face as broad and placid as a town-clock seen by moonlight. His figure, too, was tightly driven into a suit of extravagant cloth, and altogether presented the appearance of having quite recently escaped from the hands of James, his tailor. It was not in the power of man to analyze his character from what he said, for what he said meant nothing, when judged by the world's wisdom; but you saw that James had succeeded in making him in love with himself. Should he chance to read this imperfect sketch, he will excuse me when I say he seemed a person brought up to himself, and entertaining the hope that at no distant day he would become a very important character—perhaps outshine General Pierce himself. He looked at me, and I looked at him; then he grinned at me, and I grinned at him. At last I said, I reckoned we might draw the game. I then added, that from the look of the establishment I could not be wrong in assuming that they did a large business in the way of feeding hungry politicians and honest people. 'You may stake some on that, old feller,' says he, with a suspicious leer. His nasal was somewhat strong, so I put him down as from Vermont State, perhaps from the more mountainous part of it. As if shy of my patronage he upon the counter, pompous, spread his hands, as if the mahogany was all his. This seeming indifference rather touched my dignity, which was of tender quality, so I cast upon him a look he could not misinterpret, inquiring if he could tie a body up for the night in a spare corner. 'You may bet on that! got a spare pin we can hook ye on somehow, I reckon;' he ejaculates, sprawling his elbows, and making a support of his fleshy hands, from between which his face peered like



## Page 6

a soft pumpkin sorely squeezed. In this position he stared, and stared, until his countenance assumed an anxiety, equalled only by that of a stump lecturer about inauguration time—say one, who had hoped for the mission to the court of St. James, but as a matter of patriotism would not decline the Dublin Consulship. At length he condescended to say, with an air of languishing endurance, that 'he could do me up brown, in the way of comfortable quarters.' I thanked him for his great kindness, said I wanted to exercise a judicious economy, and could not do the extensive, like those persons sprawling in easy arm chairs at the left hand corner, to whom I pointed, and who, like Mr. President Pierce's representatives abroad, were making a great noise to no purpose. After looking quizzically at the tie-up under my arm, then at my tall white hat, and again at the coarse weave of my homespun, he inquired if that (pointing to the bundle) constituted my baggage. Instantly I told him it was none of his business; that there was no occasion for his feeling so large, though Mr. Pierce was President. He made an upright of himself, and very civilly rejoined that there was no place this side of Cape Horn—and he doubted if there was on the other side—where it was so necessary to see the collateral as this Washington. He was proceeding to say much more, and something about the doubtful character of General Pierce and his friends, when I interrupted by saying, I thought he must have forgotten my name. 'Smooth is my name,' I reiterated, 'of the Young American party, the party that intends doing up the manifest destiny for mankind.'

“Manifest destiny never pays debts: must see the collateral 'afore we tie ye up! Fact is, stranger, we must have the hold-fast for fear of the shot falling short. The General has got so many tin-less friends, who visit Washington on a small affair of business (here he gave his shoulders a significant shrug), that a body has to keep a sharp eye in the wind.' Suddenly he began to drum on the mahogany, screw his face into a disc of puckers, and look so wise. So glad did he seem, that he whistled Yankee Doodle with the variations, looked every which way, and then laughed right out at what he called Smooth's outfit.

“Needn't laugh at the fixens—old feller!' says I, 'Uncle Sam and me are going into the tin business, and Sam, being a generous old butt, will stand all the treats and hotel bills. Besides that, I was born in the very sand heap where Tom Coffin was raised.'

“Who cares for Tom' says he, turning aside, and making a polite bow to a thirsty senator from the far west: the senatorial gent bent his neck over, and approaching with his lips the ear of the important individual, whispered something from out the smallest corner. This something, when translated into decent English, might be rendered thus:—If justice and gin slings are administered at your bar, pray direct me the way to it! The

## Page 7

fat man pointed up a narrow, dark, and very long passage; and then suddenly turning to me, he said: 'If Tom Coffin lived now-a-days, when politics went on the fast, he wouldn't be worth shooks, he not having a vote, nor wanting an office under the new administration.' 'Now, stranger,' says I, directing a look as if I was going to strike something at him, 'don't make such a fuss about the needful—look'a here!' I just plumps out Uncle Zack Brewster's letter, and having fascinated his eye, tells him how Cochran and Riggs 'll do the dust. Like an hydraulic current let loose did the fellow prick up his ears: then he said, 'do tell,' with a musical emphasis that seemed so full of credit. Again he drew a long breath, and a seriousness came over his face that could only be likened to that of a South Carolina locomotive when drawing a whole convention of secessionists, who, having failed in devising means to dissolve the 'federal union,' were returning homeward very melancholy.

"'Never doubted Mr. Smooth's word,' says he, with simple dryness,—'but, notwithstanding, painful is the experience that office-holders and seekers, though always kind to Uncle Sam, and tenacious of his dignity and cashbag, seldom maintain the same earnestness for their own when legitimates are left in the key-hole.'

"'You mean that the General's friends don't shine over on the square?'

"'Precisely so!—Mr. General Pierce himself is a sort of mixed stripe; but his friends (and he has regiments of them!), all fighters in the Mexican war when he was brigadier, expect so much something material for themselves that all *outsiders* are forgotten. Now and then the General is sorry to inform his many friends that he is a little ill; to which a voice here and there is heard to say that he is not inclined to do the clean thing.'

"'Well, I saw what the feller wanted; so I pulled out a fist full of shiners, just to show him what Young America could do. The seeing the dimes smoothed him down into the most agreeable amiability. His face loomed out with good natur, his feelings seemed coming right from his inards; and he struck up Yankee Doodle by way of an offset.

"'Pooty full, Mr. Smooth,' he generously remarked, 'but we must try accommodate you somehow! We'll tuck you away in a spare corner, high up!'

"'That's a good soul,' said I,—'know'd ye warn't a bad sort of fellow,—when a body understood how to get the good out!'

"'Apartments for Solomon Smooth, Esq., from Cape Cod,' he said, mutteringly, looking over his book, and drumming with his fingers on the page. Mr. Smooth, in proof of his fast principles, will have no objection to tying up in the seventh story?'



“Rather stiff that, Major! Young America can do most anything,—hang up on a pin if it be necessary to accommodate, but don’t just like the moon for a bedfellow.’

“Won’t trouble you with a bedfellow, Mr. Smooth,’ he, grinned out, shaking all over his broad sides.



## Page 8

“It being well understood in Washington that great men were most condescending, while little men, with large expectations, were most aspiring, there was nothing left but to cut a course between the two. As for the latter quality of gentlemen, they never stood at trifles, and when they failed to get the big business, had not the slightest objection to the small,—which was the doing all Mr. President Pierce’s thinking. Therefore, be it known that, with a full knowledge of this sad state of affairs, did I write down:—’Mr. Solomon Smooth, from Cape Cod:’ which, when down, looked like the footprints of a hen that, having dipped her claws in an inkstand, had waddled across the page. Thus ended my induction at the National.

### CHAPTER II.

*Mr. Smooth sups, and goes to bed.*

“At length, Uncle Sam, I found myself somebody; and while looking about me on the many well-dressed and very good-natured gentlemen who subsisted on the hope of your generosity, could not avoid the contemplation of what a glorious world this of ours must be, possessing as it does so many good hearted souls like yourself, so rich—but as indifferent to their own best interests. ‘You will take supper, Mr. Smooth?’ inquired the man behind the mahogany. Before I had time to speak, he pulled a bell that jingled like Jehu. And then there came scampering in a school of negroes, so tidy, trim, and intelligent. One bowed—another smiled—a third waited with a salutation my commands. ‘Take care of Mister Smooth!’ again spoke the man behind the mahogany, as with an effort to be commanding in accent. That they might know more emphatically (as Uncle Tom Benton says) that Mr. Smooth was none of your common citizen, I turned my eyes on the darkies, and stared at them until they turned pale. Then one possessed himself of my bundle: moving off with a scientific motion, and a bow *a la cabinet*, he bid me follow. Obeying his summons, onward we went, through a long, dark passage, and into a spacious hall up stairs, where he said they eat their people. No sooner was I bowed to a seat than a dozen gentlemen darkies set upon me in good earnest; so fast did they beset me with eatables that I begun to think they had mistaken me for a thanksgiving turkey about to be fatted for the table of the secretary of the treasury. The fixins, as Mr. Samuel Slick would say, made one feel quite at home; not so with the darkies: they recognizing my home spun, soon became sassy; whereupon I turned round and set upon *them* with the broadest grin I could summon. Nor could I withhold a laugh at seeing them laugh. ‘Reckon how mas’r’s on big business to Washington wid Mr. General Pierce,’ says one, whose face was black, and bright, and full of the quizzical; while another, with a flat crooked nose gave a cunning wink out of his left eye. This being detected by a superior, in the brisk person of

## Page 9

a son of the Emerald Isle, who stood well six feet in his boots, a 'soucer' with the broad front of his knuckle bones, between the colored gentleman's two eyes, was the rejoinder—a most striking remonstrance, that laid him measuring the floor. Troth! an' it's myself 'd stop yer botheration. Sure, ye dark spalpeens, is it by the same token ye'd trate the gintleman? (Here the honest son of sweet Erin showed signs of his Doneybrook getting the better of him.) 'Myself 'll take care of Mr. Smooth—doesn't he belong to the self same party, the know-nothings? The divil a such a country, as Hamirike: an' it's the boys from Donegal that 'ud be taking her dignity in care.' Saying this, Mr. Patrick (for such was his name) stretched the whole length of his important self over the table, and says:—I'm yers to the buckle of my shoe, Mr. Smooth! It's a divil a one but yerself I'll vote for at the next helection. Sure, an' didn't mysel jine the native Hamerikan party, with Tom Connolly, afore we'd been two months on the beloved soil an', sure, it's Tom and myself that's goin to put through the *nonothin* for ye.' Here Mr. Patrick anxiously paused for a reply. To never say a bad thing when I could not think of a good, ever has been my motto; so I returned his good nature with saying:—'Give us yer hand, Mr. Patrick—we will forget the two, and yet be one! and that our faith may be made strong, we will together do brown the patriotism of these United States.

“Ye better believe that!’ returns Mr. Patrick, with an exultation of happiness; and concluding with: ‘I’d kill every nager in the land, be the pipers I would! an’ it’s the boys from old Ireland what does be keeping the bright face on pure Hamirikan principles. Sure an’ warn’t it the brave boys that halicted General Pierce and his cumrades?’ Here Mr. Patrick again paused, and with a wise look, shook his head. ‘We put the broad staunch face on the democracy,’ again he interjaulated with a mutter. Indeed, Mr. Patrick the reader will easily detect, had the crude idea of right in his head; but, unfortunately, he could only get it out in these simple and sideling insinuations. The negro, whom we have before described as being knocked down, picked himself up and had nothing to say.

“There may be much in what you say, friend Patrick,’ said I: ‘The boys from Donegal do with the elective franchise much that *native-Homers* in their carelessness leave undone. Mr. Patrick acknowledged this, shook his head, and said the fact, though deplorable, was preeminently established.

“Like every one who visits Washington these times, yer a friend of the Ginerals, and have fit with him in the Mexican war?’ again he inquired, seeming to anticipate my answer. Of the Mexicans I know little—of the war less: it were well our country made peace its friend, war its enemy. As to the General and his fighting in Mexico, that was a matter that best affected himself; through it he became a great potentate, but

## Page 10

not so great a man; but, I accept the general idea that he is now become troubled of a short memory. During this time I had not forgotten number one—my supper! Having stowed it well away under my lining, I felt very much like a man who had just turned away his back on Secretary Marcy, having through personal friendship received the country's best collectorship. Seeing the point of good-nature to which my feelings had arrived through the strong argument of meats, Mr. Patrick proffered his services to navigate me out of the place where he ate his people—through entries, corridors, passages, halls, and down stairways, along which we were ever encountering persons who, like Mr. Pierce, were groping their way in the dark. In the course of time, and after much feeling and fumbling, I again encountered the light of the mahogany counter, behind which stood the same individual I have before described—his person so formidable, his face so full and fat, his hair so sleek and smooth.

“Had a good supper, Squire Smooth?’ says he, a broad smile spreading over his broader face. On answering in the affirmative, he introduced me to numerous unsatisfied politicians. One of this very numerous gentry, and of whom I had, unfortunately, occasion to know more at a subsequent period, (he was a man of grief from South Carolina), swore, by his knowledge of southern rights and secession, that his State, so neglected, would certainly go out of the Union. She had not a minister abroad—only Consul General at Alexandria, which was said by the knowing ones to be somewhere in Egypt; and where, to prove his strong faith in southern principles, and his independent indifference to the feelings of thin-skin northerners, he had purchased two very handsome Nubian slaves of the feminine gender. This was merely to illustrate the truly American spirit of our institutions: perchance it might arouse from his stupor the Viceroy, who not fully cognizant of the height of civilization to which America had arrived, was making singular, and to me very praiseworthy efforts, to free his people from the curse of enslaving men. To our patriotic Consul General we say—go it!—a few more such examples will give the Egyptian an impression of our liberty and christian love most strange: the brilliant light of our western star will, I fear, have much in it to remind him of those darker days when his forefathers built pyramids.

“Come to see the General, I s’pose, stranger?’ our Carolinian inquired, with a suspicious look, touching a companion beside him on the arm. To his inquiry I returned—nothing shorter! ‘Cape Cod,’ he followed with a respectful bow, ‘did noble work for the true democracy; she is great in sands, shoals, and cod-fish; she will send General Pierce a chowder, as emblematic of his foreign policy—’ Here I interrupted by assuring him that Cape Cod could stand anything to the stomach digestible; But whether she could digest the General was a doubtful question. Cape Cod,



## Page 11

be it known over the broad acres of this land, I added, has a spirit above living on government: she turned disdainfully from the means that were fast turning the functions of government into a machine for grinding out patronage—she never sacrificed Uncle Sam for the sake of what is in his tin-trunk. At this, which he was pleased to call an expletive, he began to summon his dignity: at once he stiffened in a manner that proved how much superior to me he considered himself, and how much more of Uncle Sam's shiners were necessary to his conceived maintenance. 'Cape Cod is the place,' says he folding his arms, moving to a more piquant position, giving his person a little more importance, and making a target of the brightly polished stove, against which he permitted a well-directed stream of dark fluid to explode ere he wiped his lips.—'Cape Cod is the place from whence all persons come who profess to be born free and equal; but they are a scrubby set—' Considering it a duty I owed to the nation, I again interrupted him. 'Cape Cod,' replied I, 'has got gumption, principle, and the spirit of a go-ahead in her: she germinated the Young American party. Understand, citizen, (here I found spunk was necessary), a cape-coaster can at any time boast a full fair of fish; if he draw them from Mr. John Bull's waters, so much the better. He is no stranger to Mr. John Bull, whom he esteems rather a dogged fellow, pugnaciously inclined at times, but never so bad as he seems; and though stubbornly behind the age of progress, nor willing to believe in the principles of manifest destiny, often improves upon acquaintance.'

“'Good night, Mr. Smooth,' said he hurriedly; 'when you tie up for the night—remember me—! Hope to see you bright in the morning.' Off, like the handle of a jug, he went. And now it being time to stow myself away, I hailed for a pilot to navigate me safe into the seventh story. My fat friend at the counter, whose eyes were becoming leaden, rung again the bell, and out scampered some dozen darkies from nobody could discern where. I looked at the negroes with an expression of excitement, and then, somewhat alarmed:—'Stranger,' says I, 'these 'ere niggers a'int all going to put me through, be they?' He said he reckoned one would do; and to a question as to what time I would complete the journey to bed, he replied that seeing I was of the Young American stripe, and that the distinguished of that party could do almost anything, provided I started soon I would reach the destination about midnight. 'Now, providing it's any accommodation, Mr. Smooth, we can send you to bed by steam. Say the word and up you'll go!' he rapidly concluded, rapping with his fingers on the big book he had so leisurely laid aside for the night, there being no chance of another customer being caught this side of twelve o'clock. I shook my head and moved off, telling him I did not appreciate being busted up. 'Ain't a mite of danger!' says he: 'why,



## Page 12

stranger, we havn't killed more nor two dozen this year or more.' That Young America was a go-ahead I was fully conscious; still, being somewhat anxious to extend a little friendly advice to General Pierce, I begged to be excused from all dangers, Young America must live to proclaim the manifest destiny of a universal republic. You may lay aside your steam fixings until a more expedient time to use them—'Here he interrupted by saying my walking up would only save six cents;—' can put Mr. Smooth into the machine and send him up in a jiffy. Further, we have got some dozen old gents here who go to bed by steam every night!' I shook hands with the fellow, exchanged glances, bid them good night all round, and trotted off, following the darky, who wound his way round corridors, up stairs, and through passages for more than an hour, (at least, I thought it was!), until I fancied we had got lost in an interminable labyrinth of narrow passages. It was just after inauguration, which fact was duly made known through the medium of sundry corks of champagne bottles, which were sounding pop! pop!! pop!!! Again merry voices were heard announcing the misfortunes of those about to pass out: while another whose voice seemed somewhat mellow, said he had in his eye the office he wanted—exactly. A third voice, as if echoed through a subterranean vault, said they must all be forbearing—the General was so undecided in his opinions. Pretty soon, the negro, having wound his way high up in the world, turned a corner, gave a tremendous guffaw, and opened the door of a place that looked very much like a closet in which to stow away lean lawyers. 'Now, Cuff! ye ain't goin to stow this citizen away in that ar place, be ye?' says I.

"'Mas'r,' returns he, 'tis just the snuggest place ye ever did see; why! tain't da length on ye, seem how mas'r can double himself up anyhow,—just as General Pierce do.' The darkey laughed and drew back with a bow, as I began to philosophise that, being now so well up in the world, it was the best policy to coil up and invoke Morpheus,—which I did, bidding good-night to all below, and promising myself a pleasant interview with General Pierce on the following morning.

### CHAPTER III.

*In which Mr. Smooth has an interview with general Cass.*

"Smooth had just stowed himself away in the shape of a figure 4, when there came a voice as husky as Uncle Zack Peabody's conk, (which said conk had been used to blow his way through the fogs of Newfoundland for nearly half a century), saying:—'It's mighty tight squeezing there, ain't it, stranger?' Where the voice came from seemed a puzzle for all creation. No room was there in the place for another soul—all became as still and watchlike as the tomb. In fear and anxiety I gazed upon the dark wall, and along it to the little window facing

## Page 13

the avenue; and there, behold! but tell it not in the Capitol, was the broad, burly face of General Cass, like a wet moon in discontent. Unhappy with himself, he was peering in at the window. Again he muttered:—'I can't get in!—such has always been my fate.' The much-disappointed old gentleman bore such an expression of discomfiture on his countenance, that Smooth was forced to the conclusion that to be sociable would only be doing a good turn—more especially as the General and Uncle Sam never got along well together. 'Then it's you, General?' says I: 'well, don't be in a hurry!' After a short silence, he inquired if I could accommodate a traveller who had been long on the road, and short of shot. I said I was not well to do for room; but as to be obliging was the order of the day, and seeing that he was soon to try another turn by joining the 'Young American' party, I would see what could be done. He had got upon the roof of the institution,—just where he could slip backward with great ease, though it took some effort to go forward. Being somewhat infirm of age, I took him gently by the hand and assisted him in, where I thought he might, if he pleased, stand upon a square platform. The General was very polite, bore strongly in his demeanor the marks of time and honor; I could not suppress the capricious thought—that it was time a sly corner in the patent office were provided for political relics of a past age, and he safely stowed away in it. All things of a by-gone age should have their place; notwithstanding, knowing that Uncle Sam and him had tried to be intimate friends, and that he had many warm and substantial voters in the far West, I felt to be less than condescending would be bad political policy. He took a seat, and began to get up his good-nature, as I inquired what earthly mission he could be prosecuting on so dark and cold a night.

"Well, now, friend Smooth,' he says: 'I like you, but the question you put so honestly has a point which you cannot see, though I can painfully feel. However, as I have no secrets, I don't mind telling you: it must be private, nevertheless—I am sensitive not to have these matters spread all over the Union. To-night, you see, a conclave of political wranglers met below, in this house. Conscious that they would have a large '*grin*' at me, discussing the means by which I have always been the rejected of this great and growing people, I came that my ears might lesson of fools. To this end, I mounted the chimney, and was reconoitering down the black abyss, when my eye turned and caught your light, like a star in tribulation, twinkling from the window. Strange kind of a tribune for a senator, I admit, but I heard many judgments, and from them may draw many more. One reckoned I had stamped with the cold hand of death my political life; always wanting to fight somebody—the English in particular! Another said Virginia and Pennsylvania couldn't approve of my policy—that it was too slow;



## Page 14

while New York dare not vote for me, and I was New England's dread. A third said he didn't believe the middle West would back me up, because a doubt existed as to whether other States would. These sentiments I heard from down chimney. My solemn belief is, that I have been sacrificed to a firm and honest belief in the Monroe doctrine; which, singularly enough, had its origin in English minds. My efforts to carry it into effect seemed not to form a tangible objection; though a voice now and then said it might lead to evil consequences, England and France having formed a very unnatural alliance to put down the aggressive spirit of nations, without respect to the side of the Atlantic on which they were domiciled. Then, by way of a suspending clause, they said it was not so much my pugnacious propensities they feared, as that, being an old *fogy*, full of personal grievances against somebody, I would make the gratifying a venerable spleen paramount to the interests of States (all this I heard from down chimney). That I was not a bad man, nor an inflexible man, they all agreed; but that my time was passed was their verdict, and being passed, I would myself soon pass into political oblivion—nothing being left but executive expectations and ballet-boxes, with which I might build on high a monument! The trouble is, friend Smooth, I am not possessed of the tact of making the nation understand me; had I this all-necessary to political fame, the Chief Magistracy had long since been mine. To me the free press of our country is a sort of infernal machine,—its effect in my case strengthens the idea. Having held me up as dangerous, when in truth I am a peaceably disposed man, they have wronged me while misinforming the public.' Here he paused, as his face assumed its wonted seriousness, and that wart, now historical, looked brighter than ever. I had long been desirous of scraping acquaintance with the old man, whom I esteemed much better inside than out, so I offered him half of my shingle, at the same time intimating that we would have some whiskey. At this he lowered his voice, and continued with a slow shake of the head:—'I'm not so bad as I seem. Peradventure I wanted a small chance at the Britishers. I hate them, but that only signifies a trifle. Mr. Pierce, like a horn lantern for which Uncle Caleb and Jeff furnish the light, is fast getting affairs into a fuzzle; this must be so while the light is thus furnished, and the regulation of its burning be left to Grandpapa Marcy. Fact is, you see, Mr. Smooth, the administration is become like a steam-engine, Mr. Pierce being used as a piston by Caleb, Jeff, and Co., who, in addition, furnish Southern-rights for fuel, use patronage as a condenser, and make a safety valve of Papa Marcy. But Papa has yet to take many lessons in National Engineering before his control over the machine is complete.' I watched the old man's anxious eye as he spoke; and again suggested the taking a little whiskey: I pitied him. 'It will set ye all right!' says I, 'it'll take the fogysm all out, warm up yer inards, and make yer ideas come out with the philosophy of a *Mara beau*. Mr. Pierce loves to traffic in the language of war, but like all little creatures, makes his noise and stops.'



## Page 15

“Well, in obedience to my friendship for you, Smooth—and with the knowledge that you are going into business with Uncle Sam—appreciating the ‘Young American’ party as I do, I don’t care if I take. It may revive the hope of 1856. After all, there is something in you New Englanders I like—give us yer hand,’ he replied suddenly, as a soft smile spread over his hard face. He commenced wiping his lips, and was so polite. I rang the bell, and up came the negro, his face as full of alarm as a frightened moon in a hail-storm. Alarmed at his appearance, the General sprang to his feet, and was for bolting through the window. ‘Don’t be scared, General!’ says I, trying to suppress a laugh; ‘put on the pluck of Young America—niggers then will seem as nothing.’ Mr. Pierce pursues this course. General knows it takes somebody to cut a figure in the world; and seeing that these United States constitute a free country, what violation of principle is there in doing with negroes what you please? The steaming punch now awaited us; I filled the General’s glass, and he said ‘this was a great country, which would soon send Young America out on the world to proclaim manifest destiny.’ I said amen, and the punch disappeared into his depot, as he concluded. It was clear his inards warmed, he beginning to brighten up soon after. With a laconic air, he touched me on the elbow, and said, ‘Somehow, it seems to touch the right place—I declare it does! I am half inclined to the belief that General Pierce sups formidably of this just before he talks about winding things up in a straight sort of way, all of which he ultimately forgets: the influence of this sort of steam was undoubtedly that which selected Minister Solan Borland the man for Central America. It was not that friend Solan went to settle perplexing questions with that dwarf combination of helpless governments; it was enough that he amused sundry citizens and much annoyed others with the little fracas which, through the power of political steam, he was wont to indulge in.’

“Now, Uncle Cass!’ said I, interrupting him, at the same time adding a good-natured wink, ‘you must excuse Smooth’s seeming intrusiveness; but, what do you think of annexation in general, and filibustering and taking Cuba in particular?’ At this, the General gave a knowing pause, scratched his head as if it was troubled with something, and then replied with much dryness: ‘Ah! the one is a subject popular to-day, the other is fast becoming so: when both are equally popular, we may advocate them with safety. Mr. Pierce understands this policy. That which is popular and holds out advantages must go down in our go-ahead country. According to the axiom of our Southern doctrines we must have Cuba: she must be wedded in political bonds to Cape Florida; not for the purpose of consolidating niggerdom, but merely to complete in that direction the point of manifest destiny.’

“Lord love yer political faith, General!’ said I, rising up and taking him firmly by the hand.



## Page 16

“Ye’ll do for the Young America, that ye will! There’ll be no more old-fogyism—no more of the slow-coach school! Take another bumper, and you’ll be ripe for the new party.’ The General, with less dignity than you might have supposed him capable of condescending to, filled his glass, drew his chair back, threw his square figure well over the arms, and roared right out until it became dangerous. At length he began to drink his whiskey, and that stopped his joy for a time. But he soon broke out afresh. ‘What on earth is the matter with you, stranger? you ain’t going to make a shaking machine of your broad sides, be ye?’ says I, giving him a look that would have pierced a stone wall.

“You must excuse me, Mr. Smooth, but the principles of your party would make anybody laugh; why!—its sprouting members are all growing out of their breeches. Where, in that stretchy imagination the party possesses, can you find a place for the moon, which of necessity must follow in the train of annexation?’ he inquires seriously.

“Put it? Why, General, you have been stowed away so long, keeping dog-watch over fogyism, that you don’t comprehend how Uncle Sam has been transformed into a go-ahead chap to suit the times. Consul Saunders ’ll bridge the Gulf Stream, and thus unite Cuba and Cape Florida; and, his pockets well lined with letter-writing materials, be first to march over it and proclaim manifest destiny to the natives. As for the moon, George will find a place in the compact for her.’

“But, Mr. Smooth,’ says he, ‘what in the name of changes be you going to do with so many little kingdoms? A thousand years will scarcely people our present domain! Now, Smooth, I’ll cut out a small job for the Young American party:—let them, just to give a specimen of their principles, step across to Europe and help Louis and Uncle John (I hate John, though) whip Nicholas, and turn vacillating, faithless Austria into a republic, with principle and spirit equal to her position as a nation.’ The General looked serious as he concluded—so far as whipping Austria was concerned we would be only too glad did she for once throw off her cowardice and afford us an opportunity. She had long played at thimblery with doty old Mr. John Bull, before whose eyes she had placed the spectacles of fantasy, the changes of which the poor old gentleman’s very refined sense and undeniable diplomacy had not permitted him to comprehend. Austria was like the thief who set himself up as umpire to settle between two knaves of his own cloth, and, while he gave advice to both, was securing to himself the very plunder which gave rise to the dispute. Nicholas, John Bull said, was a ruffian of the go-ahead school; but, of the three ruffians, which shall we choose? history may be the teacher! Ruffians, however, may do good at times, in which sense Nicholas was entitled to more consideration than Mister Bull, in his frenzy, was willing to accord. Thus saying, the General and me took another glass, shook hands, and bowed most politely. Again I stretched myself down for the night, as he (promising to call again and have another talk) disappeared out of the window.



## Page 17

### CHAPTER IV.

MR. SMOOTH'S DREAM.

"Leaving Cass holding on at the slippery roof. I dreamed that the ghost of Benton, in contemplation bestrode the summit of the Rocky Mountains; that 'Young America,' like a Colossus with monster limbs stretched across a world, was endeavouring to wake from their stupor the nations. With a voice like unto lazy thunder murmuring in the distance was he proclaiming his hatred of kings, into whose dominions he threatened to march great armies, and whom he described as curses sent upon the earth by the evil one: for the *Evil One* sought to promote self, a means to which he found in those intrigues by which he made strong his court—the same was the trade of kings. Again the voice thundered forth—'Here are the instruments that have destroyed a world of human beings, and for a selfish purpose gloated over the blood they had made run in torrents.' I looked, and behold! appeared there before me a terrible devil, of hideous form having two great horns, on one of the long sharp points of which was poised a king, on the other a fat bishop in his lawn. The two perpetual mischief-makers, and desolators thus poised, he came with a hideous roar, threatening to drown them in the river of unrefined common sense. And then there was written in broad letters of fire across the shoulders of this sturdy devil—'Kingcraft and Churchcraft have cursed the nations of the earth, and turned to blight the blessings of the True God!' Again this significant edict vanished, and in its place there came, as in letters of gold, 'Cheap Government and no Established Church—let the nations be ruled in wisdom and right!' This had reference to good old England, not America, for here bishops are known to be meek and good. All this was a dream: but then there came, soaring giant-like, 'Young America,' and manifest destiny which he spread over the land for the benefit of mankind. Then there came a great darkness, followed by a little light that crept feebly onward as if fearing to spread itself on the broad disc of the horoscope—it was the light of Mr. Pierce, beneath which hovered doubtful devils. How rapacious they seemed! They saw the doubts and fears of his little light, and would fain carry him off into purgatory ere it died out. But his saviours came: they were the ghosts of those great lights that founded the pillars of our Republicanism. Down they sat, in ghostly conclave, and with instruments in hand set about driving away the carrier devils and working the problem of Mr. Pierce's political policy. It was impossible!—not all the trigonometry of which they were masters sufficed to aid them in the task. It seemed like attempting to solve the principle of that which never had one. He stood on a platform of sections, each of which turned at a touch, and seemed giving way for want of strength. Indeed, as beheld in the dream, he could play the game of uncertainty through a dozen focuses. The jury of ghosts became sorely perplexed; then they began to put to him some very honest questions, as to what his intentions really were. And while doing this the spirit of Washington, arrayed in glory, looked down upon its feeble successor, and with an ironical smile shook its head.



## Page 18

“Then there came an unaccented voice from the little light—the light said to be the impersonation of Pierce; indeed, it was of kindred with the shadow in that singular romance by Hawthorn, called the life of Pierce! And the voice said:—‘I shall be known by my practice.’ Just then the little light became dimmer, and turned away toward a long dark avenue, where the vista seemed studded with the faces of disconsolate ‘niggers.’ At this the ghost of Webster yawned, and that of Calhoun scowled fiercely and contemptuously; while Clay’s rubbed its eyes and wept tears of pity. Again all was darkness. Then there came again the little light of which I have spoken;—it was the light of Mr. Pierce. It flickered and fluttered, and thus we identified it. ‘We have to deal with Europe—with that happy alliance my very amiable Lord Clarendon says is for purposes not alone in Europe. My lord’s language, however, is so cleverly diplomatic—that is, it can be made to mean anything or nothing,—as to need a translation. My lord means, that when it has served to curb the national ambition of certain nations of Europe it may be turned to the same purpose in another but more congenial hemisphere. Kossuth wants material aid—such as saddles, tin, &c. &c. I would give it him, if he would teach Austria a lesson of honesty! Nevertheless, as to Louis himself I would be extremely cautious, for being more a blower than a moulder, and having a peculiar talent for getting affairs very crooked, the instrument in the man is of questionable ability;—indeed, in a crisis between nations, such an instrument should he examined with great skill and delicacy before being set in motion.’ He spoke after this manner, and quick as thought the spectacle vanished—it was but a dream? Not a ghost was seen; no lurid face cast its pale shadow over the dark canvas; the pure spirit of Washington had departed in hopeless despair. I was about to read a prayer, when the dark canvas moved aside, and there, real as life, sat on a slave’s grave the immaculate Brigadier;—he, reader, was sipping whiskey toddy, as if it were his wont. Old Bunkum was the slave whose grave he sat upon. It was a strange penance over the mound of one so old; and yet who in the political world that had not paid it? ‘Why!—Bunkum, you are barefoot;’ a voice spoke.

“‘Remember, old man, you must keep on the stiff,—it’s as necessary to success as it was to believe the old Constitution frigate could whip anything afloat.’ It was the General who spoke to the ghost of Bunkum, who, having risen from the grave, stood before him, moody and despairing. In ecstasy he grasped the hand of the cold figure cried out that his soul’s love was with him. But in his exuberance he let the whiskey run over the green grave, into which the ghost soon disappeared and left him alone to his contemplations. Bunkum, like Billy Bowlegs, who has too much sense for the great father, says he has wandered through all weathers,



## Page 19

and endured all kinds of political farcery: now that he had become old, and served as long as the god of sacrifice, would they not let him rest in peace? Here the General seemed alone and forlorn: then he wept bitterly, until the ghost of Bunkum in pity again appeared and with him sat upon the grave. The General kindly took him by the hand, and in his ear whispered something, the only part of which became audible was—'When as President of this great country I became, I was bound—' Here the man paused. A kindlier feeling now came over Bunkum, in evidence of which he motioned as if he would take another drop of whiskey with the President, or ask a favor he was delicate about broaching. For a man who had so long looked upon things beneath him his reserve was to be appreciated, especially when viewed in comparison with the expectations of those many numerous friends, all of whom expected foreign missions. Having chatted and sipped together a sufficient length of time, and as Bunkum was about to say *good by*, he turned with a half significant smile, and touching the General on the elbow, said:—'Ye ain't got a spare hat and pea-jacket to lend a body?'

"Bless you, Bunkum, you are of the South!—anything you want is at your bidding. New England (she's a trump!) can take care of herself; let the storm threaten as it may, she never trips. We must do for Kentuck and Carolina:—the black pig must have his swill if the rest find an empty trough.' 'Thank you! thank you! General; our States will stand firm to you—Bunkum himself never will forsake you;' spoke thus thankfully the ghost of the old man as it took leave of the old General and disappeared. Here I awoke from my dream to painful reflections.

## CHAPTER V.

### A MORNING ADVENTURE.

"As Uncle Sam is equally careless of his language and cash, he will excuse a crooked beginning and accept a straight ending. Contemplating my crooked dream I confess I waked up without a straight idea in my head. The fact was, I was waked up with such an incomprehensible jingling, ringing, rumbling, and gonging, that I mistook its purport, and thought the Russians were bombarding the house. I was about looking out of the window to see if the White House was all safe, when a negro with a countenance blacker than vengeance protruded his fizzy head into the door, and without a morsel of knocking commenced grinning. 'Anything wanted for Major Smooth?' inquires he; and without waiting for an answer, catches up the bed, Smooth and all the fixins, and set them somewhat aside. 'Not so fast, Cuff!' said I; 'Smooth is no Major—plain Mister Smooth from the Cape.'

"Lor, Mas'r' replied the negro, interrupting me; 'when in Washington t'wont do to be a mite less than a Major-General. Every man what come to dis city widout his title better



come widout himself. Our clerk what stand at the hogany counter be a General,— Jones, the ostler, be a Colonel; and Wilkes what keep the oyster shop ober yonder be a Major! As for Captains, they are as thick and of as little use as blackbirds. Will you take somethin?' The sagacious negro bowed, and waited for a reply. I told him that being invited to a fish breakfast with the General at the 'White House,' I would forbear to liquor until I had made my bow.



## Page 20

“S’pose you’ll take the customary gin cock-tail, Mr. Smooth?’ the negro rejoined, with an anxious air. Evinced my surprise at such a proposition, I assured him I did not know its meaning. ‘Don’t know what it is!’ he exclaimed, with a deep sigh. ‘A very fashionable drink,’ he continued; ‘gemmen what see de General, and study national affairs, all take some on em in da mornin.’

“Now, Cuff,’ I rejoined, ‘just tell the truth; you mean that in order to keep the dignity up, it is necessary to take something stiff in the mornin?’

“Dat him, mas’r,’ says he in reply, accompanying it with a broad guffaw. ‘When mas’r bin to de White House, and seem serious, as if he ain’t got what he want, he put a cock-tail down to make de glorious come up; it be a great anecdote for what mas’r call de blues.’ The interpretation of what the negro said was that it made a man feel as if he had the best office in Mr. Pierce’s gift safe in his pocket. Having a reasonable appreciation of a negro’s statement, I consented on the ground of its good qualities—thus represented—to take a little. The negro left, but soon returned with it in his hand—all bittered and iced. Down it went, plump!—it cut away the cobwebs, made my inards fizzle, and the whole frame feel as lively as a bee-hive. The negro said it was good—and I said I reckoned. And then I ‘turned out,’ as they call it, broadside on. ‘Great kingdom,’ exclaimed the negro, giving me a slanting look from head to foot; ‘why, mas’r, dey must a growed ye in a guano country.’

“Cuff! don’t be sassy,’ I replied. And then he very good-naturedly commenced arranging my homespun. He fussed over me as if I were a mere substance to be transformed into anything Mr. Pierce might require. Then, to my utter astonishment, he apprised me of the fact of General Cass having carried off my boots and breeches—adding that it was a sort of mania with him, and for which he was not morally accountable. Then the negro began quizzing my person. One of my legs, he said, was hard shell, the other a soft shell; however, to reconcile the matter, he further added that the embodiment was exactly suited to Mr. Pierce’s principles, inasmuch as he could go between—which he always aimed to do. He then said I must have pantaloons of the right stripe; because in Washington a man must look genteel, and have his understandings straight. It was no excuse that the General himself was an undecided Democrat; if he was round in some things, he was square in others,—that is he was round in policy, and square in periods. The Negro said he did not look so much at the cut of the pantaloons as the quality of the cloth, and its tenacity for stretching—according to the expectations of the ‘Young American’ party.



## Page 21

“Upon this assurance, I ordered him to repair to the tailor’s, which he did, and was not long in returning and bringing with him a pair of fashionables suited to the times. ‘Great country,’ said he, holding them before me and shaking his black sides with laughter. Into them I slid myself; the bottoms only reached a little below my knees. The negro, with eyes like astonished stars, set upon the straps, and such a tugging and pulling as there allowed! I began to think I was being pulled in two, (after the fashion of Mister Pierce’s promises and performances), when Cato, (such was the negro’s name), his face almost white with exertion, begged I would not be alarmed—that he would very soon get them all right! In another minute something went—pop! Simultaneously with the report was my head driven clean through the pine-board ceiling into a chamber unfortunately occupied by a lean old maid of some forty-seven summers. ‘Good mornin, missus,’ I said, trying to make a bow; ‘hope I ain’t intruding.’ The old lady looked mighty streaked, and wouldn’t be pacified, until I told her I was merely giving a few feats, just to illustrate the principles of the ‘Young American’ party. It’s only Young America, ma’am, he’s cutting the three figures of his sentiments, as made known by his particular stars,—Soule, Saunders, and Sickles. Didn’t intend to disturb you, my good woman,’ says I. I wanted to seem polite—to put the very best foot forward; but it was to no earthly use. The old critter screamed, jumped out of the bed, and like a ghost shaking his cotton to the storm, ran away in dismay.

“‘Good Christopher Columbus!’ exclaimed the negro, almost bursting with fright. With this he commenced pulling and jerking at my legs, until, finding his efforts useless, he hastened down stairs and spread the alarm. Major Smooth was in an alarming situation!—’most dying!—would breathe his last!—warn’t no help fo’ h him!—must die, sartin!! Such a ringing and dinging of bells, such a tampering up stairs, such a puffing and blowing of excited citizens as followed, never was heard or seen before. Although in a tight place, I was neither alarmed nor crest fallen. Indeed, I thought I’d enjoin the old lady on the other side to enter upon the discussion of a political question, just by way of keeping up the characteristic sociability of the nation. Presently about a dozen dangerously excited faces presented themselves in the room. ‘He’s gone, certain,’ says one; ‘Major Smooth’s a cold chicken,’ mutters another; ‘Young America’s cutting a figure,’ rejoins a third; ‘he’s only at rest while performing some overt act,’ interposes a fourth. ‘Much you know about it!’ says I, cool as Labrador: ‘I merely put my head through this ere place for the purpose of being friendly with this lone female lodger—pull me out!’ In right good earnest they seized me by the boots, saying:—‘Let us bring Young America into a respectable position;’ and with the most unmerciful jerks they laid me measuring



## Page 22

the floor. In no wise disconcerted, I picked myself up, and inquired if they had another strap to loan me. With the exception of Cato, the negro, they all enjoyed a good laugh; he had no sooner relieved me, than he commenced raising a fuss about my damaging the ceiling—never for once taking Mr. Smooth's head into consideration. Young America, he said, was always too fast—always getting into trouble and calling upon others to help him out.

### CHAPTER VI.

MR. SMOOTH FINDS HIS PATH TO THE WHITE HOUSE A DIFFICULT ONE.

“Good morning, Mr. Smooth!” saluted the fat man behind the mahogany, as I entered the office, having escaped from my perilous position in the seventh story. In addition, he took a lunar observation all along down my hull, which he said was a mighty tough sort of craft, and had received no damage for which the house could be held responsible.

“As if to make the picture more complete, a number of anxious-looking individuals (all firm friends of Uncle Sam) crowded about me, each putting some curious question in reference to my expectations and the Executive and his gifts. Many of these important gentry had proboscises largely developed and very red; indeed, the reddest nose was strongest evidence of the best office-seeker; albeit, some waggishly inclined gentleman had said that the most generously red-nosed man always esteemed his deserts to be no less than that of United States Minister at some very fashionable foreign Court, where the good red of a well-developed nose was significant of pure blood. ‘Well now, gents,’ I returned, ‘you needn’t be trying to poke your political fun at this citizen! Young America is all right yet. Put me on the track of Mr. Pierce’s whereabouts.’ Seeing they were facetiously inclined, I summoned that independence so necessary to a citizen of standing. At this moment, one more politely inclined than the rest, stepped forward, and commenced giving me the ins and outs of the way to see the Brigadier, who, lie said, was surrounded by many fairweather courtiers. Stepping politely to the door, he, with grace not unbecoming, raised a well-gloved hand, and half whispered:—Mr. Smooth will walk into the avenue—keep on the West side—join the throng (they are all officials in embryo)—be sure and look as serious as they do; and with them you will arrive at the ‘White House’ to take your place and chance.’ Oh! chance! ‘There is no missing the way, Mr. Smooth; get behind some well-dressed citizen—one who looks as if he were in pursuit of something the means of securing which he had made sure. Follow that man!’ I thanked him for his civility,—he seemed one of Uncle Sam’s bone-breakers, and sallied out under the happy contemplation that a gentleman from Cape Cod was on a par with the same species of mankind from South Carolina. It was true that with what little aristocracy we boasted—and in that little there was truly a great blessing, inasmuch



## Page 23

as it illustrated the fact of there being one spot on this earth where common sense had got the better of refined sense—was founded in the possession of ‘niggers,’ the number giving rank in the scale. In the small but very aristocratic atmosphere of democratic South Carolina it had been proposed to establish an order of the American garter, the means entitling to membership being the possession of a very large number of fat negroes and negresses: and to ingratiate the august order it was proposed to make Colonel Wade Hampton first knight, and Lady Tyler first knightess. The reader, Mr. Smooth feels assured, will pardon this little digression, which he will set down to my love for that darling little State.

“I soon muddled my way along with the crowd, among which there were very long faces, very short faces, and faces from which nothing could be extracted—the comic faces always kept behind! As a matter of policy I got behind the man who had the longest and most quizzical face; for he gave out signs of seeing daylight through political darkness. I made his acquaintance, and found him of the free-and-easy school. ‘On your way to see the General, stranger?’ I inquired, edging up to him in a polite sort of way—at the same time keeping up the free-and-easy. ‘No,’ he answered with a laconic air, and a half significant shrug of the shoulder, ‘I’m merely strolling this way, leisurely contemplating. I take it you have not been long in the Capital?’ he added. ‘You are right on that point, citizen,’ said I in return.

“‘Expecting a good appointment?’ he continued to inquire, philosophically. ‘Well, it may be: s’pose you’re in for a Ministership, if you come out a martyr,’ I replied, adding a Western wink which is given with both eyes. He very good-naturedly acknowledged that I had hit the mark, gave me his arm, said we must look in somewhere by the way-side and taste a small drop of Young American whiskey, which would have the effect of making stronger our friendship. This we did, drinking a good time to Mr. Pierce. No sooner was the whiskey down than all his ideas came straight up. He said he was none of yer small fry;—like thunder he had stumped it for General Pierce; like electricity he had down in Georgia and Western Alabama carried everything for true democracy. ‘Reckon Mr. Smooth never was down South?’ he concluded, in parenthesis. I assured him I never was; but that I had heard it was great of office-holders, and persons who would, with every consideration for the Union in general, hold the federal government very fast. To this he merely bowed in confirmation. To another question, which was rather of a delicate nature, he said the South did not so much value the emoluments of office; but her sons revered the noble qualities of their forefathers, with whom dignity was inherent,—and it was they that were best qualified to maintain and spread its influence for the benefit of the nation. It was the dignity



## Page 24

of the nation, made manifest in its government, the South sought to maintain. So said my friend, whose name was Pringle Pierpont—well acquainted with Uncle Sam. All of a sudden he laughed outright, saying I was ignorant of the *why and how to do, diplomacy* of Washington. What it is impossible to get you must always say you never wanted; and what is within your reach, always say was far beyond our expectations. Meantime, be a philosopher, and act with apparent indifference to what is going on around you: never tell a friend you are worth less than one hundred thousand dollars. Upon such an hypothesis you may face the General, talk profound (here and there in parenthesis letting out your knowledge of foreign affairs), but never give him to understand that you can extract crooked and put straight ideas into his head—above all, be sure and feel as independent as a wood-sawyer at two dollars a day. Play well your face, and a spoil of the game just won will be yours. Marcy is father of this principle! Heed not the sympathy between your heart and head,—while the one feels high never let the other play low. Accept anything the General may be pleased to offer, adding that it is in respect to his great talent and your anxiety to keep respectable his foreign affairs; and think how you belie your conscience the while. Now, Smooth, you will see how open-armed the General will be to see me!

“I told Mr. Pierpont how glad I was to hear it, seeing that it might be the means of putting me through on the same hook. Without hesitation, he said he would do what he could. Had I fought in the Mexican war the case would have been different—had I been true to the South, the case had been very different: the distinctions here enumerated brought down the scale. ‘However, the General and me are one, having fought by his side in Mexico, and you shall be put through.’ So saying, we proceeded on our way, reaching in a few minutes the White House, the gardens of which we found transplanted with citizens—set here and there as thick as the gardener’s tulips. Before the circular carriage-way that sweeps to the great entrance, filed a rampart of moody faces. Mr. Mulligan said they were there for the study of Botany, he believed. Near the great portico stood the tall figure of a man plainly dressed in blackest broadcloth; he sauntered about as if contemplating some hopeless game of party. Another looked as if he had just sprung from a dressing-case to present himself before Grandpapa Marcy, in the hope of his personal appearance making stronger his claims to a very acceptable appointment. A third had a woe-begone smile on his face, and seemed studying the nature of a plant that would soon need a careful hand. When accosted concerning his musings, he said he had done battle right manfully for the democracy; and now Mr. Pierce’s only reply was, that his demands were of so hard a nature as to render it impossible for him to knock under. I told him that I would take the small points of Mr. Pierce’s ideas, and the strong points of Mr. Marcy’s, and from them try to work out the P’s and Q’s of his case.



## Page 25

“You don’t know if the General is at home, do you?” I inquired of him, with as much good intention as it were possible to put in a question. ‘Know nothing about him since he’s possessed himself of the White House!—My name is Major Sykes, of the Hard Shells, New York! I know as little of him as the country did before he was elected:—now and then I see him smoking a long nine while laying off at his ease, his dirty boots sticking out of the east window.’ Here I interrupted by asking if it were possible such charges could be true. ‘True!’ (exclaimed he, more gritty than ever), ‘true as daylight; the nation may bless itself if he stops there. Be careful, my down-east friend, be careful. He will sell you for a mess of corn for his black pig. Down-east will stand no chance until Down-south gets satisfactorily served: a wondrous change has come over the General since he left the granite hills of his native State, where he did the law trade in a small way. Now—Smooth, I think they call you, says he—if I be not much mistaken the General will create a Babylon of parties, the result of which will render it difficult to define his own position. If the General would but get up a *cross* between southern secessionists and northern free-soilers, how happily it would illustrate his policy.’ Claspings his hand, ‘Major Sykes,’ said I, ‘I pity you.’

“And so do I you,’ he replied quickly. ‘And when you come face to face with the General, think of Uncle Sam, but don’t forget yourself,—*that is the motto!*’ Saying thus, he started off, much after the fashion of a man who feels somewhat fudgy. Duly esteeming the position of a man who has that in his composition which gives power to manliness, and has higher motives than political for its aims, I made my way to the entrance of the White House, whistling Yankee Doodle as I went. The closer I got to the great doors the more violent became the crowd, until at last it ended in a jam of bodies. ‘Not so fast!’ exclaimed an anxious individual, whose eyes darted terror from their very sockets. ‘Gentlemen!—it’s my turn,’ re-echoes another half-stifled voice. ‘Was not I in the city seven weeks before the inauguration? and didn’t I carry everything for the General down in Pennsylvania?’ roars a tall individual, whose hat had received what may be called a shocking smash. Then they swayed forward in a serf of bodies. Now it poised, as if for breath; then again it swayed onward, threatening limb and wind. An exceedingly lean gentleman, with a hard brown face, and a patch over his left eye, cried out to the figure that stood bowing at the door, and demanded that his card be first taken to the General, whom he was kind enough to declare a right good fellow and a most intimate friend of his. ‘Perhaps you have a claim that way!’ retorts a sharp voice, which belonged to a sturdy figure well out at the elbows. He declared he had driven the whigs out of Old North Carolina—had carried strong



## Page 26

the, State for Pierce and posterity. Another individual near by, and who seemed inclined to doubt the assertion, suggested whether it were not more probable he carried all the *watering* establishments of that renowned state, seeing that his nose and eyes had stood the storm of spirits. No one ever heard of his carrying anything else! 'True,' rejoined another: 'he can drink his way through a democratic canvass, tell the most amiable lies, absorb any amount of chaffing, and stands less at swearing than any other man in the country: more than all, he can demolish the King's English at a stroke.' Such pulling, hauling, squeezing and yawning, 'cussin' and swearing—such cross-firing, crooked joking, and slang jibes, never before was seen in such perfect medley. In calmer moments, even the hard-fisted, iron-hearted, unterrified and never-washed democracy would have shed a few blushes over it. Old democracy was nowhere—Young America was triumphant; his sprouts were up and coming.

"Clear the way there!" I exclaimed, raising my voice to a point. 'Mr. Smooth will walk in, and himself present his card to the General.' The crowd looked amazed,—began to give way. 'Mr. Smooth, citizens,' continued I, motioning as if it were my intention to speechify, 'is something of a body—don't stand none of your small fritters. Mr. Smooth—like the principles of his party—was intended for cutting a figure in the world; he will unmask aristocracy, whip creation, and demonstrate the truth of manifest destiny.' Then they all shouted a fashionable hee-haw, by which they hoped to drive me off the track; but it was no go. 'Clar the way,' says I, 'or I'll split the crowd like a thousand of bricks!' I accompanied the word with a terrible look, at which they filed right and left as I chased square up to the inner door, where stood a stiff sort of person, whose clothes had grown on him—so tight were they. Surprised at my sudden approach, he first gave many nervous winks and blinks, and then added the silly airs of my Lord Spoonbill's menial, who, with hair buttered and powdered, knew but the servilities of flunkeyism. 'Is the General at home?' I demanded, adding before he had time to answer, that if he had a spare lucifer I'd have no objection to taking a smoke with him. With the consequence of a sleepy congressman, he inquired if my business with the General was special. He seemed to have the keeping of the General, much after the fashion of a keeper who guards the wild animal of a menagerie.

"You must send up your card: it's a question whether he is out of his morning gown and slippers, however!" Here the man looked doubtingly at the card, then gave his head a significant shake.



## Page 27

“General ain’t got so mighty big since he moved from New Hampshire?’ I inquired, as the fellow hesitated and again viewed me from the extreme points. ‘Now, Uncle Sam, to you I would say a word, hoping, in the spirit of a very good christian, that it may be received as wholesome advice. You, Sam, are forgetting that fame which should reflect us in future ages; you, Sam, are assisting those who would lay sullied hands on our pure republicanism—who would sink it in the political slough, and build over it the reeking bastard of a pitiable tyranny. Stretch out thy hand, Sam, that we may cease to cut before the world and the rest of mankind so sorry a figure. Sam! you have sent your little villains out upon the world; recall them ere they prove themselves great fools at our expense.’

“Well, to go back:—I began to push my way past the flunkey, when he summoned his brass and said I couldn’t come in—that I must slide myself into costume of the eight stripe! This to me was neither diplomatic nor polite. And being deemed impolite, according to the rules of our Young America, I placed the broad front of my knuckle-bones between his observators, (just to bring out his spunk), and demanded to know what they charged in Washington for a few knockings-down. To which he elongated himself, and with cool assurance said it had never before been his fortune to be put through the process—hence he was not prepared to figure up the amount. A place called limbo, he said, was just over at the corner; that I better keep an eye to it. This last saying gave the crowd outside furniture for a good laugh; they, the citizens, set to quizzing me about the hang of my breeches, which they were pleased to call diplomatic. This, I inferred, was in consequence of Grandpapa Marcy having gone to there was no knowing how deep into the breeches business, hoping thereby to prevent plain American citizens making very unplain apes of themselves when abroad. Indeed, neighbor Marcy would demonstrate to the world that cloth and diplomacy were two very different things. And this doctrine my Uncle Buck—all praise to his name—fully endorsed,—that is, he proved himself the only American minister not given to purloined crests and crimson cloth.

“Smooth is a nine-cornered citizen in the rough: he needs polishing down with a federal holly-stone before he can be admitted into good society:’ a voice like the creaking of a door resounded through the passage. Being a rough sort of citizen didn’t affect me as long as I had the straight up-and-down principles within. Well, I got up the go-a-head, and walked in steady. ‘T’wont do! citizen Smooth!’ interposes the flunkey, putting out his right hand as his face reddened into a blaze. ‘Young America must keep within bounds; he must conform to the established etiquette before he can see the General.’ Not liking to be out of sorts, I turned to him, and with the best kind of good nature told him not to come within grasping distance.



## Page 28

“Lord bless yer soul, Uncle Sam! I told him it was always good policy to keep civil to distinguished individuals, and treating his insolence as Captain Ingraham would an Austrian proclamation, I kept onward (that’s the motto!) until the passage-way opened into a gorgeously decorated hall, the motto on the door of which I surveyed until my head begun to ache. The General seems to have got him a snug and well-ordained establishment, thought I. But the fixings were rather more profuse than democracy in its simplicity had led me to suppose its taste appreciated. But there was no concealing the fact, that the democracy—its love of simplicity not excepted—did pay large sums now and then for showy fixtures and grand failures. The short-comings of the New Hampshire law-shop were extinct—elegance everywhere met the eye. While enjoying my meditations one flunkey approached another, telling him to keep a keen eye on that fellow—meaning me. Then a slim figure done up in dignity and tight clothes approached me with a polite bow: ‘Please remember this is the President’s mansion,’ said he, viewing my perpendicular as if he questioned whether my length was all real growth. Seeing that the establishment belonged to Uncle Sam, I assured him he was a little too impertinent.

“‘Now, neighbor!’ says I to the citizen, don’t deceive yourself by supposing the General has got his aristocracy up like this before he has lodged three months in the White House. I’m an independent citizen; come to put some straight policy into the General, who, with the assistance of his grind-stone man, Fourney, unfortunately has got everything into a twist. My name (sometimes they call me Squire) is Solomon Smooth. It don’t matter what they call me now, for be it known, ye men of titles, all the fishermen in our district have become judges and generals. This is the result of that necessity that makes negro-drivers of the south captains and majors. ‘But the President,’ said he, ‘has got such a fearful load of business on his hands this morning, it will be impossible he can see Mr. Smooth, nor are the apartments in a state to be seen by visitor—’ ‘Always in the suds!’ I interrupted. ‘No! that ain’t it,’ he continued, half trembling of fear; ‘but the President is new, nor yet has got into the straight way of doing crooked business.’

“‘Never mind that,’ replied I, ‘Smooth’s an independent citizen, who must not be interfered with while taking a turn round the establishment: he neither stands on ceremony nor political point-making.’ The fact was, Mr. Smooth had a very wholesome hatred of the nonsense of ceremony, and always pitied that complacency of Uncle John Bull who, like a well-worn and faithful pack-horse, never flinched under the heavy burden of that precious legacy called royal blood, which, said blood, was fast absorbing the vital blood of the nation. May our Union always be spared the degradation of such blood!



## Page 29

“The fellow, seeing I was not to be outdone, gave it up for a bad job, and contented himself with following me here and there, keeping a fixed eye on my motions, as if he feared I was going to become enamoured of some of Mr. Pierce’s chambermaids, which said commodity was acknowledged to be very pretty, and much admired by Jones, who did the fashionable at Willard’s. It having been said that the General, like Jackson, would keep himself, I endeavored to persuade the fellow to show me his nook. He only shook his head and said it wouldn’t do: so I took a careless stroll through the loose apartments, and ceased only when my sight was gratified. ‘Well!’ says the flunkey, adding a deep sigh and a despairing shake of the head, ‘it’s no use trying to control this citizen; he’s of the fast school, without bowels.’

“‘You may believe it!’ returned I, advancing toward a broad circular stairway that wound downward far into the regions below, where I expected to find Fourney and Company holding the General down upon the grindstone, while Uncles Caleb and Jeff turned, and Marcy stood by to say when enough of the rough was got off. ‘There! in my soul he’s going down into the kitchen!’ The fellow bawled out as I passed down, and soon disappeared, saying it was just the winding way I sought; and, though the things to be seen in the vortex to which it led might be dangerously dear to the nation, the proof would at least be convincing. On I went, the way darkening as I advanced.

### CHAPTER VII.

MR. SMOOTH PENETRATES THE DARK CONFINES OF MR. PIERCE’S KITCHEN, WHERE HE FINDS THINGS SADLY CONFUSED.

“Down, down, down, went, groping my way (significant of the General’s policy) through a long dark passage, whence came a rancorous stench, strong enough to kill cats and doubtful democrats. ‘Keep the right hand way for the kitchen: General is in there, assisting in the making of a monster stew. Work your course through the smoke—you may be sure Mr. Pierce is in the thickest cloud, though over the smallest stew-pan,’ a voice echoed, as if broken on the winds. ‘All right!’ I muttered, confronting on my way the still stronger odour of the sickening steam. My intention was to have a political discussion with the cook (Fourney by name) and say a thing or two to the General; for I had got a sort of cross-grained notion into my head that he was compounding a grand stew for the black pig with the horns. Meanwhile my stomach said it would have no objection to join the General over a good breakfast. Presently I scented the frying of fish, which betold that I was on the right track. But lo! as I was about to open a great door that led into where the fussing and frying was going on, a voice screamed out—‘Visitors are forbidden these premises!’ Here was a pretty kettle of political fish. ‘Much you know about it!’ I replied testily, and turning saw nothing but fog and confusion. Faith and energy being the two great pillars of human progress, I summoned them to my aid, and pressed onward, determined to see for myself who regulated the culinary. This resolution was adopted solely on the ground that the General had repudiated his

responsibility to the people, and joined hands with those who eat up all the loaves and little fishes.



## Page 30

“Mr. Smooth, on behalf of Young America, esteemed the having positive proof of how Mr. General Pierce kept his kitchen things a duty he could not forego, and upon the strength of which he presented himself to the august culinary cabinet, which he found enveloped in a dense cloud. As I passed the great door, a fat man from Florida, who filled that office of steady habits, the doorkeeper, said Mr. Smooth, which he read on my card, was decidedly impertinent; the more so because neither of the old grey-back parties had ever troubled themselves about the kitchen fixings; that the present was an innovation he was sure Mr. Pierce would resent by the withholding of appointments. I left him to his opinion, and delved my way through the smoke, until I began to think I had lost myself, and instead of Mr. Pierce on the grindstone found a lower region of unlimited extent—so murky and dismal was the place. They said it didn’t use to be so! Such fritter frying; such johnny-cake baking; such chowder making, and flounder frying! Nearly a dozen fine buxom-looking, corn-fed females (*helps*),—such as Vermont only can grow, were stuffing and stewing, and beating and battering, and themselves seeming on the eve of dissolution. They evinced alarm at my presence, but I told them not to be scared, inasmuch as I was an intimate acquaintance of the General, for whom I carried Cape Cod. On the left side of the kitchen there stood at a great deal table an aged maid whose mien was somewhat fidgety. This visible nervousness was increased with the labour necessary to prepare the ponderous pile of soft dough-nuts she worked upon; which, she said, when ready (though of little substance) were intended to satisfy the Down-easters, who never expected much, and seldom got anything. I pitied the poor old lady, for she seemed well worn. She declared it was pinching times in the kitchen—that is, her part of it. She prepared a deal of little niceties for the peace-loving North: but, the General was so pinching with matters on that side of the house, and had become so enamoured of the black pig! This voracious brute demanded everything, and got what he demanded—even got us into a deal of trouble. Indeed, it had been said that all the swill in the country wouldn’t satisfy him—he would seek abroad for more. ‘Needn’t be afraid, old lady,’ said I, edging up to her in a polite sort of way: ‘Smooth won’t harm nobody. The New Englanders think well of the women—they do!’ Here I gave the old lady my hand, and shook her’s right heartily. ‘Why,’ I continued, ‘there’s three Women’s Rights Societies down Massachusetts way, any one of which can start a breeze at pleasure—blow the men all into thunder! I say, old lady, better join one of them—pay fifty cents, and blow the men all into political rags. Musn’t take what I say amiss; but you looks as if you could do some blowing: the General standing much in need of that article, why not volunteer? The General is going it pretty fast now, but just get the Women’s



## Page 31

Rights Societies to blow him a little, and he'll go fast enough for any Young American party out.' After leaving the old woman, who said she was nearly related to General Cass, I went politely to the other girls, bidding them, one after another, a square down good-morning, ending with a social chat and a smile for them all. On the opposite side of the smoky kitchen stood the grim figure of a nigger wench, as big as the north side of a Dutch lighthouse, and as saucy as Benton's goat. The way she was making the wool fly over a sas-pan as big as old Zack Coffin's ile kettle was a caution to nervous folks. 'What on earth have ye got in that, eh?' I inquires, peeping over the side into the half-scalding foam.

"'What business is that to you?' sounds, like thunder rolling away in the distance, from t'other side the cauldron. Looking up almost dumb-founded I espied the hard phiz of the General, in dim outline through the fog and steam, stirring away at a massive ladle.

"'Pierce! Lord love yer soul—is it you?' says I, my feelings rising into a rhapsody of affection for him: 'Give us yer hand.'

"'Yes, it's me; just come round here if you can see your way through,' says he; and I fumbled my way round, and got him by the hand, and had a hearty good shake, just for old acquaintance sake.

"'But what in the name of Columbus are you doing here?' I inquired, touching him on the elbow, significantly.

"'Well!' he answers, rather undecidedly, 'just helping prepare this pot of mixture for the black pig.' He kept on moving his big ladle with one hand and throwing in additional feed with the other, from a bucket that stood close by.

"I inquired of the General where he kept so dangerous an animal, and was told in the most complacent manner that he ran all about, was as ravenous of power as the gentleman of those lower regions we hear so much about is of sinners; that he demanded all the country's swill. Here the General threw into the cauldron another sprinkling of grits, which he said was to complete the pot of homony. It was merely the daily feed of the black pig, which the colored female assisted the General in preparing. The General seemed very good-natured, and commenced a mathematical description of the ingredients of the mixture, when suddenly there came a fierce blow from behind, which well nigh tilted him deep into the foaming liquid. I grabbed the broad expanse of his nether garments, while the wench screamed, and was only quieted when she found him safe under her broad lee. A deep sonorous voice responded:—'Stir quicker in the feed!' I turned to see from whence it came, and who had dealt thus unmercifully with the General, when behold! there stood this hideous animal. With fourteen horns he incessantly used, and two just growing, he hoped in time to use; with a back of thorns



he ever and anon threatened all who came near him; with a tail of poison he defiantly lashed, and a wicked eye that sought objects afar off—he was the most pertinacious brute unchained. Moreover he had a snout like a ploughshare, with which he had frequently driven Mr. Pierce to the wall.



## Page 32

“Add more grits!’ again the brute growled out, as if alike unhappy with himself and those around him. The voice had scarcely delivered its command, when Mr. General Pierce, as undecided as wanting in vigor of intellect, turned gently round, patted the hideous monster on the head—said he would do all he could to pacify him, though to appease his discontent seemed impossible. Indeed, it was a fact that notwithstanding much of the swill intended for the whiter portion of the litter was sacrificed to this demanding brute, he illustrated his gratitude by threatening to swallow Mr. Pierce into the bargain. This was most unfortunate, seeing how much had been done to transplant the breed to foreign lands.

“Mr. Smooth felt that for a President to be thus driven to extremes was indeed an unenviable position. I told him I thought Young America would do something, and, with a little advice concerning his principles, passed on through the smoke and foam until I confronted Uncle Jeff and Cousin Guth, both hard at work over a blazing fire, frying a monster fish. Uncle Jeff’s apron looked as if he did most of the greasy work, while Guth looked on and directed the turns—now and then whispering a word to the French cook, who with sparkling eye, and oval olive face, and hair so glossy, black, and curly, was dexterously compounding a luscious sauce. ‘Going it on the strong!’ said I, giving Uncle Jeff a significant wedge under the shorts as he was about to let the grease in the stew-pan fuzzle. Guth, who at the moment commenced dredging in a little more pepper, and a little more butter, and a small sprinkling of salt, said they had been trying to cook this old fish for there was no knowing how many years, all to no purpose; but now that the arts of the very best French cook in the country had been secured he was sure to be done brown. Here he smiled and turned to the cook in question, who bowed with such grace! Such a bow in the presence of ladies would have secured his reputation. Indeed, the said cook was extremely neat of person, though rather below the middle stature, and was well thought of among lawyers and ladies, who declared they liked his graces better than his gravies. ‘He’s of the right stripe—a fillibuster cook!’ said Jeff, exultingly, as Guth gave the coals another stir. ‘This is a Cuba flounder,’ interposed Guth. ‘You see, Mr. Smooth, the General is exceedingly partial to this sort of flounder, but he doesn’t understand the quality of dressing requisite to the cooking it—he must be done with native sauce. It is necessary he should be fried in a southern griddle, with plenty of native sauce—an article for which this cook of ours is not celebrated.’

“Well, gents!’ rejoined I, ‘if you do brown that old fellow this season I’ll knock under. However, don’t be bashful about extending Smooth an invitation to breakfast: understand, he is rather fond of a good fish hash, which he thinks it is the profession of your French cook to do up.’



## Page 33

“Lord bless you!” quickly interrupted Uncle Jeff, ‘being a good Down-east democrat, your wish shall be gratified.’ Then in great good nature he told me just to step along, and a little further into the dark smoke I’d find Grandpapa Marcy and Uncle Dib, exerting their wondrous energies over a stew they were puzzled to get to the right substance. Knowing that their good advice was much better as example than the result of their actions, I wended my way along, leaving Guth and Jeff to their frying, and soon came upon the two old worthies, busily employed over stews of the most incomprehensible ingredients. ‘That,’ spoke Grandpapa Marcy, as I approached within hearing distance, ‘is the real democratic stew, it will cement hard shells and soft shells into one strong conglomerate mass.’ He pointed to a punch-bowl held between their legs—for they were seated on the floor—and containing a mixture they stirred with spoons containing the Tammany-hall mark. For some time I stood contemplating the venerable appearance of these two, nor could I resist a smile at the singular occupation they had so readily adopted. Uncle Dib seemed happy, and evidently had a keen sense of what the consistency of the stew must be to make the flounder palatable. Grandpapa’s countenance, nevertheless, wore an air of deep anxiety. He had undertaken the management of the most unruly set of cooks that ever infested the kitchen of a respectable gentleman; and they had made a shocking mess. And, too, Grandpapa, was unhappy; his clothes bore seedy marks, and his breeches were in such a plight—it really excited our pity. I called his attention to an unmentionable rent in a conspicuous place, but he seemed careless about it—said it was of no consequence—and that Uncle Sam was a good old soul, and always paid the tailor—he knew from experience. Suddenly I heard the formidable negro-wench raising her voice in admonition. She was scolding the General, who still kept stirring in the homony grits for the black pig. Then a noise came through the foam and smoke as of one in trouble. ‘Faster, faster!’ it spoke, ‘stir in more grits!’ Then followed a loud splash and a deathlike shriek; alarm and consternation spread throughout the building. From the cauldron came the cry. Grandpapa moved for a moment, as was his custom, declared the voice to be no other than that of the General himself. Dib agreed (‘There’s trouble!’ he exclaimed) and both sprang to their feet, and with anxious countenances hastened to the rescue, Marcy crying out, as he passed Jeff and Guth, ‘Stick by the flounder, boys! Stand firm; don’t give in until he’s well cooked; we’ll save the General—you dig in the basting.’ The boys, as Grandpapa called them, were crowding the charcoal finely. Always having a taste for seeing what was going on, I kept close at Dib’s heels, and soon saw through the grim smoke where the trouble was. The black pig had got the General poised by the nether part of his breeches, on his Virginia horn, and was having a nice



## Page 34

little game of shuttle-cock with him, just for his own amusement, while his executive victim shrieked most piteously, expecting every succeeding surge would land him beneath the surface of the boiling mass. The old nigger wench had fainted at the sight, and lay sprawled on the floor, as Marcy, making a grab at Mr. Pierce's breeches at a moment when the savage brute was giving a last vault ere he landed his victim into the scalding homony, tripped his toe and brought his length upon the floor beneath the pig's hind legs. 'It's all gone!' exclaimed the General; and in another minute nothing was seen save the soles of his boots protruding above the boil-surface. The surly brute, having generously moistened Grandpapa Marcy's head, stood, his fore-feet on the rim of the cauldron, gazed after his struggling victim, and held his head high aloft in triumph. This brought Uncle Dib to the rescue. After raising Grandpapa, with limbs extended, they drew forth the half-cooked body, reeking with the black pig's swill, and laid it on the kitchen floor, the ungrateful quadruped walking victoriously away. Satisfied that I had seen enough for one day, I sought my way back to the National, where I contemplated the next move necessary to my mission.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### MR. SOLOMON SMOOTH TAKES A FISH BREAKFAST.

"Well, Uncle Sam, I reckoned I'd seen enough of the kitchen arrangements; so I left them scraping the General—that is, getting off the injured outside, in order to see what really he was made of, and what he had beneath the undefinable cover. When in Washington, there's nothing like going ahead; and if you can look a man into respect for you, so much the better. Dignitary or no dignitary won't do; you must always profess to be a distinguished individual. Well, on the strength of the invitation extended by Jeff—to take a fish breakfast on the following morning, when it was expected the flounder would be done brown, I again repaired to the White House, and after pushing my way through all kinds of passages and doorways, found myself in a gorgeous sort of establishment.

"Your lookin for somethin, I take it?" said a trim figure, whose face rather bordered on the brassy.

"Well! I reckon I am. Can you tell a stray citizen where the General hangs out in the morning?" I replied, as he confronted me and paused.

"Sartin!' he rejoined, interrupting me, and at the same time looking very sociable, as if he wanted to have a talk on politics. Nevertheless, it was getting close upon the hour of breakfast; so he takes me by the arm, and stepping through a frickazeed passage up to a large door which opened into a ponderously furnished room, 'I'll take your card, sir!' continued he, with a low bow and a motion of the hand to sit down.

“Didn’t have a card at hand, but chalked down Mr. Solomon Smooth, from Cape Cod, on a piece of thick paper per, that suited all the purposes.



## Page 35

“Mr. Smooth belongs to the Young American party, if I mistake not?’ he returned, with a polite bow.

“You better believe that, citizen!’ says I, and off he goes, soon disappearing through a door at the other end of the room. While he was gone, I thought it wouldn’t be a bad idea to take a survey of the premises. So, lighting my cigar, I began at the top end first. Such looking-glasses, sofas, carpets—so much fashion and flummery, that nobody could tell what utility it contained, I never had seen before. Tell you what it is, Uncle Sam, we have an expensively queer way of representing our republican simplicity! As I was squinting about, in comes the General, looking as bright as a newly-coined cent. Running up to me, with hand extended, and exulting with joy, he spake: ‘Great kingdom, Smooth!—is it you?’ And then he shook my hand as if he never would let it go.

“‘Tis me too!’ says I, giving him a significant touch on the elbow. ‘Didn’t expect to see you looking so bright, General—rather a bad kettle of fish that you unfortunately got into yesterday, eh?’—

“Oh no—things like those are mere trifles; hardly worth mentioning amidst the current turmoil of the day. That black pig is an ungrateful brute, though, I must confess in confidence,’ the General replied, touching me on the arm.

“He sunk you in the very swill you were cooking for him, eh?—petulant brute!’ I rejoined.

“Well, Smooth,’ said he, ‘don’t let us say any more about that; I was deceived—most egregiously! How are all the Young Americans down your way—the real go-ahead stripe?’ he inquired anxiously: and we both laughed heartily to see one another. ‘They’re all bright ends up, General,’ said I. ‘General!’ (I touched him on the shoulder) ‘taint more nor three years since we used to go fishing in old Sam Peabody’s pond; hain’t forgot it, I reckon?’

“Not I, Smooth. Give us yer hand for old acquaintance sake! No change of power or circumstances could make me forget old associations. Fortune may change, my feelings never; they have been and shall always be with the people.’ The General couldn’t keep the dignity on, to save his life; he was not born to do so!

“Give us yer hand, General,’ I demanded in reply; ‘right glad to see you, and to know that old New Hampshire’s granite hills have not faded from your memory, nor been absorbed in the quantity of swill it seems necessary to provide for the black-pig. But, I say, Frank, what harlequin-like changes politics take in a republic—now and then! Two years ago, and who’d a’ thought a’ seeing you here? ‘Stonished you yourself, didn’t it? Scarcely expected to brush old General Scott’s fuss and feathers into a cock’d up hat,



eh? There's nothing like a man keeping his mouth shut when he's got others to do the fighting for him; you know that, don't you, General?'

"Mr. Smooth is always asking some strange questions, or making some queer observation!



## Page 36

“Now, General, I reckon how you didn’t get the hang of this ’ere establishment all on a sudden? Seems to me how I’d like to be President of these United States about two months, merely to have the satisfaction of straightening the cross-grain of political parties; they have got so so crooked now-a-days.’ The President just then said he would take my hat, and hoped I make myself quite at home. As everything seemed so comfortable, I had not the slightest objection. ‘Now, Smooth,’ he reiterated, spreading his length on a magnificent sofa, ‘I am anxious to hear how the Young American party progresses down your way; and you must tell me all about it. I intend to give you a roving commission as my minister in general.’

“‘I’ll do that,’ I replied, and just when I was getting the story fixed square, he interrupted me by saying—‘One moment, Mr. Smooth; we are going to have a flounder breakfast—it’s the same old fellow you saw Uncle Jeff and Guth cooking yesterday morning,—they’ve got him pretty well browned—You must join us.’

“‘Well,—have no objection; but tell us, General, how is the missus?’

“‘Right well, Smooth; she’ll be delighted to see you.’

“‘And so will I to see the missus; I know’d her when she warn’t bigger nor Cousin Obadiah’s Jane, and didn’t think no more about being Mrs. President of these United States nor my missus.’ In answer to which, the General said a respectable man might as well be President as anything else—we all know how to be. Here we joined arms, and like jolly fellows of a stripe, took a few turns up and down the apartment. ‘Well! here’s pure democracy,’ thought I to myself. Taking Mr. President Pierce’s arm doubled my independence—made me feel that I was the left wing of his brightest hope. Having talked over a few small matters of foreign policy, we sauntered together into one of the largest, and longest, and handsomest breakfast rooms this side of Texas. A table of great length stretched across its centre, upon which was arranged in profusion, Georgia potatoes, New Hampshire bacon, Virginia oysters and fried eels, South Carolina rice cakes, and Cape Cod fish balls—all strong incentives to the stomach of a hungry politician. Trim waiters stood round, like statues tailored and anxiously waiting a guest’s nod. As I cast a bird’s eye glance down the scene, in popped the General’s missus, all calm, and with an air of motherly gentleness that inspired me with lofty reflections on woman’s mission. As she approached with her hand extended, and such a sweet smile on her face, I could not resist a salutation thus earnest, and grasping it, gave it a good, warm-hearted shake. She said great was her joy at seeing Mr. Smooth—plain Solomon Smooth. She could not feel more joy were I an Emperor—no not even were I a governor of Hungary, who, having lost the chance of winning a diadem, would Uncle Sam lent him aid to regain it. In another minute the gong sounded, the great doors at the opposite end



## Page 37

of the hall opened, a train of serious-faced gentry entered, and as unceremoniously took seats. Mr. Smooth being put down number one, took a seat beside the missus. After a blessing had been dispensed, the conversation turned on politics and potatoes. A potent-looking individual, who sat not far down the table, said the Union was known by its magistracy, which being an established fact, should make it incumbent that no chief of this great and growing nation leave the federal chair unmarked by some bold stroke. 'Good!' says I, 'Smooth always went in for bold strokes—they are just the things to make outsiders knock under—' Here I was just getting up to make a speech on behalf of manifest destiny, when a gent who ought to have been voted into the army as a regular cried out:—'Keep cool! keep cool! Mr. Smooth.'

"Scarcely had he ceased speaking, when Uncle Caleb Grandpapa Marcy, Cousin Guth, and good-natured Uncle Dib, and the grindstone-man, Fourney,—all dressed in bright aprons, and white ghost-like night-caps—made their appearance, tugging and puffing at a hand-bier, on which lay the much-talked-of flounder. Jeff, who walked in front with a drawn sword, wheezed, and Grandpapa grunted, and Dib said, 'Carry a steady hand, boys!' and Guth said he would bear up his part, which was the tail part. Staggering along under the load, they brought forth in solemn procession the flounder, and after a good deal of bad diplomacy, laid him, like a stuffed whale, on the table. The General was not quite certain about the catch of this flounder; but as there was nothing like having a dash at things now-a-days,—'here's go into it!' he exclaimed. 'I don't believe that fish is cooked enough,' retorted John Littlejohn, a statesman of very elastic capacity, who spoke for Uncle Bull, on t'other side of the big pond.

"Looking as if he were about making a longe into him, hit or miss, the General seizes up the big carving-knife (generally used by Grandpapa Marcy) and asks who will have the first bit? The pall-bearers, still retaining their bright aprons and white caps, had taken seats at the table, among the guests. 'It's all for me!' mumbles a sullen voice; no one knew from whence it came. 'It's all for me!—who are you?' reiterated Mr. Pierce, kicking under the table: 'I believe in my soul it's the black pig, who always pursues unto the death what he considers his!' True enough, there the savage brute was, lashing everybody's legs, and threatening destruction with his wicked mouth. No one knew how he got into the dining-room; but where the good Uncle Sam had anything to eat or give, there he was sure to be, demanding more than his share. After a hard tussle, Grandpapa and Uncle Caleb succeeded in driving him out of the room; albeit, it was only for a time. The unsatisfied animal was always keeping Uncle Sam in a fuss, and the folks about the White House in an uproar. 'That critter is always crying 'Me first!' rejoined Uncle Caleb, who, having lost his white cap in the tussle with the black pig, looked funny indeed.



## Page 38

“A Cuba flounder!” exclaims the General, who continued to work diligently, his face flushed as crimson, but I as yet he had failed to secure the first slice. It was evident he had made a stroke too bold, and would now be compelled to draw back a little—perhaps to take a few more lessons in the diplomacy of carving. And while the General was trying to get the knife into the neck part, the critter opened its mouth, and gasping looked as if it thought some of swallowing a whole cabinet of philibusteroes.

“The brute ain’t cooked yet—if it don’t open its mouth!” proclaimed the General, the hair almost standing on his head, as he reclined back in fright.

“The critter’s going to be generous, I do believe!” chimed in Grandpapa, whose white cap, during the moment of excitement, had fallen over into Mrs. Dobbin’s plate; from whence that good-natured lady, in the moment of anxiety, removed it to her lap, and ere she had been served found it near her pretty lips, under the mistaken impression of its being a napkin. Grandpapa, discovering his loss, politely developed the dear lady’s mistake.

“Tell you what it is General; you’ll have to be mighty careful, or that Cuba flounder will swallow all the shiners in Uncle Sam’s brass box without yielding anything in exchange,” I insinuated.

“Not a bit on’t!” says Uncle Jeff, going off into a state of excitement: ‘Just lend me the carver; I’ll put him through;’ and seizing the knife from Mr. Pierce’s hand, and the steel from Grandpapa’s, he was just on the point of making a thrust into the fish, when his mouth again expanded, his fins fluttered, and out came a long roll of paper. ‘What on earth is that?’ inquired the astonished General, as Jeff unconsciously let the knife fall in fright, and Grandpapa gave an anxious look toward the door, as if to measure the distance between it and his chair,—while John Littlejohn applying his glass to his eyes, squinted seriously at it. ‘He’s not just done enough for you yet, gentlemen; I think you had better let him stand awhile,’ remarks our Cousin John, rather coolly. ‘You cannot republicanize him, unless you change his head and heart; I can tell you that, my good fellows.’

“Uncle Jeff, at Grandpapa’s bidding, took up the roll of paper, the text of which Mr. Pierce requested him to read. ‘A protest, your Excellency!’ said Jeff, the paper vibrating in his nervous hand. ‘It says, this is to notify Brother Jonathan, that the extreme largeness of his appetite, insatiate in its demands for my body, shall never be gratified therewith. You are far-seeing, have grown powerful, and are rather a good sort of fellow, Jonathan; but I’m not quite ready to say I should prefer either to belong to your household or provide your table with dainty dishes. The fact is, Jonathan, and you know it, when disposed to think on the square, we are not prepared to denounce our league loyalty and come over to you; common sense might have convinced you of this fact. The world protests against your forcing propensities in this little affair between us. For more than two centuries have I remained at peace; let me so continue. I admit that



kings, queens, and courtiers, have feasted on my fatlings, and even discomfited me, and caused much discontent among my people; but even they would rather bear the ills that be than fall victims to your black pig's will.'



## Page 39

“Well!’ interrupted Uncle Jeff, looking suspiciously about the table, ‘if he ain’t the toughest old flounder I ever did see!’

“Shouldn’t be surprised if you found it so!’ replied the fish, his spacious jaws opening, and the end of another parchment slowly protruding from his mouth. ‘Read that! I must get somebody to help me to eject this instrument.’ The General wrested it from its mouth, turned it over and over, and tried and retried to read it. ‘It’s a protest from John, my Uncle, John Bull and Johnny Crappo, which says:—‘We, the said John and Louis, having entered into a sublime alliance with our sublime brother of the East, by which one great and mighty power has been concentrated, do humbly beg Mr. President Pierce (for whom we now have and ever hope to entertain the very highest esteem) that he take heed how he dips his fingers into other people’s political pies. And, further, while exhibiting so earnest a desire to appropriate the choicest delicacies of his neighbors to the cravings of his black pig, to be a little more modest. Now, we, the undersigned Louis and John, whose names—in alliance have become mightiest among the mighty, are duly convinced of the many inconsistencies, irregularities, and breaches of *good* faith, together with the many petty acts of tyranny, the mother of this Antilla flounder has been guilty of, to her own disgrace. But greatness should be known by its forbearance with the weak; hence we should bear and forgive. Yea, we admit that her footprints are marked with blood—that her history has numberless pages written in blood—that her arrogance and avarice have blotted out her national virtue, and now work like a battering-ram her downfall. Yet, as arrogance is but another name for weakness, is it not better to brush off than kill the wasp? The principle herein contained we have, in the sublimity of our power, adopted as an example to the nations of the earth. Jonathan! we like your amiability; we esteem you as a keen fellow, who, large of trade, and wise in the ways of a cheap government, may well boast a happy people: bridle, then, the audacity of that southern ambition, lest it betray you into unforeseen difficulties. Let peace be the guardian of that commerce now teeming its grandeur and wealth on your shores; and in all kindness, Mr. Pierce, do we speak, when we say,—look to those *things* you send into foreign lands to represent the quiet grandeur of our institutions: send the gentleman whose conduct may be a means to great ends, for ruffians leave their little stains behind.”

“Well!’ exclaimed the General, his large square face reddening with anxiety, as he turned to Uncle Dib and Grandpapa, ‘I should call this the insolence of sublime power. Let them try their sublime power on this side of the Atlantic!’ Here the General gave his head a significant toss, and wiped his lips as he added,—‘*Young America* can whip the three.’ This pithy speech being received with great applause, he reached



## Page 40

over his hand, and was about taking mine, when I warmly embraced his, saying—'Give me you yet, General! Messrs. John, Louis & Co., having consolidated their sublime power, must not entertain the idea of making a menace over here. We have no means of questioning the legitimate qualities of this sublime joint-stock company; but we would advise its keeping decidedly cool about matters this side of the big water, lest its stock get to a very low-water mark. This old flounder, nevertheless, is a hard case for cooks, nor in my opinion will he be made softer by that celebrated French cook of yours, whose process is that of too suddenly piling on the charcoal. In fact, I believe it not untrue that in political cooking a Frenchman is more a man of muss than method. This you, General, might have known before you engaged him to cater for Spanish appetites. In truth, (it must be told now and then, General), that black pig you so fondly nurse, and which you can neither tame nor make grateful, is sacrificing us to his poisonous litter. And, too, he is dividing his own pen; and when pigs become divided among themselves, refuse to eat out of one trough, and threaten to devour each other, they are sure to become an easy prey to the bore of fractional sovereignty.' With the exception of the General, all listened attentively while I spoke: he, exhibiting little concern, arose with the calmness of moonlight, and was about to make some remarks, as the flounder again opened wide his mouth, which produced a pause. 'You are right,' joined in the flounder; 'that black pig's love of territorial feasts knows no bounds, nor will he stop at that point where justice sets the limit; he will continue his insatiate trade until common sense and generous sentiment interpose and exterminate him. Here is another paper for you—read it! It is the protest of the people of free, enlightened, and happy New England: they protest against being swallowed up in your black pig's bowels!' Again the flounder mechanically closed its mouth.

"And my old governor across the water will not view with indifference this black brute's ever-threatening disturbances. He watches long, waits patiently, moves cautiously, but enters upon the execution of his plans with monstrous method,' interrupted Littlejohn, who spoke on behalf of his nation, and for the *status quo* of nationalities in general.

"I say, neighbor,' rejoins Mr. Sam Blowaway, a leader of the national Young American party, 'pears how, if your old chap over there attempts that game, he'll get himself boots deep into a scrape he'll not find it so easy to claw out on.' And Sam got right up, and looked brimstone at him, straight across the table.

"I'm methodical, but not easily repulsed: impulsive acts do not constitute valor,' returned John, rising coolly and dispassionately.

"Grandpapa Marcy now got up to say a word or two, but Mr. Pierce had the floor, and demanded—Order! Order, gentlemen!—Order in the White House! My boys want to get me into trouble, but I feel that I can yet regulate my own household!' he rejoined, with a peremptory tone that excited surprise.



## Page 41

“Yes,” replied the flounder; ‘I say so too. If you do not keep quiet, and live in harmony among yourselves, I will be the means of swallowing you.’ Just at this moment the black pig, with savage grunt, bounded fearlessly into the room and upon the table, where he confronted the flounder with open mouth, overturned the table, smashed all the crockery and pewter, made the uproar and confusion complete. The pig and flounder fell upon each other, wrestled among the wreck, nor ceased until, like Kilkenny cats, they had nearly devoured their substance. Such a chaos of excitement as followed! Grandpapa and Uncle Jeff ogled one another in fear and trembling, women fainted in the arms of gallant men; the General, covered with fish gravy, cut the more sorry figure, as with thunderstruck countenance he raised his hands to protest to the nation. Meanwhile the guests suddenly disappeared, and Grandpapa seriously damaged the broad disc of his unmentionables; while Uncle Caleb, shaking his sides with laughter, stood his comely figure in the doorway, the thumb of his right hand to his nasal organ, and his fingers making five angles, quizzing the General in his dilemma. Esteeming it rather an ugly situation for Mister President Pierce, for whose dignity I had a special regard, I picked myself up, made an apology, bowed myself to the great door, and left the General to his pig. ‘What a mess you have made of it!’ thought I, and straightaway ascended the cupola to watch the nation’s emotion.

## CHAPTER IX.

MR. SMOOTH CIRCUMNAVIGATES THE GLOBE.

“When the nations of Europe give themselves up to the sword, let us aggrandize ours with the arts of peace. This is my talisman. In that commerce which is our nation’s pride there is more of greatness than war can give, more of power than armaments can command. It would be well, Uncle Sam, if you pondered over this; because, having your pockets well lined, war could supply numberless valiant sons ready to do the emptying of them. This was a private opinion, which forced itself upon my mind as I (having received a commission as minister in general to Mr. Pierce) engaged passage in a spacious balloon, with which to navigate this little globe of ours, and report here and there on the condition of our international difficulties. Indeed, some of those difficulties required looking after. And as no man should permit his dignity to take the upward turn when a penny may be turned, I reckoned on turning what I learned to the very best account. That you spend your money very foolishly, Sam, is as true as sunrise; but more than that, you intrust your honor (which is more precious than your gold) to those who are seen abroad only to misnomer us. To counteract this state of things is the primary object of my mission round the globe.



## Page 42

“This I was anxious to impress on General Pierce; but he seemed to have a wavering bump on his head, and not seeing his way clear, came to the peculiar conclusion that Mr. Smooth had a very novel head, full of novel notions. But he told me, by way of becoming enlightened on the affairs of other nations, to keep a bright look-out, note down the items, and see where we could turn the go-ahead of our people to account. As most of our small disputes were with Mr. John Bull, who was prone to keep open any quantity of very vexatious questions, Mr. Pierce thought it good policy to make John Littlejohn a fellow voyager with me. It was not a bad idea, seeing that Mr. Pierce had an inward hatred of the Britishers, nor thought a war with them would be the most unpopular thing in the world, inasmuch as it would attach to him the Young American party, which said party might in gratitude render good service to his re-election. Upon this principle Littlejohn’s company was acceptable; and when he joined me at the National we had a social bit of a chat together about the matter. John was not a bad fellow when once you knew how to take him, but he had qualities of character which at times seemed at variance with what he would have us believe were his straightforward principles. It was this trait of character, at times defying analysis, we had to treat with most care, lest unconsciously it embroil us. My friend Palmerston might without prejudice be taken as an excellent representative of this unfortunate trait. ‘Now,’ says John, in a methodical sort of way, ‘there are, to be honest, (and acts will prove the truth of a principle), two great pirates in the world. You know that, Smooth, just as well as I do.’

“‘No I don’t,’ says I.

“‘But you do!’ he returns. ‘There’s your Uncle Sam: he will steal all territory adjoining his dominions,—in a good-natured sort of way, merely to work out the problem of manifest destiny. As for my old gentleman, Uncle John, why he has a dignified way of doing things, always plays the part of a bold gentleman, and when he joins a kingdom it is with a modesty so quiet and genteel. You needn’t shake your head, Smooth,—such are facts; nevertheless, they are both tenacious of their rights—a national trait of great value,—and will shed a river of human blood to gain a very small point on paper. Like two great gamblers, they are opposed to the principle of give and take, standing steadfastly by the *take*. Once they were father and son—thus, the inheritance may be pardoned; and when they quarrelled it was not to be expected the son would relinquish the traits so paternally bestowed. Now the parent is obstinate and the son ‘cute; but the son has an eccentricity that prompts him to outwit. Not unfrequently the father lets the son—just for peace sake—have his own way; but this letting him have his own way has inclined his heart rather to the ungrateful than otherwise. His demands are at times somewhat funny, and when made known surprise a world. And now that they are so firmly and extensively identified with each other in pursuits of the noblest character, would it not be a sin to quarrel?’ Thus spoke John, very complacently.



## Page 43

“As he got through, the negro produced some liquor, piping hot. To be good-natured, and keep cool, is one-half the battle; and to move those very desirable traits of our nature, we put a hot punch a-piece into the mentality of the inner man, smoked a couple of long nines, bowed compliments, and packed up our duds for the voyage. There was a great gathering where the balloon was blowing up; but Mr. John Littlejohn and me walked cordially down and took our seat, bundled in our traps, and sung out, ‘Cut away the strings, and let her go!’ I said I would steer for Uncle Sam, and John said he would steer for Mr. Bull; so, not feeling inclined to quarrel about the point, and knowing full well that the mother of constitutional governments (some facetiously called her the mother of constitutional incongruities) always liked to have the first trick at the wheel, we tossed coppers—after the fashion of good-natured diplomatists, when a large stake is at issue. ‘John!’ I enjoined, ‘let us keep calm, and put the point to a test that never fails!’ Here I gave him one of those pats on the shoulder so impressive, and pulled out a double-headed cent, like unto those so much in use in General Jackson’s time, when shaving decapitated the deposits he found himself mounted on the back of a brass jackass. ‘Here!’ I continued—‘Heads, I win; tails, you lose.’ To come the sharp over him in a more square sort of way, I gave him an unmoved look straight in the eye, as I twirled up the copper.

“‘I’ll take the chance,’ ejaculated John, and down came the other head. His countenance, you may be assured, wore a singular seriousness. The truth was, that John always had one strong idea in his head, and made a strong effort to keep that one straight, to the sacrifice of all the rest. Acting upon that axiom that so stimulated the wood-sawyer who expected to be President of the United States in a very few years, we cut away the fastenings, and having ascended high among the clouds, sailed from the mist heavenward to the blue arch above. Our position was not the most firm; but as Young America had the helm, and rather courted than feared danger, the result could not be doubted. Now and then Mr. John looked somewhat stern of countenance, and turned pale when I crowded the charcoal. ‘Be careful, Smooth,’ he lisped now and then, grasping my arm as he took a look below—‘Be careful; you know what a go-ahead sort of lot you are. Your party would think nothing of going to the d——I, if it were only with steam power.’ It was indeed a dangerous position for large men with small ideas; but as Young America was a small man with large ideas, the case became reversed. Well, we headed square for California, and proceeded at lightning speed, fast overtaking that old slow coach of refulgent light that has made sentimental the wild wisdom of the poet-world. Soon old Jacob’s face loomed out upon its broad disc, looking as good-natured as a Dutchman over a pot of lager beer. My friend



## Page 44

John seemed rather moody and dogged; however, we soon got within hailing-distance; and having provided myself with a speaking-trumpet—John having forgot his—I esteemed it good policy to, in a social way, have a small quantity of talk with Jacob, who, although a common sort of person, I felt assured must be well posted on matters and things concerning manifest destiny. We were running bow on, and at the moment I seized the trumpet for a blow, Jacob sung out—'Good morning!' just like a free and easy citizen, who had sense enough to be approached at any time without walling himself up in the dignity of that thing called a duke. His voice was like thunder, with reechoes for accents. 'Mind your helm!—you steer rather wild, there!' he spoke.

"Old feller! don't get into a pucker; there's not a mite of danger,' I returned. 'Just hold up a little, and let us have a bit of a talk!'

"Well, don't mind if I do,' good-naturedly returned the old man. So we hooked on to his establishment,—laid her aback in the wind, and, as the sailor would say, 'came to.'

"Who are you, anyhow?' continued Jacob, getting up and shaking himself.

"Well, I'm Young America (Jacob shook his head, doubtfully, at the name) and my friend here, is Cousin John, from across the water. We are going to take a view of state affairs around this little globe of ours, that we may report to General Pierce in particular.'

"Then you're from the States down yonder?' rejoined the old man.

"Just so!'

"Ah,—go-ahead fellers down there, they are! But they've got to mind their moves just about this time.'

"Seeing it's you, Jacob,—and knowing that you must be worn down with toil, s'pose we strike a trade in a small sort of way?' Jacob shook his head, and replied:

"Like your folks for their masterly energies, but rather not trade.'

"That won't do, old fellow: you must come out on the new principles of civilizations. Who knows that we may make an arrangement to annex your little establishment to these United States! Young America has, you see, yet to fulfil the functions of manifest destiny.'

"Don't, pray don't, bring your Young America about my dominions!' he exclaimed, interrupting just as John Littlejohn was about to speak.



“John spoke, inquiring if his preferences were not for him? He knew old Jacob would like to annex his dominions to Great Britain, seeing that he carried out his annexation in a quiet sort of way. Jacob laughed right out—laughed irresistibly; laughed as if he meant it for something. ‘To be honest with you, gentlemen, and I know you’ll excuse me for being out-spoken,—I want nothing to do with either of you. You’ll both steal territory; and as for you, Young America, take a word of honest advice—be contented with what has honestly fallen to you, covet not that which is thy neighbor’s, but improve what thou hast of thine own. At the same time, take particular care how thou sail in this very lofty atmosphere. Your manifest destiny may fall into martyrdom.’



## Page 45

“That’s right good advice, Uncle,’ said I, (interrupting him), but it would be better it did not smack so strong of that fogymism whose obstinate policy won’t let the progress of those United States come out. Anyhow, Jacob, seeing that you have got such a nice stock of territory, dotted with fascinating hills and plains, upon which good speculations can be made in starting a speculation in churches, as has become the fashion, doing a little in the tin business, laying a few railroads, and building up factory villages, we must have a treaty of commerce—at all events!’

“No! no! no! You’ve large inards, Jonathan; and your youngest son,—Young America, —has got such a pair of eyes! I’m afraid of him. No objection to joining in three cheers for Hail Columbia, almost any time; but save me from your claws. You’re both great pirates: pray be merciful to your neighbors, and spare me my Independence. Your little place down there is become troubled with wars and rumours of wars;—the shedding of innocent blood in streams at the caprice of imbecile princes, who make the bones and blood of their subjects the waste material with which to serve their incarnate ambition, tells me to beware. Beware of ambitious princes; the world would be well rid of them!’

“Like to hear you talk so, Uncle Jacob. Reckon how you’ve studied in a New England school! There the greatest power springs from the humble people. Anyhow, Jacob, since we can’t strike a trade, nor do a thing or two in the way of speculation, s’pose we take a drop of whiskey punch?’

“Can’t object to that,’ he returned.

“So, Littlejohn and me set about it, and in a very few minutes had a first-class punch brewed, of which old Jacob supped most lavishly. In fact, he liked it so well that I reckoned he had forgotten to stop drinking; and Littlejohn felt somewhat nervous lest the old fellow get fuddled and turn everything over. John reckoned I’d better give him a cold julep to wipe down with; but Jacob said he much preferred hot things, that his profession was quite cold enough. So, after we put the punches down, and smoked some cigars, and received some good advice about being careful how I proceeded, we loosened the strings and bid him good morning: it was coming faint daylight, and Jacob had to be jogging. Just as I was leaving, my heart felt kind a down-pressed to think what gorgeous territory he had spread out to a feller’s eyes, without the slightest chance of making an operation for a small portion of it—say just enough to get a foothold.

“Westward we went with breathless speed, soon losing sight of Jacob and his luminary. ‘You better reef down, Mr. Smooth. Should anything give way, and you tumble out and break your neck, the democracy would go into mourning,’ said Littlejohn, who had kept very quiet up to this time.

“Not a bit of it!’ I answered, ‘our democracy is like Parr’s Life Pills, enervating and elasticating. You may break its head, but you cannot kill;—it belongs to the heart, and springs from the laws of right.’ At this Littlejohn began to get dogged,—to shows signs



of very bad nature. Knowing this was most unprofitable to him I yielded indulgence. To be good-natured in cases of Emergency is a most valuable trait; and to whip a man for being ill-tempered, when nothing can be made at it, is most absurd.



## Page 46

“The world outside of the United States is inclined to believe American democracy something next to infernal—that it must have everything it sees, and turns everything it comes in contact with into dollars, cents, and republicanism. To such it is a mysterious power, moved by chemical agency. As for Littlejohn, he thought that in addition to our speculative spirit we should be governed by modesty, an example of which his forefathers had set us. This he recommended on the principle of a gentleman who keeps up his dignity, gaining one half his object through the influence of his mien. Many said this was the precise material General Pierce was most deficient in; and that if the General would preserve more dignity and less bluster his administration had been marked with results more in keeping with the true character of the nation. Old Uncle John could brag stoutly; but Jonathan was a magnificent player at the same game. I realised this as Littlejohn took a long look over our wonderful West, and asked by what singular process of diplomacy we got to many fine states, so richly burdened with natural resources? He reckoned we must have come the *smart* of our go-ahead principles over the French, Spanish and Mexicans, and then insinuated ourselves into their dominions. But, this being the smallest end of an Englishman’s ideas whittled down to the very point of self-conceit, Smooth thought it best to be good-natured and make the best of his calmness. The fact is, John Bull and Cousin Jonathan must be good friends; strife is the dire enemy of good order, while war becomes the assassin seeking to overthrow those principles of constitutional liberty, both nations so wisely combined in their constitutions. Why tear down the noble edifice you cannot rebuild? why blight the cheering prospects of thousands to gratify the vain ambition of pedantic politicians?

“Hallo! Smooth, my dear fellow, what place is this below?’ cries out Littlejohn, looking over, as the balloon made a B line westward.

“‘That,’ I interrupted, ‘used to be called the ‘far West.’ Now it is getting to be the centre of civilization. It goes ahead of the march of progress, while outstripping comprehension. Upon this great expanse will spring up the materials for feeding every hungry and oppressed citizen this side of sun-down. We can already raise anything,—from mountain of corn to a river of pork,—on it; and as for the nigger crop, there’s no end of that!’

“‘And that yours, too, Mr. Smooth? Your fertile acres stretch from sea to sea.’ Little John interrupting, pointed all over the broad expanse below. He had no generalized ideas of America, no distinct estimate of her productive and maintaining powers, and less knowledge of that machinery so simply beautiful called her government. He never for once thought how this wide western expanse was destined for the back-bone of the mightiest republic the world ever knew. People without homes in



## Page 47

the old world found happy homes there; civilization drove the buffalo from his wonted haunt to give place to man; man himself yielded to the power of progress marching westward. 'Now, Littlejohn,' said I, 'seeing that your people have but an imperfect geographical knowledge of our country, let me tell you that yon black ridge you see afar down is the range of rocky mountains. Colonel Fremont, a small man, slim enough to split the wind, but as tough as Uncle Seth's whip-stock, climbed the loftiest peak, hung his hat on it, made the stars and stripes on a rag—in accordance with necessity and the go-ahead spirit of our country—hung them flying in a snowstorm, whistled Yankee Doodle three times and proclaimed them ours in the name of the United States. All this was smooth and fair,—done in the spirit of our go-ahead, all-accomplished diplomacy.'

“Ah!’ interrupted Littlejohn, ‘your appetite for bits of territory runs monstrously that way.’

“Yes!’ I replied; ‘but, John, give us your hand-on that point we may honestly embrace, and declare ourselves now even two. You are as modest as an archbishop on salary day, and seldom openly embrace territory; we prefer the frank style in all our adoptions. Let us not quarrel over that—you love freedom, we love free government. Our political thoughts are moulded in one die, though self-interest may vary them. To be mutually just toward each other, to live on terms of friendship, and preserve that amity which is our bulwark, serves well that unity of great principles which conserves and preserves our happiness. Yea! cursed be the hand, and stagnate the breath raised against that peace and good-will which saves us from the monster of war.’ Here I grasped firmly and earnestly John’s hand, and would fain he forgot the past and thought only of the future. Looking down, ‘that is New Mexico,’ said I, ‘a small corner we just hooked on to our large establishment; we let all these little ones come into the same nursery, where a generous mother watches their wants and provides for them as circumstances demand. You, John, treat your colonial babies with singularly cold diet; in fact, you often permit them to become stunted and ill-tempered for want of proper care in the home nursery. You see, Texas was well nursed, and now her territory is fast filling up with the hardy sons and daughters of your land; but, would they become new beings, and enjoy equal rights and equal privileges, they must divest themselves of those servilities which in your country one class unfortunately endeavors to enforce upon the other.’ John bowed, but gave no further heed. Presently we came to the Mormon settlement, and here he set to chaffing me about equal privileges. ‘We always had inconsistencies in our social system,’ he said; ‘just see how many wives these Mormons have got, and what a nice thing they are making of equal rights. You beat us there, Smooth; we Englishmen would never think of such sort of thing.’ John looked very innocent and honest, which, added to his dignity so naturally put on, was enough to make one’s face square up into a broad smile.



## Page 48

“Permit me, John,’ returned I: ‘we tend well the great things; this Mormon evil will work its own remedy! Westward the wave of empire rolls on; that’s the word we speak as the world looks on, grudgingly acknowledging its truth. We nurture small things that they may become great; we make men feel themselves living equals, not inferiors; we put the lowly emigrant in moral progress, and from his mental improvement reap the good harvest for all. By sinking from men’s minds that which tells them they are inferior, we gain greatness to our nation. Simon Bendigo is made to feel that he is just as good as Blackwood Broadway; and Blackwood is made sensible of the fact that he is no better in the body politic than any other man.’

“Now, Smooth, just let me interrupt you in your train of Yankee logic,’ said Littlejohn; ‘the safer a man feels his position the better is it for the nation; but the policy of equality in men, though it might do for your young place, never would do for ours. Age and its attendant glories demand different rules of guidance for society. All your fancy articles of freedom, equality, and dignity among common people become doubtful, when subjected to long practice. Our people, sir—take my word, not unworthily—are above considering such degrading innovations; their grades of society are a sacred protection.’

“Ah! those are English opinions, iron-bound. Your social institution is a perfect curiosity shop, where everything old may be stored away unmolested, but upon which the man of plain sense looks distrustfully, while sycophants waste contemplation in devising means for its preservation. How few estimate the cost to a nation of maintaining those ancient inconsistencies so preserved by governments of the old world!’

“Never mind that, Mr. Smooth; these things are our own, and on us will the evil recoil. Be not so earnest in condemning us, for the same sins you lay at our door are fast developing themselves in your would-be fashionable society! Your society is fashionable without being refined. Your aristocracy is a base imitation of our snobby, revelling in the heartless hoarding of gold, and vaunting of bad English.’ John looked down ere he finished, and seemed taking a bird’s-eye view of the great Utah territory. The Great Salt Lake I assured him was where the venerable navigator Noah discharged his ballast of salt bags. As for the settlers on its borders, they were the followers of Joe Smith, a veritable descendant of Ham, who never was known for the good he did. That clever mouthpiece of English opinion, the *Times*, says they will one day confuse and cause much trouble to the people of the United States; but this is only the offspring of that one strong idea so characteristic of Mr. John Bull. Now these descendants of the veritable Smith have a fantastic appreciation of many wives—a strange delusion in which there cannot be much happiness; but beyond this they are a very harmless people, who, beyond the sin of having many wives (and if this be a sin, it may be found at many a cleaner door!), may be excused from much they do.



## Page 49

“One word, if you please, Mr. Smooth!” suddenly interrupted John Littlejohn,—’it is in that the dangerous element of your Yankee nature exists. Once beyond the neutralizing sphere of public opinion, you go in for all sorts of vagaries, the more inconsistent with strict order the better.’ This crimination was certainly as fast as out of place; John was, indeed, too ready to censure us without a forethought. We had given these deluded creatures a home in our land; we had received them as citizens, though most of them were subjects of that land of freedom where the chains fall to give place to flunkeyism; we had protected them in their wilderness home—should we not be generous, and forgive their errors rather than punish or provoke the delusion? Preferring more than one wife is not originally American: on that score Uncle John cannot shake clean the skirts of his garment, nor proclaim his virtue as white as snow. Ere this conversation ended we had arrived over California. Standing up I gave three long and strong cheers that astonished and awoke John from the moody reflections into which he had fallen. There the great El Dorado spread out in golden plains, teeming their rich treasures into Uncle Sam’s apron. Then, all bright and full of busy life, rose San Francisco, the stars and stripes waving gracefully from a thousand temples. A thousand ships, like monsters sleeping, rode on the calm bosom of her waters;—a busy throng of merchants filled her broad avenues; while houseless, anxious, and never-despairing mortals, like swine at large, rooted her broad plains for gold. A country, by the aid of that Anglo-Saxon energy which carries liberty and civilization into the remotest corners of the world had risen, like a young giant, from a wilderness to a flourishing State. Already was it a world of industry, every man working for the main chance. John could not suppress an expression of gratification,—the sight was bright of promise; but, he added, he much feared his countrymen would view it with a jealous eye, inasmuch as it might become a means of deranging their beautiful organization of very fashionable society. We were made up of an indescribable compound of common people and shopkeepers, he added, shrugging his shoulders and changing slightly his position. He forgot that the absence of two of the greatest evils a nation groans under had brought its blessings on our land,—Mr. Smooth refers to pauper lords, and lords who make paupers. Great men there sprung from the commonest ranks to take the best care of the nation. They discarded the expensive nonsense of maintaining dignity which polluted independence: they respect the poor man’s rights and brighten his prospects; they seek to promote the good of all and fear not the few!



## Page 50

“Smooth, in humble solicitude for the reader’s feelings, begs he will join him again while proceeding on his course. Proceeding at a rapid rate we had well nigh lost sight of the El Dorado, when John made a significant motion, which, being translated, meant that he would like to take another glass of hot punch. To this proposition I readily consented; after which we lighted two real Havanas, and rolled on as resolute as a flying Dutchman. It was with some effort that John curbed his natural feelings. The punch, being placed in the right place, seemed to create new thoughts. ‘Queer fellows you are!’ says he, to talk of freedom and equal rights. ‘Why, you have got a human property market open, and more than three millions of souls up for a bid. Mark my word, Mr. Smooth, the voice of sorrow for your human commerce will yet shake the stability of your country. When slavery drives this country to sectional issues; when it corrupts the federal power; when it serves the ambition of those who would drag us into foreign broils; when patriotic men, North and South, ceased to come forward for the safety of a confederation, then will sectionalism wage its angry wars against a noble edifice, whose foundation history tells us must totter under the siege of strife.’

### CHAPTER X.

#### SMOOTH PRESERVES YOUNG AMERICA’S RIGHTS.

“Day dawned through the gray mist of the East, as crowding the old institution, we sailed swiftly through the air, over the calm Pacific. Soon San Francisco seemed but a speck in the dim distance. On, on, on, we sped, until the land passed far out of sight behind. Our next business was to hang in suspense our hopes, and await the welcome sight of land ahead. John strained his eyes, and I did the same. Two hours passed, and the welcome moment arrived. ‘I see it!’ exclaimed John—‘Land oh! Land oh!’ In a frenzy of joy he had well-nigh upset the barge and spilled us out. Then he pointed his finger to an object in the distance that seemed like a lonely steeple holding watch over midnight.

“‘I see it!’ I rejoined—‘it’s land—a new discovery: I’ll call it Uncle Sam’s Land.’

“‘A little more moderate, if you please, Mr. Smooth,’ retorted John, very politely. ‘Seeing it first, I claim the right of calling it Prince Albert’s Island.’ John was inclined to exchange any amount of diplomatic notes, but I inquired, in a plain sort of way, what would be the good it could confer on his country? to which he folded his arms, and replied curtly, that having it was the thing sought for by his government. He might institute the Established Church on it, and create any amount of Bishops, with good fat salaries—a thing all-desirable in the eyes of the Saviour. We use these out-of-the-way places,’ he continued, ‘as a means of relief to our over-crowded population and pensioners. We are heavy of pensioners, while our governors are prone to create dependencies, which they do in consideration of the very large stock of gentlemen always on hand, and most clamorous to be provided for at John’s expense.’



## Page 51

“Having arrived over the spot, we found it an out-of-the-way island; upon which I suggested that it would be better to drop the stars and stripes, with a note to the chief (if one there existed) desiring he would put it up in the name of our great Republic. John, taking the initiative, began to draw from his pocket a bit of bunting; but so methodical was he, that before he had completed the process I took from my pocket a piece of red chalk, and on my white, Sunday nightcap figured the Stars and Stripes. This done, I rolled it round my jackknife, and let it slide downward ere John had his Union Jack ready. Down it went, like a thunderbolt chased by a streak of chain lightning. ‘Put that up, in the name of these United States’ thought I,—‘we’ll take care of that little bit of territory.’

“Well,’ interrupted John, looking as serious as a May moon, ‘it’s Yankee outright: I confess the Union Jack can’t keep up with the Stars and Stripes, nohow!’

“‘Give us your hand, John,’ said I, ‘we’ll be good-natured anyhow, seeing the positive proof that we both belong to the same school. We are types of two very progressive and honorable gentlemen, who, in a very modest sort of way, do pirate territory now and then, merely for the sake of that inevitable result the extending good constitutional principles has. If our small faults creep above the surface now and then, the influence they have is more than counterbalanced by the good which may come. But, while we both affect a deal of modesty, and are ever criminating and recriminating each other’s acts, would it not be well to acknowledge the motive by which both are moved to the same greedy propensities? Think it over, John; and at the same time let us join—just to keep up the good-nature—in another glass of whiskey.’ He said he had no objection, so filling up, we drank to the very best sort of friendship, John winking and blinking, as a squall just springing up began to increase.

“That place—we were both a little too fast, John—is inhabited, as I’m a Christian. I’ll bet a cotton-mill it is!’ I returned; and before the words were cold I saw a French sentinel pacing as straight as a handspike in uniform, and as mutely savage as a scare-crow in a corn-field. There he was, moustaches heavier nor a goat’s smellers, *a la* old guard. Not a great way behind his Saxon neighbors, he was watching No. 1; just keeping an unoffending eye on Queen Tamerhamer’s little place. That tawny sovereign had insulted the French, but it was difficult for them to define the nature of the offence. However, they claimed the right to mount guard, if only to the end of getting a better foot-hold. Poor, hapless sovereign! she thought more of her tinsel than the French did of her rights: thus the small difficulty. Frenchmen are clever fellows in a small way, have very pliable ideas, which they can change with wondrous celerity; they aim to do good, if, through their eccentricities, they too often fail. They are pleased to consider themselves more refined than Americans, and yet they are more deficient in moral courage—that moral courage which is made to conserve the good of the State. An Englishman’s reserve, a Frenchman’s politeness, and a Yankee’s go-aheadativeness, —all contending for the palm of honesty, form the curious illustration of an eventful age.



## Page 52

“Let us push on, John, across the calm ocean we shall soon arrive at Shanghai,” said I, confidentially.

“Yes!” returns John, interrupting me, “and I wish we could get a glimpse at Japan. Other nations have supposed it impregnable; but Jonathan has found his way to the very gates of the Emperor’s palace, which he now knocks at with might and main. How fantastically he is dressed! Coal-basket in one hand, and Bible in the other, he is cutting what may be properly termed figure number one.”

“Certainly!” I rejoined, “that is the figure to make safe our country’s interests. Trade and civilization is Jonathan’s *motto*, While ‘go-ahead’ is the pass-word that has placed him where he is—in power. Jonathan demolishes the aristocratic fantasy of dignity, and builds up the greatness of a people with the simplicity of trade. We never had the most distant annexation design on this little empire, but we want coals that our commerce may be fostered and protected in its march over the world; and, if we chance to do a little trade while teaching an isolated people their proper position, so much the better for the world and manifest destiny. The absurdity of celestial pre-eminence must be removed from the minds of those who yet maintain it at the expense of Christendom. If we can sell the Emperor’s people Lowell cotton, at the same time you are selling them Manchester stripes, where can be the objection? There can be no harm in promoting that which has for its end the interchange of good feeling between the most distant nations of earth: interchange of commerce infuses its spirit of energy, and its results are for the good of the many. But those interchanges between progressive and non-progressive governments should be conducted with caution and kindness, in order to preserve mutual respect. The double-sided Dutchman prostrates himself before the barbarian whose commerce he seeks; but in doing so he enlists contempt for his nation, without aiding to tear down that superciliousness of the barbarian which is the greatest enemy of the world at large. Better were it he approached that monarch on equal terms—to, it might be, compel him to reconcile his feelings to the force of manifest destiny. Smooth will stand the odds that Commodore Perry gets the better of the Dutchman, comes the independent over the Emperor, and makes a contract for the establishment of cotton factories and churches all along his coast. ‘Land! oh,’ suddenly cried out John, at the top of his voice—‘another patch ahead.’ In another moment he shrieked out:— ‘There you go—good by!’ As I overreached to sight the object far beneath, one of the stays broke, the balloon careened wildly, and making a dashing circle high in the air, out we tumbled into the wild waste of space. Finding myself going, I reckoned it was as well to keep up the philosophy, and remain cool. ‘You’re on the passage, too—are you, John?’ inquired I, finding him turning the most artistic somersaults in his descent. ‘Yes,’



## Page 53

he replied, in a tone indicative of sorrow; 'blast you, and your Young American policy. This is the natural result of soaring above a reasonable level.. Your manifest destiny is finding its proper depths now!' John was terribly chagrined; he reckoned Young America was a shade too fast. Flying, he said, was at best a mighty poor business; once again on firm footing he would for ever look upon manifest destiny as the most aerial thing of the fast nineteenth century.

### CHAPTER XI.

MR. SMOOTH IS RIGHT SIDE UP.

"This side up—with care!' said I, finding we must come down, and keeping an eye on John, who looked as burly as a drifting ale pipe in a head sea, and whispered something about Young America being an unpleasant companion to sail the air with. Feeling how much better it was to be good-natured, I took the matter mathematically, trusting to the best. To be always right end up is a principle never to be lost sight of. There was land below us, firm and frowning; which, before we knew where we were, we had slipped into, like preserved meat, up to our arm-pits. Poor John made an awful blubbering; seeing which, I told him to be good-natured, and at the same time inquired if he had worked up his whereabouts on the way down.

"A pretty affair this!' said he, angrily. 'Here, on a desolate island, surrounded by a broad ocean, what chance is there for us to save ourselves, or ever again make the confines of civilization? Despondency knows no joking; and, in such a perplexity, questions about reckoning are out of place. You may make light of it, Mr. Smooth; but, if you please, let us think of some way to deliver ourselves,' grumbled John, sweating, puffing, and blowing. Finally, he said he wished the old gentleman with the horns had made a previous demand on him, inasmuch as it would have saved him the trouble of dying on so desolate a spot, which to him seemed the sorest grievance of all.

"You groan over it some, don't you, old fellow? Reckon how you hain't seen a Yankee try his ingenuity. Just puff a spell, until Mr. Smooth calmly studies a little philosophy, which is a mighty good thing in cases of emergency like this,' I remarked in reply, getting my ideas into a fix, in order to bring out the best point of operation. Working myself out in a cool sort of way, I seized hold of him by the shoulders, and yanked him straight out, like a log from a marsh slough. 'Now, take it all for the best, John,' I rejoined encouragingly, going to work and putting up a liberty pole, to which I tacked the stars and stripes, while John was grumbling, growling, and methodizing about saving himself. This done on behalf of my country, and Young America more particularly, I set about erecting a hut, wherein we could both turn in for the night. With me it was sink



the desponding and keep up a stiff spring of hope; but when bed-time came, John made a great fuss about his night-cap and



## Page 54

dressing-gown, and slippers,—as if the comforts of home were inseparable. Then he made a crooked face about his bed, while I laughed at him for his whims, his fancies, and his dogged pedantries. However, morning found him better-natured, and taking advantage of the opportunity, we held a consultation upon what was best to be done. That we were on an uninhabited island not a doubt existed: nor had any son of civilized man ever visited it before: not so much of civilization as a gallows was there to be seen anywhere, although there were visible in the distance many mountains, and plains, and valleys, and lakes swarming with fish. With these a people might have flourished, while the soil was pregnant of richness, ready to bring forth corn, rice, tobacco, and cotton. I was grieved that such a spot should lie wasting; all it wanted was a few sons of New England to make its resources of great commercial value. A ponderous mountain rose nearly to the sky, distant some two days' journey, in the west. After breakfasting on wild fruit (of which there was a great abundance) and limpid water, we set out for it, making a straight line through the forest; but before reaching the summit, and after three days' scrubbing, we discovered smoke curling gently upward here and there in the clear blue atmosphere. 'Lord bless ye, John!' I exclaimed, halting suddenly, 'there is living critters here, as I'm a Down-easter.'

"I see 'um moving!' he rejoined, nervously surveying the spot. And in another hour we were in the midst of a tribe of savages, swarthy and of vicious appearance. Such yelling, hallooing, jumping, and cutting wild antics, you never saw before, nor could pen describe. Nobody could have understood their chattering, which was a species of growl and shortly accented muttering. Forsooth! it was as unintelligible as that language so generally diffused through diplomatic notes and protocols. Now hideous squaws ran one way, young children another. Dogs and cats brought up the rear, their music combining in most ungrateful medley. John's fears became excited as he saw the chiefs rushing furiously onward in the van. 'What shall we do?' said he; 'they will exterminate us.' I said we had better summon all our amiability and endeavor to engraft ourselves in their good graces. Young America would talk Yankee to them. To this John gave ready consent. I was glad to see that for once he had laid aside his dignity and superciliousness: it was freely acknowledging that Uncle Sam was somebody—that he could, in his plain straightforward way do clever things. Therefore, to initiate my diplomacy I drew forth the Stars and Stripes, and held them before a monster chief of some seven feet in stature, who had almost reached us, making savage grimaces. Soon he stood before us, John commenced to bow with all his politeness, and meekly doffing off his hat, began a speech with:—'Your sublime majesty—' 'Stop that, John!' I exclaimed firmly, interrupting him. Here I



## Page 55

stepped in, and extended my hand to the savage. 'My name, stranger,' I continued 'is Commissioner Solomon Smooth—at home they call me General Smooth. Now, seeing that I am sent by our patriotic President (a very small man by the way, but immeasurably large when dealing in the mere language of war) whose determination that talent of a truly American character shall shine abroad has been fully appreciated by the nations honored with his promising plenipotentiaries, Mr. Pierce has deputed me to square the world in general, and manifest destiny in particular.' The savage at first exhibited signs of concern, but finally summoned to his aid a salutation of welcome, and at the same time grasped my hand warmly and earnestly. Communicating with him by signs was not the most agreeable office: but when there is a point to be gained energy is always well spent. I would enlighten him upon matters connected with our government, while ascertaining his ideas of annexation: this the language of signs prevented my doing. I regretted this exceedingly, inasmuch as it compelled me to forego the comparison I contemplated making between his and those known ideas entertained by General Pierce himself. Enough, however, was drawn from the signs to prove a striking coincidence. 'Never bin to Washington—I reckon?' I inquired assuming the independent, as I gave my hat an easy set on the windward side of my head. He shook his head, and croaked out something no one could understand. 'Great place!' rejoined I—'ought to come over and see it, old fellow.' I affectionately placed my arm about his neck, as he shook his head a second time; the small kindness had made us good friends. Motioning John to him, he grasped our hands, led us to his camp, called a council of his people, who said much it was impossible for us to understand. Indeed, they set up a conflict of sound more dinning than the roar of waters. Instinctively hospitable, when dinner-time came they motioned us to sit and partake of a piping dish of snakes' heads and fried beetles, of which choice delicacies the old chief was sorely grieved that we ate but little. Now and then he would spread his hands, as if to say—why not eat of what I give you? I was not long in becoming acquainted with our new acquaintance; nor did I fail to shock the modesty of our worthy friend John, who said he could not view with indifference the celerity with which I walked into things which should be touched only with the dignity of national character.

"'Now stranger,' continued I, addressing myself good-naturedly to the chief; 'seeing you are sovereign of this remote but lovely country—and that yours is manifestly an empire—suppose we try a little trade. Smooth is a free-and-easy citizen of the United States—can meet you at and be friendly over anything. My friend here,' (I pointed to John who seemed in an offish mood) 'is a Britisher, an honest member of that very ancient and gallant family which now views us, too often for that spirit which should make us friends, as a beardless upstart; John, though extremely vain, is not a bad fellow, and at times improves on acquaintance. If his proclivities for getting into an hole (like a toad in a shower) are at times too strongly manifested, who so ungenerous as not to forgive the hereditary character of the disease?'



## Page 56

“Umph! umph! whew!’ exclaimed the chief, as he spread his hands and contorted his face. We could not understand him; pained were we that we could not. He felt keenly the misfortune, shook his head in sorrow; and murmured, as if a world separated his thoughts and ours. Modestly, John touched me on the shoulder, and whispered:— ‘S’pose we call this distant Britain? you can have the next discovery. I’ll proclaim it in the name of my sovereign—it will be quite right;’ John was inclined to do the very honorable on the sly; but, being of opinion that he had appropriated to himself enough in that sort of way, I interposed a decided objection. ‘Governor!’ I retorted, taking the chief by the hand—‘if a good speculation you would make, annex this little empire of yours to our great Republic. Manifest destiny will make you one of us; but don’t wait for that. Hook on while the link is hot—you’ll find it a good speculation. Young America will put your nation through a process of regenerating: he will make steam civilize when everything else fails; he will send his Transit Company to take possession of the government. We seek not, like John to conquer—we colonize. You may be one of us; by accepting Young America’s offering you may be as independent as a colored preacher on Sunday.’ The chief gazed in bewilderment—his people muttered still more.

“John now became furious of anger. ‘We, too,’ he interposed, ‘colonize. Say you will come under the protection and acknowledged allegiance to our Queen, and yours shall be a scarlet coat, a cocked hat, and a great broadsword wherewith to fight your way in the world.’ The chief moved his head doubtfully, as his body vibrated from head to foot. What strange opinions invaded his thoughts! He placed his broad hard hands gently on our heads, drew us lovingly to him, and smiled. In that smile was that which said we were both good and honest, but needed much watching. We were, indeed, good specimens of our separate nations, but the free-and-easy seemed most acceptable to the savage. ‘Governor!’ I continued to address the chief as I turned to John, ‘beware of his fascinating coat of scarlet. Such things may charm the little; sensible men know their worthlessness. Hang out the star-spangled banner, espouse popular rights; let the rest of mankind know you belong to a nation whose destiny is the overthrow of kings and kingcraft on one continent at least.’ Still, mutely the savage listened. There was no getting English into his head; hence I saw the necessity of gaining my ends by signs and motions, after the fashion of our modern diplomacy. Say what you will, mute diplomacy is not without its effect. At it I went, in a style that put French dancing entirely into the shade.

“Your Yankee figuring won’t play on his head, Smooth,’ spoke Littlejohn, in a tantalizing sort of vein. ‘He is less a fool than you take him for.’



## Page 57

"I calmly intimated that he might be right, but inquired if he ever knew a Yankee out-yankeed? John folded his arms, and got his face well adjusted within the circle of his ample shirt-collar, which he had preserved unruffled during his fall. Suddenly I remembered that in my pocket was a handbill of Uncle Obadiah's clock factory, upon which was broadly emblazoned a time-piece of modern fashion. Its effect was electric. No sooner was it displayed than the barbarian's eye glowed with anxiety; the gaudy picture carried his heart and soul captive to Uncle Sam. In his ecstasy he threw his arms about me, hugged me and fawned me, and in his joy was well nigh devouring me. Poor John stood outdone—dumfounded. The sight was characteristic.

"'Principles, in these days of development,' mumbled John, as with the fingers of his right hand he stroked his chin, 'I admit give way to circumstances. To say a difficulty exists you Yankees cannot surmount—to say an invention is known you cannot improve and apply; to say a remote colony exists you cannot people and govern, is a calumny gross indeed. If they fail to gain the end they aim at by one movement they will resort to another more bold—success must follow.' John grudgingly made the admission. Had he possessed the forethought to discover how the point was likely to turn he would have provided himself with the picture of a business-like ambassador proceeding to a great convention with only thirty-two females in his train, as might have been seen at Vienna very recently; or, better yet, the picture of a duke's flunkey, which, being the more ridiculous of the two, would to the savage have proved the greater attraction. But John turned coldly and methodically from the subject. His ancestors had made so many sovereigns! he said. Nothing to be gained, his thoughts were turned now to the means of getting away from the savages. Not another day would he stay; I was at liberty to start any amount of young Republics. Apprehending difficulty from his state of excitement I counselled his better nature, and brought to the rescue the quiet and cheerful of his curious composition. It was the only way to surmount a great difficulty. Preserving, then, the calm of a philosopher, I set about inventing something to take us from thence, to a more congenial land. Smooth, with progress in his head and grasp in his fingers, can, upon the same principle that he can start something to please our nation, create some thought for the relief of two distressed individuals. One half the failures in the world are the result of the mind magnifying the undertaking into an impossibility, instead of setting about it fresh and vigorous—making a determination to achieve the object. The American nature has become bold of adventure, and one of its greatest characteristics is, never to stand in doubt when an experiment is to be tried.

"'Yes, but, Smooth!' he interrupted, 'you don't consider that we British officials abroad are placed in a very unpleasant position. Our acts being at all times liable to disapproval at the Foreign Office, we too frequently remain passive for want of faith at home and confidence in ourselves. The spirit of the Foreign Office is like a weathercock on wings; we are a mere servilage to the uncertain changes and caprices of those who may chance to be its Chief.'



## Page 58

“By that, I understand you know not how to act; and to avoid being wrong you remain inactive, that course being likely to receive the most praise. My good fellow, lesson from Young America,—act boldly, take the responsibility on your own shoulders, and abide the consequences. Be an independent citizen,—let your acts be your country’s and your own;—and whatever the result may be, meet it manfully, that moral courage may strengthen your cause. Now, then, let us set about building a canoe; let us imagine we can do a prodigy and it shall be done!’ At this John’s spirit became restored.

“We went to work in right good earnest, and, with necessity for an incentive, found ourselves at the expiration of three days master of a fine canoe, with which we drew down the astonishment of the natives. Two days more and we bid them a touching farewell, promised to call and see them again, bring cotton, cloth and sundry Yankee notions, with which to start a trade between them and the people of Salem, Massachusetts. Supplied with fish and porkmonhunter, a savory dish prepared by the natives, we set sail for Shanghai, I being skipper of the craft, and John mate. Nothing should seem to one’s mind too simple to learn, and I learned to navigate by what the sailors in times past called the rule of thumb: the rule now came nicely into play. Energy is the master of difficulties; the application of it is all-necessary when they present themselves. Adhering to this maxim I took the helm, laid down the course, and steered for Shanghai, while John kept a close watch on the stars. At times he would work lunars in his head, as did the Macedonians. Laughable as it may seem, John was just credulous enough to think that savages in these out-of-the-way parts of the world were honored with a north star, and amused himself with speculations on its identity. As luck will now and then favor the unfortunate, so we, after a voyage in which were any amount of storms and hair-breadth escapes, which it will be needless to describe here, arrived at the expiration of the tenth day safely at Shanghai. To know precisely where one is, and feel safe on terra-firma after a tempestuous voyage, makes the heart leap with joy—and with joy leaped mine.

## CHAPTER XII.

MR. SMOOTH MAKES A FEW REFLECTIONS.

“Shanghai seemed a place of adventures and uncertain speculations; its people were a medley of all sorts of human kind badly propounded. Perhaps I should except that numerous gentry called fleas, so averse to travellers that they at once set about biting them out of the town. Two days in Shanghai proved quite enough. So, viewing it advisable, we packed up our alls, and on foot shaped our course for Scinde, a territory rather out of the way and very remotely situated. Littlejohn, still my companion, said his honorable Governor got possession of it in a very dignified sort of way; nevertheless, he thought it advisable that as little as possible be said about the process. The truth was, it was not distinctly known what the rest of mankind said about it.



## Page 59

“After much journeying and hardship, we found ourselves in the heart of Scinde, which looked desolate enough to have been under any other than British rule:—we speak merely for the honor of British rule! ‘This, Uncle John’s, too?’ I inquired, touching John on the shoulder.

“‘Beg your pardon!’ he returned, with affected indifference.

“‘Does Britannia rule this territory?’ I reiterated.

“‘Well,’ he rejoins, hesitatingly, ‘as to that—Smooth, give us yer hand—there is something to be considered; we believe in dispensing blessings to mankind; and that all men, great and small, may have their share, we aim to infuse our principles, and make them understood throughout the world. It’s all for humanity and the good of Christianity; but, you see, we have for a long time tried to make these foolish Princes comprehend the benefits resulting therefrom without success, and were really forced to harsh measures. We were sorry it was so, but, being the case, we, as a national sequence, had to resort to conquering. Now, though it may not be always necessary to apply the principle of conquering to do good, it follows as a rule that good must result where the conqueror is a Christian power, whose only motive is progress and civilization for the good of all. The Anglo-Saxon teaches the barbarian to know himself; and when he has done this he endeavors to infuse principles of trade and constitutional government into his mind; but not daring to leave him to himself, he reluctantly, nevertheless, is compelled to subject him to his rule. I frankly admit we refrain from doing these manifest destiny things, as you call them, with the same boldness characterized in your proceedings with Mexico. Our East India Company may not be the very best institution in the world for governing purposes, for it is dangerous to invest a trading compact with governing powers, inasmuch as selfish interests will conserve to keep the power of the governing superior to the best interests of the governed, even though they be in the majority; but the Company is a great machine for civilizing and keeping civilized, that trade may not lose its influence. It teaches these poor devils of natives to talk English, and, sir, can you calculate what a blessing that will be when it comes into general use? By and by we will be enabled to turn this vast empire into one field teeming with the richest produce.’

“‘All right,’ said I, interrupting his sentence: ‘we will yet agree on something. In the meantime, let me inquire, John, why you did not add—what a blessing it would be did they but understand the English! Your modesty and their insane bigotry furnish a strange group of nondescript governments, which Uncle John covetously fathers, though they be the illegal issues of that very honorable dredging machine, whose grapnels, always extended, are for ever bringing up something new. In truth, this company so strong of power, which it sways on the penny-wise principle, and so pampered by royalty, is ever troubling honest Uncle John with its unfortunate affairs.’



## Page 60

“It never will do to talk in that kind of way, Smooth; 'twill never do! When you Yankees make grave charges, you forget to clothe them with style and dignity: they are things of much importance in government matters, and then it never comes to much for small men to prate against powerful bodies pursuing formidable enterprises.’

“Listen, John!’ I retorted, laying my right hand good-naturedly on his left shoulder, ‘that which takes from a country without previously spreading nourishment to sustain it is a dredging machine, and will sooner or later dry up its resources. It takes out, but forgets to put in, thinking only of the present, while the future invites an enlightened policy to nurture and bring out its richer resources.’ But with these small misdemeanors we would not directly charge Uncle John, who is at times as honorable as he is dogged; but he, fathered as he is with the responsibility, is seriously to blame for this neglect. Viewing these things in their proper light, John and Jonathan, stimulated by the same virtuous inclinations, and weighing well their distinctive prowess, should be careful not to offend by petty means: how much better to encourage friendly relations, than wound a sensitive but worthy national pride! Promising to criminate after this fashion so much in vogue no more, we left the desolate Scinde, continued our way across an immense waste, where might have risen up one of the mightiest and most fertile empires. An enlightened policy only was wanted. The people were ignorant of their power and resources: John had conquered, and viewed it well to keep them so. His East India dredge did not dissent to this verdict. My friend John thought the acquisition well approved. But the people, he said, were worthless; they added superstition to ignorance and fierceness, and obstinately opposed the bettering their condition. ‘Without attempting to burden your credulity, Jonathan,’ interpolated John, ‘the truth is, we well understood the nature of this people, and having failed to conciliate them in one way betook ourselves to another, and in our characteristic style chastised them into submission.’ John spoke with great seriousness, never for a moment lessening his air of dignity. Indeed, it embodied and acknowledged serious mode of docilizing a people: how much real attachment between the conqueror and conquered must follow this system we leave the reader to contemplate. The honorable Mr. John, notwithstanding, had a very circuitous way of confessing the fact of having taken into his family, by this arbitrary system of wedlock, no end of people; still he accused Jonathan of using his soft-sawder for the same purpose.

“Journeying a few days through a country rich of soil and rivers turned to no account, we reached a dominion called the Punjaub, which John said had limits he knew not where, and was his, too. He acquired it by the same bold and very honorable stroke of policy. The chiefs, he said, kept up a continued jarring among themselves; such being fatal to their best interests, he, as a friend, merely stepped in to put an end to their unprofitable disputes.



## Page 61

“As I have before told the reader, this honorable individual, who sensitively declared nothing could make him less than a gentleman, never failed to consider himself a model of forbearance, but in the fulness of his generous soul, having conquered, he rather preferred to remain conqueror. In the Punjaub John had left his mark, but nothing to praise.

“Despairing of finding something to praise in the Punjaub we passed over into Pegua—John’s also. Got by the same bold stroke of policy—a few variations excepted! It was rather a fascinating piece of territory, to the Rajah of which he had several times offered protection, after the manner of that protectorate of two centuries, so vauntingly claimed over the Mosquitoes. The barbarian as often rejected it. This, John could not submit to: humanity demanded he should accept the kind proffer. And to serve the ends of humanity did John hasten to the Rajah’s palace one Commodore Lambert—a pugnacious seafaring diplomatist, known for his love of the yard-arm law. The Commodore would hold a parley with the Rajah; the Rajah, whose dignity was first to be consulted, was too slow in preparing his palace. The Commodore, erratic of temper, was at times accustomed to growl for his own amusement; he now growled for the amusement of his countrymen. The result was natural. In the littleness of his vanity did the Rajah imagine himself a very great man. He was important of those small follies which prove the great misfortunes of old nations. The Commodore must wait in the sun, with becoming respect for his dignity. But the seafaring diplomatist esteemed the importance of his cloth above all barbarian considerations, hence decided himself insulted. As patience is essential to the success of diplomacy, so the Rajah deemed it expedient to test how far that quality was possessed by the Commodore, whom he permitted to wait two hours in a vertical sun. This was too much for the patience of any respectable gentleman, and only resulted in exciting the petulance of the before-named sea-going Ambassador, who just demolished a few out-of-the-way towns, and pocketed the kingdom for his Queen. From this it will be seen (we make no allowance for John’s acceptance of the issue) that the vanity of a Rajah and the petulance of a Commodore cost a kingdom. Littlejohn said this was the way Pegua slipt, almost unconsciously, into the possession of his family. The process was of itself so innocent! Language to praise it sufficiently John could not find. Diplomacy having large claims on the observance of etiquette, cannot permit insults to go unpunished, said he. The Commodore, too, was in diplomacy a fast sort of man, and could not be excited to anger without a consideration—which said consideration was no other than that the aforesaid Rajah just hand over the kingdom. Spunky boys are Uncle John and Cousin Jonathan! To that end the Commodore pitched into the Rajah, thrashed him, bagged his dominions, and would as little as possible were said about it. Here, then, it was clearly shown that what John charged Jonathan with was but a facsimile of the crimes so profusely spread at his own door. Great governments are at best thieves; and to claim a superiority of modesty in acquiring dominion is poor moonshine badly spent. With these contemplations we agreed not to quarrel, but continue our journey over Turkey homeward.



## Page 62

### CHAPTER XIII.

MR. SMOOTH SEES A COUNTRY GREAT IN RESOURCES BLIGHTED BY A NARROW POLICY.

“Difficult is it for a man travelling in a country where everything seems crooked, to keep up straight ideas. I have said crooked, for where nature has been most profuse in her blessings, and no signs of the iron sinews of progress are seen; where no Mississippi steamboats move on in busy occupation, opening up the resources of a country; where no bright villages hold to light the charms of hardy industry; where the favored few gather the fruits of the husbandman’s energy—something must indeed be crooked. Through countries enamelled of nature’s best offerings, as fine as ever spread out before the eye of man, we travelled; but all seemed wasting away in the inertness of bad government. A narrow policy had spread weeds where fruitful vines would have hung blessings for mankind. Things called men revelled in what to them seemed luxury, but in poverty and wretchedness a people struggled; men walked to and fro in tattered garments, colored like unto their moral and physical degradation. But they heeded it not, and were careless because no one cared for them. There is no slavery so abhorrent as that of the menial who has no thought beyond the narrow sphere of his servitude, and the little pleasure which his light heart may transitorily enjoy. Here men saw no vitality in the hand that ruled: hence they maudled through that deadening scum of servile life that tramples better things beneath its feet.

“From the fertile bottoms of the Himalayas to the Indian ocean on one side, and from the Burmese boundary to wherever British rule extended on the other, there spread out the same sickly prospect. There, resigned, stood outlined the same apathy of spirit, the same result of misgovernment—the same soul-degrading influences; the same rebuking spectacle; the result of the same wealth-dredging principles practiced by a few. Cotton, corn, and sugar, would have repaid the hand of the husbandman tenfold, nature having given it germ for that purpose; but jungle grew in their stead, while bad government rioted in its follies. Nationality had no soul, energy no lifesprings, progress no railroads to move onward. The honorable John, having conquered, and very modestly enthroned himself, was strong to maintain his centralizing power, from which point he would make effectual his blighting policy. Notwithstanding this, John would have us believe him world-wide in his kindness, desire his power made known to mankind in general, and stood ever ready to have his philanthropy and his tears spent upon the sorrows of the American slave. Were they not more needed in his own Indian dominions? A peasant clothed in rags picks his little spot of sickly cotton as it falls from the bowl; but how valueless is it to the poor wretch ignorant of the first principles of trade! Yet, instead of providing for his improvement,



## Page 63

this honorable dredging machine which so disgracefully governs a people flatters him into contentment with promises it never intended to fill. With his bag of cotton gathered, the humble subject is pointed to a path through a country infested by dangerous bands, over which he may seek a market some hundred miles distant. In its crude state he roughs it, and sweats it, puts it through—without a gin to give it market value!—all the various processes of damaging during the transit, and is surprised that India, with the best soil and climate in the world for such an object, cannot raise a good and sufficient supply of the raw material. What a look of pity the wretch might bestow upon the board of directors, sitting in pompous conclave in Leadenhall street! Happy is he, Jonathan, who, contented, knows not the things at his hand by which his own condition may be bettered. And how blind is that rule, which, having the power to do good, contents itself with dragging eagerly away the first compensation. The penalty of the crime of not developing what is given us by nature for a nation's good is the sacrifice of a people's happiness. My friend John reluctantly acknowledged the delinquency. Mark the contrast! Had this all-bountiful India been ours, a more liberal policy would have produced results widely different. No oligarch could have sacrificed it to its own avarice; associations would have sprung up for developing industry; a policy to make the resources of the state serve general interests would have been established, and the good of the many had been kept in view. Cotton-growing, and tobacco-planting, and rice-cultivating, had been encouraged and fostered. Those rich alluvial bottoms, so fertile and yet so uncultivated, had given out their rich harvests to some purpose—untaxed prosperity would have rewarded the hand of the hardy husbandman. India would then, besides proving herself the greatest exporting empire in the world, have clothed, fed and made happy her benighted millions.

“Had India been ours, Yankee enterprise had traversed it with plank roads; Yankee enterprise had laid down strap railroads until better ones had resulted from profits; Yankee energy had invented a species of Mississippi steamboat, wherewith to navigate its narrow water-courses to their source, and there develop the capabilities of the country. Yes, Yankee ingenuity had had a steamboat where there was scarce water for a duck to swim. But why pain the feelings with recapitulations like these? Its resources are of little value when government interposes a dogged obstinacy to improvements; nor is it much better where a people seem at a loss to know whose business it is to give out the incentive. So long as this state of things lasts will Cotton remain king, and Uncle John be its most servile and dependent subject. It matters little that his empire is so beautifully adapted to its cultivation. He must shake off his love of those very ancient and effeminating systems of his, and adopt the modern policy of improving and nourishing industry.



## Page 64

“John admitted things were not conducted on the most approved principle; but as the business belonged to the old gentleman, who was very testy in the exercise of his power, he was at a loss to conceive what we had to do with it. That became very easy to explain; for whereas Young America claims a right to dictate principles that will aid in working out manifest destiny, so also does he take upon himself the right of pointing out the evil of all political misgovernment that falls under his notice. It was not the honorable manner in which a government acquired new territory or incorporated weak provinces, that Mr. Smooth had to deal with, but the dishonorable government that followed. Wherever waste and misery meet the eye of an energetic man, who discovers the palpable cause at the door of wrong-headed government, his natural feelings revolt against the powers that be; and to an American, trained in the New England school of universal industry, the desolation seems calling upon him to take the initiative of working out its improvement.

“With me, a feeling, inspired by the best of motives, prompted the advancing some rules of improvement; but, conscious of Uncle John’s obstinacy to being instructed by youth, and with a just sense of the obstacles my tattered garments would present, the inclination failed. Indeed, John, as dogged as he is old in experience, views his son Jonathan as a bold, reckless, and discontented fellow, whose notions of progress he would receive with the same cautious hand he would his, to him, preposterous principles of republicanism. He, while entertaining some good feeling for us, hath an inert prejudice which views us as levellers, always reforming or abusing reforms. Swelled, he says, by large notions of ourselves, generous in our expectations, and never ceasing in our love of excitements until we are safely landed in the grave, we are become dangerous to the great family compact. In the devil’s department, says John, your Young America would prove his energetic nature by devising some new arrangement, addition, or modification of that gentleman’s sin-roasting machinery. Failing in that, he would plan some enterprise, propose some joint-account operation with Mr. Jones, and content himself with ‘truck-and-dicker,’ or charcoal, for his half of the spoils. In heaven, your Young American would be discontented, unless he were devising some improvement, getting up spiritual intrigues, or laying the foundation of some new species of glory—perhaps claiming a right to entire possession.

“‘You must understand, Mr. Smooth,’ said John, ‘we have long been meditating a new policy for this great and fertile empire, now so desolate; but we pursue ends most patiently, letting our thoughts have the benefit of time, before reducing them to practice. Manchester wants cotton—wants it free-grown—that she may relieve herself from the yoke of King Slavery; but she cannot yet solve the problem by which the throbbings of her manufacturing philanthropy may be set at rest. She thinks long and strong of it, but there it rests—and there’s the rub. John is blind, and Cotton is king.’



## Page 65

“With us it would present no rub; give us the means, as spread out to your hands, and the problem we would solve while you were pondering over its intricacy. We would pay good premiums to practical overseers of cotton plantations in Georgia and Alabama, who, with the inducement offered, would come as instructors—cotton-growing requires the application of the nicest agricultural science—in the art of cultivating the sensitive plant. And to encourage private enterprise we would offer bounties for the largest amount of best quality produced on the smallest space. By government encouraging the best staple, a rivalry would spring up which could not fail to produce much good; it would open up a spirited system of planting, as well as that enlarged intercommunication of commerce which must follow.’ Let me take leave of this subject!

“From India we sojourned across the great desert, meeting in succession the white-robed Arab, the savage Kurd, the docile Yeeside, and the melancholy Turk. John said we must have a staff, and a score of guides, and no end of menials, and must put on the dignity, or it would not be safe, especially now that Turks and Russians were at war. Mr. Smooth took exceptions to this ruling, preferring to assume the go-ahead, and test the virtue of a hard front, the effects of which he was quite sure would not be entirely lost even among the Arabs. And then, if the Turks and Russians were again at war about holy places—places for which a deal of human blood had been spilt for the mere gratification of a very unholy ambition—Mr. Smooth, on behalf of Young America, might make a dollar or two by the way of proposing a very christian plan for settling the stubborn intricacy. With this best of all motives in view, I left John in the desert, where he said he expected to do some good business, and, what was better, get some good dinners. So, bidding him godspeed, I made straight headway for the point where the pious difficulty had resulted in so much iniquitous blood-shedding.

“The fact is, Old Uncle John was at first inclined to make rather spare use of bear’s grease to dress his Turkey, an unhealthy bird, scarcely possessing fat enough to cook himself; but, being rather doubtful of his own culinary efficiency, had consented to receive a French cook into the family: and, fearing there might yet be a deficiency, the ever-credulous old dotard was making good-natured overtures to one Joseph of Hapsburg,—never trustworthy, and always known to act as circumstances changed interests,—who said there was no knowing what time he would be ready to turn his attention to such purposes. Joseph, however, was never in his life so willing to play open and shut with John, at the same time giving Nicholas that cunning wink so well understood in all respectable family circles. This game Joseph played, and played, and played, until the credulity of old John seemed like a cooked fish in a pot of porridge. The fact must be confessed that Joseph was so politically



## Page 66

dishonest that to be for once honest was tantamount to a great victory over his traditional immorality. Knowing right well the traits of character this Joseph possessed, Jonathan would at short notice lend a willing hand to thrash other morals into his system. However, with a view of leaving this point to be settled by more interested parties, Smooth proceeded to the holy places, where, he regrets to say, he shuddered at the thought of how much human slaughtering it had been the scene—all done for holy causes. Let an impious world forgive those *Little Ones* who in all ages have lent their aid to stimulate the worst passions!

“As for Turkey, I, Smooth, would make no insinuations against that lovely but ill-governed country. Muslimism was dying by its own hand; it had shocked a world with its persecutions; it had scoffed at virtue, and was sinking down into its own deluge of vice. The independence of Turkey! Now, Mr. Smooth made no boast of his common-sense, but to such as he had it was a question whether the Turk, instead of exhibiting so fanatical a love for fighting, had not better betake himself to reconstructing and reforming his internal government, and by that means save himself from a continual jarring with nations sensitive of the rights of their subjects. Should this be thought an employment too inferior, he might employ himself with a plan for enforcing a more strict respect for the rights and feelings of the christian population under his political rule. It would not be incompatible with his own best interests, for it is unnatural that an inferior govern a superior race. Flatterers, and even savans, may find apologies in the changes fortune has been pleased to make in the affairs of a state; but here so strong are the evidences of bad government that only lame excuses can be offered for the finest country the sun shines on groaning in poverty and distress. The independence of Turkey!

“There could be no doubt that the Bear had long cherished a serious inclination to do for the Turkey, the character of whose independence he well understood. He would make fertile use of its apathy. The Bear would cook the Turkey with his own grease—albeit, he found him a sick man, but had no objection to the meal. If, however, he had lain his paws too rudely upon the patient, diplomatic donkeyism made the case still more dangerous. Mr. Smooth begs the reader’s pardon for using the term ‘diplomatic donkeyism;’ but indeed the only difference he has yet been capable of detecting between the conclave which drew upon the nations of Europe so much carnal warfare and the assinine species is, that the former have soft heads in place of ears. These diplomatic donkeys, ever ready to keep the world apprised of their own greatness, and without the slightest objection to getting up an unnecessary number of excitements for its benefit, betook themselves to playing drafts, in which game they made such an innumerable quantity of wrong moves,



## Page 67

that they lost themselves on the board. The world strove to respect the body, but having never before been perplexed with such polite players, the effort was indeed a task. With regard to their game of drafts, such was the fear of the Bear exhibited by the movers that no one dare remove him boldly from the King row, lest it leave an opening he was but too ready to take advantage of; nor did they want to wound the Turkey by any incautious move whereby the Bear might unhesitatingly swallow him: so they pushed and shoved until they found themselves in a sort of baby-jumper, in which they could be nursed to sleep while the war they had so innocently kindled waged fierce and bloody. In fact, they themselves got the Bear so far into the crockery shop that no one could get him out without smashing to pieces the whole establishment.

“Everywhere in Turkey they were preparing for war; and so Mr. Smooth, as soon as he reached Constantinople, where everybody seemed surprised to see such a description of citizen, called a meeting of those whose feelings were so finely up in fighting trim, to whom he stated in most emphatic language that, inasmuch as Turkey had ennobled herself by her noble defence of Kossuth, whose asylum in her domain was held sacred at the price of the kingdom, he had great respect for her, but could not think of fighting. But they didn't seem to understand square Yankee talk; the consequence of which, in Mr. Smooth's opinion, would be the Bear getting his cubs in motion, to do some first-rate fighting. In this fighting Mr. Smooth would not have the least objection to taking a hand, provided always that there was some coin to be made at it. However, before entering upon the fighting business, Mr. Smooth would especially stipulate that all Austrian notes and Prussian protocols be used up in a bonfire, Austria be turned adrift as an inconsistent huckster without principles, the diplomatic donkeys be driven into the Danube, and all constitutional governments bound by arbitrary yokes set free. In that case freedom and constitutionalism would fight its own battles and constitutionalism would bid defiance to Czarism. When the battle of liberty against barbarism became the issue, then Young America would join with a bounding heart, a glowing soul, and a firm hand. We can whip all creation, build more churches, blow up more steamboats, lay down more railroads, and absorb more Mexican territory, than any other nation breathing; but, in this case, where liberty was at stake, hold me back if we wouldn't fight! At the same time we would pay a premium for the privilege of whipping Austria single-handed. Young America owes her a debt he stands ready to pay at the shortest notice and cheapest price. 'Mr. Smooth,' said I, 'is here before you, a free and independent citizen of the United States, ready to chalk down the items of fighting to be done, say about how much we can do it for, and get General Pierce, whose fighting diplomatists will be thrown in, to stand security.' Not comprehending this generous proposition I left them to their own stupid way; and as every American conceived he had a right to his own opinions I hoped they would become a reflex of the example.



## Page 68

“Seeing nothing, in Constantinople I could turn to account—the allies were undermining the foundation of Islamism as fast as possible—I took a stroll to the seat of war, contenting myself with the hope that something would ultimately turn up. The fact was, I meant to follow the policy of the Aberdeen government when starving to death one of the bravest armies that ever faced a foe. Instead of expanding plains and undulating hills, such as Smooth had pictured to his mind in his boyhood, I found the seat of war an ungainly mud-puddle, with ramparts of savage-looking citizens menacing each other from its opposite banks. Between these banks the amusement of war was every now and then kept up with doubtful results. That something more than ordinary was to pay I felt assumed by the grimaces of the contending parties, and feeling a deep interest in the cause, I vaulted into the mist of a group on the left bank, so singularly mixed that their identity as allies could not be mistaken. To the question as to what brought them there, they answered with unintelligible assertions about the issue—the balance, of power—the *status quo* of Europe, and nobody knows how many more things that were to remain unmoved. The best that could be made of it was, that the atmosphere of kings and emperors was filled with very explosive matter which they thought it best to let off in this sort, of way. If, according to Mr. Smooth’s philosophy, Europe were to remain in *status quo*, that spirit of progress so much beloved by Mr. Pierce, and his family must die, a natural death. Was it not singular that the least discussed issue, the most prominent one of the war, according to Smooth’s opinion, was in regard to who should be the greatest toad in the European puddle? Your European puddle is no ordinary affair; kings and emperors only dabble in it at the expense of their people. I viewed with some interest this European cesspool. In the centre there was seated on a pole, with his arms folded, and having an air of assumed independence, a corpulent old gentleman, whose face fused broad and red, like a full moon in harvest-time. This very honorable gentleman had long esteemed himself the largest toad in the European puddle, and was worthily sensitive of his position, though he at times exercised it to a bad purpose. He was notoriously square-shouldered, had beer’d a great deal during his life, and could be as obstinate as a well-fed donkey. Indeed, he had more than once been known to put his finger in his mouth and look serious when great events demanded prompt action, but he never failed to do his part when driven into the fight. To speak honestly, and with all deference to the feelings of this very respectable gentleman, John had no legitimate right to be thus mixed up in this squabble of European despots; nor should he have permitted himself to be led into it on the one side by that imperial transgressor, and driven on the other by his own beer-shop politicians.



## Page 69

That imperial first transgressor had the fickle imaginations of his people to dazzle by paying off certain old scores; even now how beautifully he plays the disinterested to curtain the designs of his ambition! John, nevertheless, did wake from his years of stupor to find himself in an uncertain position;—this was manifest by the manner in which he assumed a contemplative mood. A few shakes at the hands of his rougher politicians aroused his apprehension of being swamped in the political perplexity. Mr. Smooth paused, and took a careful view of the venerable old man, that he might learn something more of him. ‘Stranger.’ said I, ‘what on earth has brought you here?’

“He canted his head, as if it were thickish, gave a dignified look, and again turned to his meditations;—‘Beg pardon, but I don’t know you,’ he grumbled.

“‘Social’s the word, John; be social, and give us an inkling of your motive for that peculiar position you unwittingly find yourself in.’ The salutation seemed to excite his astonishment. He was a stranger to such familiarity—rudeness, if so you may please to call it; and turned from me, his movements assimilating to those of a turtle with a coal of fire on his back.

“‘You are who?’ he returned, in a gruff voice, a scowl of contempt invading his broad face.

“‘Smooth, from Down East!’ I replied,—‘who do you think it is?’ To make the point more convincing, I started up Yankee Doodle, which I whistled with the variations.

“‘You are not only an intruder, but an impertinent fellow!’

“‘Needn’t feel disagreeable about it. Smooth—a man of standing in his diggins, and Young America’s independent delegate, has only come to take a bird’s-eye view of the way things look about this seat of war.’

“‘Who the devil is Mr. Smooth? I know he has no business here!’ again grumbled the old man.

“‘Don’t know Solomon Smooth, eh?’

“‘No, don’t nor do I want to. You are always making difficulty wherever you go, probing your nose into everybody’s business. You may be a keen fellow in commerce, but in diplomacy you are impertinent and quite beside yourself. You better be off from here, inasmuch as I am the biggest toad in this puddle, and mean to remain so. We are not inclined to know anything about Mr. Smooth; so the quicker he packs himself and his baggage up and is off from this, the better.’ The earnestness with which he said this left me no reason to doubt his intention to remain the biggest toad of the pool.



“Mr. Smooth, something of a man in Washington, holds a contrary opinion, and claims a right to know the ins and outs of what is going on outside of your dominions, as well as inside his own, and to insinuate himself into just what it may please him,” I replied in the measured manner of an experienced diplomatist.

“Perhaps you have,” he interrupted, “but if you were possessed of ordinary modesty, you would refrain from intermeddling when you saw what a blasted time I had to keep that great Bear, across there, from breaking his chain and devouring everything on this side.”



## Page 70

“Feeling a fellow sympathy, I thought perhaps I might lend you a hand to do some of the whipping,—knowing how the brute professes to be a christian of the latest pattern.’ Nicholas had a strong appetite for the Turkey, which, though sick, he would have no objection to breakfast upon, as I have before stated; and, that his christian cubs might share the feast, he had begun to teach them the straightforward principles of holy orthodoxy; which said holy orthodoxy incited a craving for blood we have not yet learned to appreciate.

“The said sick Turkey had not given the best satisfaction to the world in his mode of reducing to poverty his flock; and, too, he was always ready to bandy words and ostentation,—having a large supply of the latter always on hand. He had, moreover, evinced a certain degree of heroism; nor was he ever backward in professing his readiness to fight somebody—if it were the unruly Bear, so much the better. The heroism thus manifested on the part of the decaying Turk would have deserved more praise had it not had its origin in the assurance that Uncle John would lend a hand to do the fighting. Mark ye! John had copiously poured forth his treasure and blood in order that this vagabond Turkey might still live, and be saved from the Bear’s all-digesting stomach, and for which he would deny John the freedom of his city; he would condescend only to honor him with the title of dog.

“In one sense a more generous fellow than John was not to be found on the outside of our small world. He had been the pack-horse of Europe, and all sorts of kings had used him for all sorts of purposes. Never was friend used better. He was proud, and yet how submissive. Ready to shed his blood and squander his treasure for he knew not what, he was equally willing to submit his well-burdened back to the kicks and cuffs of those he had saved from ignominy. Now, the very type of endurance was he who sat poised in the puddle. ‘As for the Bear,’ says John, ‘he won’t guarantee to be satisfied with his ordinary rations; and if he were to plant himself in the centre of this puddle I would very obediently have to plant myself out.’ Here John folded his arms, and, with a dignified air, ordered his beer.

“That John should keep his eye sharp to windward was natural enough; but had this very same eye been kept to windward many years ago, much blood and treasure had been saved in the present. It is playing false to his national character thus long for which John now pays so dearly. But that phantom of terror excited by the Bear’s growth, Mr. Smooth seriously thinks unworthy of being entertained by the honorable John.



## Page 71

“You need not be alarmed, Mr. Smooth,” continued John, modifying somewhat his natural crisp: ‘I am painfully sensible of our diplomatists having played the donkey; but why should you, being far removed from the scene of strife, nor having immediate interest in the game, desire to burn a finger in it? Be a man of sense—watch kings and kingcraft—go your way home in peace, and let peace be your glorious triumph over war!’ From John such advice was valuable. Acknowledging the joys and comforts of peace, we shook hands,—I wished John well with his fighting, and we parted. I could not however, resist the conviction that John knew not for what he fought so bravely, and might have maintained his position as the greatest cock of the dunghill without sorrow to the homes of his people, and desolation into the land of his long tried and most dependable friend. Who can foretell the ways of a Napoleon. Oh! ambition, ambition!

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### DONE BROWN IN DOWNING-STREET.

“Few would have supposed that when Minister Smooth left General Pierce and his waggish cabinet he would so soon have taken a turn round the world, and fetched up in that world of misery and wealth called London. But the world has got very fast, and only a fast man can keep up with it. Indeed, it were well we set about doing things fast, instead of so thinking them over in the mind that they seem immovable as mountains. Well, there was in London just about this time much waste of that sort of small talk newspapers now and then deal largely in, (editors are always kind enough to consider themselves great warriors), concerning our very spunky Captain Ingraham, who, they said, had Kosta safe under his guns, and would blow Austria to nobody knew where. The whole, however, only amounted to the simplest evidence of what there was in sympathy and the Saxon heart. To our Christian friends would we say—none of these things moved Smooth from his equilibrium. After all, come to the true philosophy of the thing, and it only amounted to a broil among small bullies. And, too, did the little skipper not take care of himself he was no Yankee, and the whole United States would know it to his discredit.

“General Pierce, too, being a fighting President, (not a doubt could exist since the bombardment of Greytown), would take good care of the whole thing (perhaps send to Congress a message blazing with the language of war). Could it turn a point to his own advantage, he would—right or wrong—send a fleet to whip Austria, to make her something.

“But let us turn to a subject more fruitful. London seemed like a great waste of dingy dwellings and badly constructed palaces, the whole sleeping under a canopy of sickly smoke. Everything wore a sombre, heavy air—even the men seemed born to methodize on some one object. Show-shops, beer-shops, and gin-palaces, made the very air reek with their stifling fumes. Above all, there were

## Page 72

great palaces for very faint-hearted people, who thought well of themselves, and in their prayers thanked Uncle John, at whose great cost they lived in sumptuous idleness. As this last specimen of human nature, when dressed in full shine, would completely outshine the most vain Pawnee chief that ever ran wild in Arkansas, Mr. Smooth was anxious for a peep at the curiosity. In truth, to Mr. Smooth's unpolished eye London looked as if it might have emanated from a place called hook or crook, and stretched along the banks of a nauseous stream spreading its death stench in the air, where, diffusing itself in the most perfect of fogs, it lent cheerful aid to the trade of physicians. Everybody affected great knowledge of system; and yet things were so complex of past errors and ages that no system existed equal to the requirements of the present day. The municipality was great only on dinners and donkeyism. It had indeed a dining senate, but that august body never was known to discuss the practical reform of anything but turtle-soup, and that with an horrid carving of the English language.

“The beggar, (we name the worst nuisances first), the begrimed sweep, the butcher, the hawker, the ignorant costermonger, the 'cute cabby, the wily tradesman, who seeks favors and pockets frowns from his distinguished clowns—the Lord, whose rank is known by his tinsel, and the Duke, so deeply identified with flunkeyism,—all move along, helter-skelter, helter-skelter. And then there came the small men of smaller titles, and the commoner whose grumbling was only equalled by his apeings. To dine with my Lord Flippington was to him something great; nor could his airs and ostentation be well improved. The little man of little titles, too, stood profound in his dignity: no man was larger, nor thought he that his own little self wasn't great. To the tailor who made him he paid money down. Of all men was he the largest dabbler in that divine essence of things called men—the philosophy of blood. But to keep up the dignity it not only required a great deal of experience, but a large amount of tin in the pocket, which for the minus thereof was it necessary to have a deal of brass in the face. This principle, then, which is strictly in accordance with natural philosophy, being very well developed in this worthily aged country, makes the truly great very great of modesty; while the man of pewter greatness—that is, great because Our Sovereign Lady said he might take upon himself the name of Sir Simpleton Somebody! always boiling over with the froth of his own follies. With tin in his pocket, brass in his face, and never a forlorn *h* in his vocabulary, is he the fellow to do brown the 'rag and tinsel.’



## Page 73

“Well, Mr. Smooth felt conscious of his own importance, and that same was something among the good British. With philosophy profound in his long face, Mr. Smooth made his compliments to the new and very sedate minister, who some facetious wags called the very unobsequious Jimmy Buchanan, of Pensylvane. This worthy and very firm-fisted statesman, who was too much of the old school ever to be President of our United States, advised the doing of a great many things, the diplomacy of which Mr. Smooth seriously doubted. Especially did Smooth question his reasoning on the breeches question, the quaint originality of which was Marcy’s own. This the venerable statesman informed me in a sly sort of way, as he invited me to go into the back place and take a little gin and bitters in a quiet way, for he was inveterately averse to every body watching his movements. To live in a country so ancient of incongruities, and where not alone the weak-minded bedeck themselves in fancy coats and flashy tassels, and indescribable coverings of high colors, requires some resolution in the man who mixes with it, and is pleased to make known his taste for plain black. And here Mr. Smooth and the worthy and very promising statesman held a very learned controversy over the fact of Marcy having gone into the tailoring business so largely as to define the shape of coat it was consistent to wear at court tea-parties. Smooth wanted to put on a little bright, just to look a man of consequence, and in order not to be behind several of his brother democrats, whose names he views it imprudent here to insert, and seeing how he was invited to join a dough-nut party in Downing street, while he was certain of a card to one of Citizen Peabody’s most select dinners, for Peabody was an intimate friend and old acquaintance; but our honest and very American plenipotentiary said it would not do, for the obvious reason that a man’s importance should depend on what was in his brains. His very democratic secretary having come to his sense of the force of this argument, had made a solemn promise to put on red cloth and feathers but four times a year, one of which he stipulated should be at the opening of the Crystal Palace, that being an occasion when all the fine ladies were expected to be present for the purpose of witnessing the superiority of genius over court fooleries, as well as being singularly fascinated with the young secretary’s handsome person. The argument here was so strong that Smooth at once knocked under; and, too, simplicity in great men being greatness itself, he sincerely enjoined all his countrymen to let sense and not semblance honor their country, guide their actions when abroad.



## Page 74

“Acting upon the principle so many of our countrymen unhappily develop, (thinking nobody could hear of it on the other side of the water,) Mr. Smooth chartered a donkey-cart, put his donkeys in shining liveries, and was determined to outdo the Choctaws in making London astonished. The most expensive tailor in Regent street did up the external, as he had before so many of my very simple-minded countrymen. Such a suit of toggery as it was! Alongside of me General Scott would have looked shy, I reckon. And then, when the big cocked hat was spread! I tell you, Uncle Sam, there as no touching Smooth—he was half-duke, half-beadle, and the rest Pierce diplomatist. ‘If a dash ain’t cut among the nobs!’ thought I. The donkey turn out was a curiosity, Smooth himself was a curiosity; and with two curiosities an excitement was certain. My first dash was into Hyde Park, near the entrance of which stood the brazen statue of a gladiator, raised by fair hands, in commemoration of the Iron Duke, whose indelible deeds they would emblazon on hardest brass. In this park, at fashionable hours, sauntered the nice young men of the West End; that is, the biggest snobs of the fashionable world; but Smooth took the shine out of the whole lot, as did nearly all the rest of Mr. Pierce’s little folks. Had he, however, turned out in the flummery of some of his contemporary snobs, and driven thus equipped into Cape Cod, a town-meeting, to take into consideration the sending him to a place where straight-jackets are worn, had been the result. But in London a man may make almost any kind of a fool of himself, without applying for a license. Indeed, the man most earnest in making an ass of himself may do it, with the satisfaction of knowing that he has a very large number of very respectable families for patrons. In Hyde Park the greatest asses (a name and the needful may be necessary) have the most followers. Longest ears are not the surest indices. After all, my reader must excuse me for not visiting the purlieu of Downing street just yet, having a few of Mr. Pierce’s little folks to pack up and send home to Fournery, with instructions that he give them a few more turns on his grindstone.

## CHAPTER XV.

### HIS LITTLE LORDSHIP’S SHOW, AND A PEEP INTO DOWNING-STREET.

“Uncle Sam!—if, beside yourself, there exists outside of Cape Cod another individual who would like to see Mr. Thomas Foolery move in state most perfect, just send him over here: he must be present on that day when the little Lord Mayor makes a great man of himself. A great man is the Lord Mayor on that day on which he sacrifices all his good sense to an ancient and much-beloved show, in which he permits himself to be made the fool of the farce. No Choctaw war-train was ever half so extravagant of colored cloth and feathers. A great day for London loafers is it, when my Lord Mayor puts on the big chain, and issues his mandate



## Page 75

to the sprats, who then come up the river, to the great joy of the poor, who have it thus in tradition. Well, Smooth thought he would keep Lord Mayor's day, and to that end harnessed up his team of donkeys, merely by way of contrasting it with some duke's turn-out. Imagine, Sam, my chagrin, when one of the donkeys took it into his head to keep Lord Mayor's day in his own obstinate way. Not a step would he go. However, I got another donkey, and proceeded to where the Lord Mayor was, just in time to hear him make a funny speech, throughout which he made a sad slaughter of all the h's and a's of the King's good English. Then he seated himself in the barge, and had a sail on the Thames, followed by innumerable beggars, sycophants, and costermongers. Succeeding this he marshalled his show-folks into a string (such a string!), and with them caused his august self to be moved to the Mansion House. Swarms of frightened turtles were seen hurrying away in front of the cavalcade.

"Such a set of white-washed heads—heads with all outside—heads with little inside—and heads nobody knew what they had been made for, never before were seen displayed in one string. Strangely attractive was the glare of tinsel—it fascinated the little souls of corpulent men, and made small men more becomingly great. Fact was, Uncle Sam, His Worship the Lord Mayor, whose year of greatness was death to turtle and terrapin, so outshone Her Most Gracious Majesty (a good little body) in confusion of brilliant brass, that the little woman thought it incumbent to call a Cabinet Council, before which she laid the grievance of his stealing her thunder. At this privy council Prince Albert was permitted to be present without anything being said by the Daily News and Morning Advertiser. His Worship had indeed usurped all the modern appliances of flunkeydom. But the cabinet, it was acknowledged, was very thick-headed, and her Majesty, good body, must bear the consequences.

"Well, after the most curious caravan eyes ever rested upon, there followed his jolly worship the Lord Mayor; he largely sat in a coach of gingerbread, the tea-things spread outside, and the glows of Souchong impregnating the air. They said his jolly Lordship sold real and mixed Twankey. In this sense, however, was his Lordship more fortunate than his predecessor, who, having ascended from the soap business, and himself used a large amount of that article for the purpose of washing down the wares of Threadneedle street, found his greatest difficulty that of getting rid of the foetid scent. And then, my Lord's h's were the things most violently handled; for otherwise he wasn't a bad fellow, and when he rode in his coach of the olden time, which might, by the green in mythology, have been taken for the lost chariot of Elijah, it was a serious question whether himself or the things that held on behind were greatest. Then these latter gents of flunkeydom in frills had big sticks in their hands, with which they kept the



## Page 76

flies from my Lord's good-natured countenance. Happy fellows were they, and, like well-stuffed mules, only wanted the long soft ears to make them marketable. Everybody said it was a big day in London. To have suggested that his Worship might be making an ass of himself in this common-sense nineteenth century would have been to render yourself a victim of hasty contempt. Smooth was just taking a contemplative view of these things,—asking himself how many poor wretches would lose a day's work over the nonsense; how many would get drunk on the hallucination of the show; how many poor mechanics would make a blue week to his Lordship's honor; and how many would find themselves in the House of Correction to his disgrace—how many employers would be annoyed,—how many customers would be disappointed—and how many wives would get broken heads; when suddenly a crowd of filthy, dejected, and ruthless beings swept along in mass, heedless of whatever came in their way, and threatening life and limb in the onset. Then there came such a smashing of maids' bonnets, squeezing of milliners, and frightening of old maids, as never was seen before; indeed, this, added to the many well-jammed ribs and jostled beavers, seemed the most expensive part of my Lord's show. Summing the whole thing up in a logical sort of way, Smooth made it amount to this:—that the Lord Mayor, just mounting into greatness, could by no means make that greatness impressive by any knowledge of philosophy he possessed; so, to be sure that his importance had its force upon all vulgar minds, he suffered himself made to play the part of a monkey in a cake-shop. To this his Worship added the greater gratification of having given amusement to nine-tenths of the city costermongers, made idle seven-tenths of the working people, kept busy two thousand gin-shops, filled eleven hundred chop-houses, given hard work to five hundred policemen, who never like to be worked hard, and made lackeydom tumultuous. And then Beadledom seemed crazed, and, joined with the many ale-bibbers, were turned out to do good service in the show. But, to make my Lord's train complete, there was no knowing how many men he had to ride on horseback, how many more so inebriated they couldn't ride, how many of a character nobody would desire to know out of his show, and how many *ballet* girls who ride in circuses and so forth,—all of which latter material had faces made deep of moonshine modesty, to suit the solemn occasion. Then my Lord topped off the little end of his show with the soup and great Ministers of State. And, that nothing should be left undone, the *Times* must have a *go in* at it, which it did with one of Doctor Moseley's most spicy articles, putting the whole thing into a very comical nutshell. Quoth Sam, without the thunderer's dissecting knife a London Lord Mayor would be the most beautiful of nobodys—that is, so far as sense goes. Smooth, on the nicest observation, was decidedly of the opinion that only one thing more was wanted to make the Lord Mayor's Show complete—a pair of long soft ears emblazoned on the Corporation coach. The reader will excuse Smooth for dwelling thus long on little things.



## Page 77

“Having peeped long enough at the Lord Mayor’s Show, I felt like looking at something more solid; so to that end I turned about the donkey-cart, whistled to the flunkeys (kept things of this kind merely to be like other Americans when abroad), and drove into Regent street, where I would inform General Pierce and all my firm friends a desperate excitement was made. Then, in glowing independence, I rolled away down Pall Mall, where the club-people—especially those of that institution of arrogance called the Reform—seemed much astonished. From thence I proceeded past Trafalgar square, where stood in singular contrast the monument of the noble Nelson, and an equestrian statue of that ignoble creature, Charles the First, the loss of whose head saved England from disgrace. How strange, that even in this day of intelligence and liberty-loving, it should stand a shrine before which very respectable old gentlemen poured out their stale patriotism! At last I found myself in Downing street—at the door of a massive and sombre-looking mansion (No. 12) in front of which stood methodical-looking men with grave countenances. And, too, there sauntered moodily venerable-looking gentlemen, now and then casting wistful glances at the time-begrimmed walls, as if they would see some one sealed-up in the antiquated recesses of the place. Mr. Smooth’s turn-out only made a stir among them; they reckoned somebody had come! In a free-and-easy sort of way I walked straight to the door, maintaining my independence the while, and feeling as important as a door-keeper in Congress. After passing the massive entrance I encountered innumerable obstacles in the form of flunkeys, and then passed into a dingy room of immense size, which for all the world had the appearance of having some two or three hundred years ago served for a barracks. ‘By appointment?’ inquired a human thing dressed, as he emerged from behind a green screen situated at one corner. He bowed, and I bowed, until he was satisfied I was somebody, ‘Who would you see?’ he reiterates, adding another bow.

“‘Well!’ returned I, ‘reckon how I’ll think about that.’ Then the fellow crossed three or four times my track, as much as to say—Stranger! you don’t go in there. Presently a batch of well-to-do individuals came snickering out of a closet, and eyed me very suspiciously; at which I summoned all my brass, and stood fronting them like a staring machine. ‘You must say who you want to see!’ interposes the man I first confronted.

“I here took leisurely out my card, and said ‘I would like to see the Duke of Newcastle, who temporarily tied up in this establishment.’ He viewed my card with a serious hesitation; at which I turned round, and told him I would not trouble him, but take it myself, had he had any special objection to going a-head. They, the people, said the Duke, did all he could with what he had to do with. If it were not possible to see the Duke, I would like a peep at my venerable aunt Aberdeen, who was about



## Page 78

as well qualified to sway the destinies of discontented England as a virgin pumpkin; and together with my ever amiable Lord Clarendon, would set a world at war good-naturedly. These very high functionaries, Mr. Smooth was informed, could not at present be seen by common people, inasmuch as they were contemplating the problem:—'I don't know what to do!' Nicholas's appetite for Turkey breakfasts had made work too profound for the brains of Downing Street. 'Don't seem a subject of this atmosphere,' said the stupid, significantly canting his head, and giving a queer look out of the corner of his right eye. 'You fellows don't seem to know me,' I interpolated, 'Citizen Smooth—they call me Solomon Smooth, Esq., that is my name.' A door now opened near where I was standing, and in I walked—right among the Dukes and dough-heads. It only wanted a bold push, in the right go-ahead sort of way, to make myself respected. Dukes were not only flesh and blood, but owed much of their importance to the ignorance of the people they aspired to frown upon. Dukes, Earls, and Lords, were, at this moment, playing at very un-English games for England. They affected to believe it right that the loyal people (I mean the simple and vulgar, who have hitherto proved mean the simple and vulgar) who have hitherto proved true to their noble traditions, should remain ignorant of the game played at their expense. This, Mr. Smooth thought too bad; however, his friend Urquhart was devising a scheme for remedying the evil, which, did he not himself fall into evil, might do great good to the nation in general. But Urquhart was so modest that he never accused Lord Palmerston of anything worse than bringing about the potato rot in Ireland. 'Hallo hallo!' a dozen voices echoed from the table around which the all-accomplished sat:—'A rustic intruder is upon us!' half muttered the man who followed me in. 'It's only Solomon Smooth, Esq., from the Cape,' returned I, with a good, wholesome laugh. Believe me, Uncle Sam, there sat round a table ten of the most solemn-looking fellows, with faces as dreary as a wet moon in November. Some of this unique body looked as if they had seen hard usage and lean pay. Others were grey with thinking, instead of moving. Be not surprised either when I say that the gravity of their countenance left no visible room for anything else. Hard at it were they, straining their antiquated imaginations over a secret game of thimble-rig, which seemed of momentous importance. Only five, however, could play at the game; and Sawny Dablerdeen, who always played on two small pipes, and paid sundry small pipers to do a deal of blowing, seemed in the greatest fuddle. And then there was my Lord John Littlejohn, as crusty a little snap as ever declaimed against tyrant in one breath, or turned a political summersault in another;—bricks to the back-bone was he, and all for old England, though he was not bigger than one of Betsy Perkin's well-grown cucumbers, and could be turned to as many



## Page 79

uses. But what there is mentally in a man must not be judged by the measure of his body from head to foot. And, too, there was my very amiable Lord Clarendon, who attempted to out-clever my Lord John, inasmuch as John stated, in the fulness of his geographical knowledge, that the passage between Havana and the extreme southern point of Florida was not more than four hundred miles, while my Lord Clarendon assured the House of Lords that South Carolina was an island. Enlightened House of Lords! But, after all, there was a harmony of sentiment between these two noble worthies that was truly grateful to the submissive hearts of the freedom-loving English; both could spin flattering speeches: both could play the long and short; both could wince when foreign bull-dogs sent out their threatening growls; and both were mighty of mouth when dealing with little chickens. It was not to be concealed, however that Dablerdeen, master of the board, was gifted with the unfortunate characteristic of talking himself into an interminable difficulty.

“Who, or from whence on earth do you come?’ inquired my Lord.

“Smooth,’ I replied, that is my name; I am a citizen of the Great Republic—come to study the way in which you are disorganizing foreign affairs.’

“Yer a little in advance of the times—too fast, sir!’ replied a large man most serious of face. Thinking it best to answer him by declaring my opinion to be that it was better to be with the age than behind it,—and which I believe constituted the only difference between a fast and slow man of the present day, I let slide at him upon the fallacy of his political philosophy, with knock-down arguments.

“The fellows cooled down at once, and John Littlejohn said, ‘Come, Smooth! if you really are a clever citizen then you are precisely the fellow we want!’ And then he conversed feelingly with me, said how much he liked our country and our countrymen; persuaded himself to believe them the real go-ahead chaps—though he, at times, thought it quite necessary to keep their go-ahead a little slow. I proposed their taking a smoke in a rough and ready sort of way, and pulling out my pouch, in a friendly sort of way, they all seemed struck aback with astonishment. One said, if we did things that way in Congress it was not the way they did them here. They all shook their heads—said they didn’t smoke.

“We will may it please you Mr. Smooth—Citizen of the United States—excuse these things for the present,’ rejoined Dablerdeen, who looked as if he did not know which way to turn, or how to please his people. Seeing this I sat down and watched the very odd style in which they played the game. Dablerdeen did all the talking, and Littlejohn, whom the reader will see had returned home helped him make his muff; and then there was a good deal of assisting one another to forget each move. But Sandy always



moved slow, as if he had something under his thimble he was afraid of damaging.  
'That's



## Page 80

Turkey, that's Russia, that's France, and that's Austria—and this is ourselves!' he would say, making the moves up or down, but not knowing where to stop. 'It won't do to push that one, it won't!' he continued, pointing at the one he called Austria. 'If you did, nothing would you get from under it. It's a costly cup with a tender handle, somewhat dangerous to turn: only the cup of Spain is more costly; but that in this emergency is of no account whatever.' They had no United States cup to move, inasmuch as Jonathan had very respectfully declined to hazard a point in European games when he withheld his ascent to a tripartite treaty for the purpose of keeping his delicate fingers off Cuba. Now these very antiquated gentlemen seemed to entertain some respect for the British Lion, some apprehension of Jonathan and Nicholas, and a great dislike for fighting, which they had been driven, or rather drifted, into much against their imagined obligations to peace; for, indeed, did they carry on the war tail foremost, finding everything they had done large of stupidity. By and by a loud call rang through the tabernacle, and in another minute the platter of dough-nuts was borne in by two cooks. One, they said was Mrs. Victoria, and the other was Mr. Napoleon, curious acquaintances, who lugged and tugged, and puffed and blowed; and the piping hot doughnuts nuts gave out their glows. Then the players all seemed to quicken up, as if they had sooner be eating than thinking.

“Strange things will come to pass at times, and nothing stranger has come to pass than that John Bull and Johnny Crappo have gone into the brotherly-love business, by which they hope to bring about one grand object,' I said. 'Neither had I any objection to Spain joining, provided she kept Cuba all right. But, Cuba being so near Uncle Sam's fingers, nothing more than the common course of events was needed to let it slide so naturally into his modest hands.' Smooth told the old gentlemen that the very best way to hasten Uncle Sam's getting Cuba was to point out a process by which he could keep his hand out of his pockets. 'We, Mr. Smooth, do not question your correctness on the point, so far as it refers to this Cuba business, and the tripartite treaty which we would you had signed merely that your fingers were kept off the property; but you have misconstrued our amiable motives—we only wanted to form a trio, honorable in combination—that is, we would it were mutually understood that you do not annex Cuba, and we will not!' said my Lord Littlejohn, who spoke quite as spunky, though with less assurance on geography, than he did to the very amiable Mr. Everett. Smooth understood the P's and Q's of the thing, without examining further into the portfolio. It was Johnny Bull saying to Johnny Crappo—'them Yankees 'll get Cuba!—in spite of all we can do.' Of course something must be said in return; so Crappo puts in his say:—'Can't you suggest some way to stop it, Uncle John?' he inquires, with a quizzical shrug, adding—*mon dieu!* 'But, by gar, we may do him somefin yet, by gar!'



## Page 81

“To make rogue one honest man is one clever thing; Mr. Jonathan mistake himself in tinkering himself great, when he not so great. Now, dem Yankee one grand 'cute fellow; you no catch him wid de, bird chaff,' he is supposed to conclude. Smooth very amiably suggested that it were better to let Cuba be Cuba, until the time came when, if she felt like snugly brooding under Uncle Sam's wings, without any assistance would he attend to the little matter of offering her a roost. Uncle Sam was growing, but had grave ideas, with which he generally maintained his own dignity. They here reckoned Mr. Smooth had delivered his speech with becoming dignity. Of this fact I was fully sure, for my Lord Littlejohn put his finger into his mouth and began to suck it, as is common with him in these his days of tribulation. 'Let us quit the Ottomans and go into the eatables: the one is so dry nothing is to be made at it, while at the other everything is to be made, for there is something to eat,' rejoined John. They carried the suggestion by acclamation. Just then, whang!—bang!—whiz! somebody thundered at the door, when, alarmed, they all cried out—'whose there?' In answer to this the man with the long rod cried out at the very top of his voice—'Stop the game!' The old fellows began to stow away their gambling tools, look innocently and vacantly at one another, as if a crisis was upon them they could not understand. 'It's only us outsiders,' a voice replied, in most harmless accents.

“There! I told you we'd make a mess of it,—that the outsiders would break in upon us' said Littlejohn, with a savage grimace, directing himself to Dablerdeen, who it was now thought better to call Grandmamma Fudge. The gentlemen outsiders were the honor-saving committee from Finsbury, the members of which declared themselves large stakeholders in the game at the Treasury. Grandmamma Fudge thought it best to tell them, merely in a bluff sort of way, that England's honor was safe in his keeping—that they must not be scared about it; not however, until they found him peddling pills and other quack medicines with the object of inducing Austria to be more explicit. 'But, my old closeters, in we must come! Fearing you have got the gout in the head, we are here to make an examination; things done in secret have a dark look about them; and we, being the honor-saving committee, have come to make a single suggestion, which is that my lord of foreign affair memory is found wanting in firmness, and gets very crooked when he is not kept straight, which is most unfortunate in a diplomatist who smokes bad cigars all the day long. This said, it must be remembered that old Finsbury feels sensitive of her rights and liberties; closely allied to which is the honor of Old England. And Christmas being near at hand, if the old Bear eat up all the Turkey, Finsbury cannot keep it; and we have been honied down in a good-natured sort of way long enough.' Poor old Grandmamma Fudge looked



## Page 82

dumbfounded, like at times we see a disconsolate individual, who nipped in a hail-storm, mourns the loss of his umbrella. Like death, it was necessary to keep close, tell the honor-saving committee to maintain their usual spirits, and call again, when in respect to their ancient character, they would get a listening for their grievances. With this valuable solace, condescendingly bestowed by the ancient gentlemen aforesaid did the committee go away happy, promise to be very good, and keep Finsbury before the world.

“The gentlemen having been respectfully bowed out of Downing street, a loud call was made to commence again at the dough-nuts. ‘I say, bring ‘em on,’ rejoined I; Smooth ‘ll help (I’d been seated a little back, watching the while) play at that or any other game, provided there be a rule of honor and economy to work out.’

“‘Be a little more modest, Smooth—if you please!’ spoke up my most intimate friend, Palm, who until then had seemed viewing the whole conclave with measured contempt. Indeed my friend Palm was a regular brick in his way, which fact was most happily illustrated in the manner he now and then threw the hard tokens at the head of his parliamentary brother Bright. It was as unfortunate as notorious, however, that in his dealings with the United States, his conduct was as dishonorable as uncertain. ‘Smooth, you are a large youth,’ said he; ‘but your reforming principles have too great a resemblance to innovations to go down without scratching, in this aged atmosphere of ours! Nor must you be so lavish of your manifest destiny policy; that, to me, is the medium by which you intend to come on this side of the big pond and stick your fingers into everybody’s mess.’

“I interrupted him just then; and in reply to a question I put, he acknowledged his conviction to be that we did things well and simply; but he made one little reservation, and that was that we did not do so well when we permitted the little State of South Carolina to imprison Uncle John’s nigger sailors. Then he said South Carolina was the *Empire State of Nigger Slavery*; and was not aware of his mistake, until such I happily removed by convincing him that she was the only Don Quixote of the Union; and as it was necessary for every nation to have such an inhabitant in its compact, merely for the purpose of keeping alive the humorous, so Carolina filled the void in America, where happily her little exploits were viewed as very harmless.

“Well, peace again being preserved, we drew up to have a feast of the hot dough-nuts, when a terrible thundering came at the great door. Then the figure standing guard, who resembled a flour-barrel in frills, announced the reporter of the *Times*; who said he must come in, for his folks, too, held a large stake in the game. And the individual did come in; and a right jolly-looking fellow he was, too; and in contrast with the fudgy old conclave, seemed bright, fresh, and ready to go ahead; and then he



## Page 83

said the *Times* and the country were two great institutions. 'You!' he spoke, advancing independently to the table, and grinning the old fogies almost out of countenance, 'have got to render an account of this game to the country! your just unequilibrizing everything; and my humble opinion is that you have got the fear fever in your heads.' The old gentleman took it all in good part; in fact (the truth must be told at times) they seemed rather to fear and like the man of the *Times*, who seldom failed in getting by some mysterious process the secrets of Downing street. However, as disturbances seldom come separate, no sooner had the man of the *Times* been smoothed nicely down with Downing street soft-soap, of which a never-failing supply was always at hand, than a most furious hue and cry again echoed through the old walls from another part of the house. Alarm and anxiety darted into the face of everyone present; all eyes stared in death-like gaze in the direction from whence it came. Smooth being in for a share of the alarm as well as the fun, looked along with the rest, when, lo! high on a seat in the corner, sat *Mr. Punch*, his comical face glowing through a sort of knot-hole and Toby perched on his right shoulder, growling and looking as if he wanted to bite every old fudge in the conclave. *Punch*, to outsecret the players, was, in a very clever sort of way, taking private notes, the subject matter of which he intended giving to his readers in a very condensed and elegant volume. This started the players to their feet, when each seized a book, and, letting fly at *Punch's* head, drove him scampering out of Downing street.

"Having got rid of *Mr. Punch*, and bowed the man of the *Times* politely out, Grandmama Fudge, in a strong Scotch brogue, said, 'Nu, luds, let us gang awa to the crumpets—bring 'um hither, mya bullies!' He drew a sort of simple contortion over his broad, hard face, and mouthed his lips, as if he would the amplest dough-nut be put on his plate. Palm, just as they were resuming their seats, insinuated that as the venerable old man was well gone in his dotage, he had better measure his diet somewhat after the judicious character of his diplomacy, which was celebrated for its small doses crookedly doled out. The dish was again removed, mouths began to water, eager eyes glanced upon the steaming viands, giving out their strong glows and unsavory smells. This incited dither strong, on calling the two cooks its, after many and tedious interrogatories, confessed, in fear and trembling, that Grandmama Fudge had strictly ordered them fried in grease of the Russian Bear, an animal for which he entertained a curious sympathy. And here it was observed, with no very commendable emphasis, that the precious old dote had a particular partiality for Bruin's dominions, nor could be driven from the strange hallucination. Another minute and the poor old man was in the most alarming state of mind



## Page 84

that could be imagined; the largest dough-nut on the platter had stuck half-way down his throat. To relieve himself of his unsuccessful attempt at swallowing things beyond his capacity, he called lustily for Palm, who, unfortunately, had left in disgust, the stench of Bear's grease being too strong for his capricious organs. 'He! he! he! ah mun, I doe believe to heaven it's all up—I doe!' gurgled the old man, struggling in spasmodic efforts to get the thing up or down. 'If I die,' he continued, 'with this lump of indecision in my throat, the consequences will be that no man will mourn over me.' Littlejohn, always ready to move as occasion required, sprung to his aid, crying 'Swallow it! swallow it! for the honor of Young England swallow it! If it comes up you're a dead premier: dead without a doctor.' The whole thing now became a complex confusion; no one knew how to unconfuse it. It was a sad mistake having its origin only in the want of the age's appliances to our day and its circumstances; he had attempted a nut he had not capacity to swallow. A dozen voices cried out 'Bring in the doctor.' and as many more said the case was a desperate one. Some run one way; some run another; 'and some never moved. Downing street was in tribulation. Then everybody ran in everybody's way; nobody knew what to do; nor could anybody find Mr. Chesterfield, the loud shouts for whom seemed to make him a character of some importance. Mr. Smooth kept very cool the while, thinking it best to maintain his philosophy up to a scientific point; and in that way he reckoned it was as well to send for Doctor *Punch*, who, in such cases was an adept of a practitioner, and had an extensive infirmary in Fleet street, where patients innumerable were healed for three-pence. Well, just as they were on the point of making a rush, a voice cried out—'Here I am! here I am!' and in another minute there jumped from under the table a suspicious-looking turkey, who stood upon the platter, clapped his wings, and sent the dough-nuts into a flutter about the room. 'I'm all right' he proclaimed, stretching to his extreme height 'let every man take care of himself.' My reader will scarce question my veracity when I say the turkey looked with grave disdain upon the unnecessary confusion, made at this moment by British cabinet cooks, whom it was gravely intimated, had lessened of Mr. Pierce's French cook, Monsieur Souley. Mr. Smooth, about this time, resolved to leave the donkey diplomatists, and drive his own ugly brutes home.

## CHAPTER XVI.

SMOOTH DINES WITH CITIZEN PEABODY.



## Page 85

“Smooth being a great man, as well as Mr. Pierce’s minister in general—and citizen Peabody being no less great in diplomacy, which he illustrated in the most substantial manner—it became necessary to make a demonstration: to this end did friend George delegate his hospitality in an invitation to dine with him at Blackwall. George was large and loose of figure, possessed a broad, honest face, bright with kindness, candor, and firmness: added to which a well-developed nose; a soft, yet watchful eye a mouth indicating gentleness; and a broad, benevolent chin, finished the make-up of the external man—if we except a neat pair of brown whiskers, and a head of dark youthful hair. Citizen George loved dearly his country, and was altogether a man who meant well, nor ever forgot those of his countrymen who reflected honor on their country when abroad. He had no genius for politics, had never aspired to the class *par excellence*; no, he espoused none of their dogmas; he let littler minds revel in such luxuries. The means by which little demagogues find themselves great politicians could reflect no fame to George: he served his country with less noise and more effect. If he was quiet and unassuming; if he loved his country to a fault, that fault was his own, not his country’s. How much more to be praised is he who seeks when in foreign lands to sustain the simple but grand spirit of our institutions! For sustaining the simplicity of our institutions is friend George most to be praised. The object of his labor was the establishment of a simple but real and effective diplomacy, from which international benefits of great worth might result. A few here and there had doubted the quality of his diplomacy; but no one bold enough to question his abilities as a diplomatist had yet been found. It is not what we are supposed to do, but what we really do, that ought to entitle us to respect. And had not citizen George done more to promote a kindly feeling between the too boastful peoples of England and America than all our well-paid ministers, their court luxuries, and costly retinues thrown in? That citizen George would interpose for peace and international harmony, in the event of an unfortunate misunderstanding between the two countries, was equally certain; indeed he had more than once had occasion to view with feelings of commiseration those small jealousies against which great minds have to contend while seeking to carry out an enlarged policy. Painful as may be the assertion, it is nevertheless true, that whenever questions of an intricate nature arose those whose legitimate business it was to act in the matter were either moved by the narrowest aspirations of party, or, yielding to their own more contracted views, were disposed to keep alive dissensions blighting to their country’s best interests.



## Page 86

“Deeper than etiquette and quibble (those much-beloved virtues of the time-serving and polite corps) had friend George delved into the recesses of human nature, that he might find a law upon which to build a comity of enlarged sentiment, having for its end the bringing together of Americans and Englishmen, cementing the bonds of commercial intercourse, and pledging the continuance of peace. Those whom he thus worthily drew together did he enjoin to cease their small jars and partake of his large jar, which was always plentifully stored. Be not surprised, then, when Smooth tells all his readers in general, and General Pierce in particular, that Citizen Peabody has founded a dinner diplomacy, contrasted with which all other species of the order are but secondary. This was indeed the means by which he hoped to, and no doubt would, develop a more fruitful international policy; for, meats and good drinks being never-failing arguments with fat Aldermen and Statesmen, who could doubt it? Smooth would here say to Uncle Sam, that there is no mistake about the effect of this sort of diplomacy, and begs that he will insinuate to Mr. Pierce the propriety of his suggesting to Congress through the medium of his next Annual Message (he will make a hit) the propriety of sending abroad good cooks instead of bad ministers. They must be well provided with gold eagles, and give the very best sort of dinners to every hungry citizen, at Sam's account; the boy will then shine in all his glory! Never dealing in sarcasms, nor casting reflections of an insinuating character, yet, Mr. Smooth cannot forbear to say that while the very polite worship at the shrine of the polished *corps*, stronger-minded men are always found doing homage to the meats and drinks—more particularly when they are good! Upon this most modern but very material principle of natural philosophy (with a great heart, and intentions to correspond) did our worthy and truly characteristic countryman pursue to usefulness his diplomacy. That it had excited the fear of small politicians and antiquated and very polite diplomats, whose trade it seriously damaged, was well known to Mr. Pierce and the world in general. Even this species of gentry was at times disposed to pay it compliment; but it was only on the ground of its relieving them of that *onerous tax* of now and then receiving their fellow-citizens respectably. Smooth is exceedingly delicate about mentioning here the onerousness of this tax, inasmuch as our parsimonious government has proved itself obstinately opposed to grant a sum requisite to the necessary respectability to be maintained at foreign courts.



## Page 87

“Well, the day arrived on which Smooth was to dine with Citizen George, and not the smallest idea had he of meeting another stray citizen. Happy in the enjoyment of our own greatness, Smooth expected to learn something of Uncle George’s opinions upon international questions in general, and to give him in return some account of General Pierce’s crooked notions of a national policy—so crooked, indeed, that they left him alike the laughing-stock of friends and foes. This was very easily done, for, being Mr. Pierce’s special minister to everywhere in general, and more particularly to Europe, where he invested him (Smooth) with power to draw up preliminaries for the ‘Ostend Convention,’ as well as to cut a figure on behalf of Young America, the power thus given made the divulging Mr. Pierce’s policy no breach of confidence. As for Young America, that very unassuming young gentleman was being gloriously represented by the very famous house of the three S.’s and Co. (Sickles, Saunders, Souley, Buckhanan & Co.), the latter very respectable gentleman having been received into the firm with the specific understanding that he sell out his large stock of old fogyism, and invest the proceeds in manifest destiny.

“Nothing is so easily attained as the flattery of small men; and yet no essence is more delicious to the soul of a sycophant, for it is he that loves to refresh his recreant spirit with human frailty. Mr. Pierce’s comprehensive and very elastic mind had not yet made a point of analysing this as properly as it was capable of being.

“Doing himself (Smooth) up in his very best fixings, he chartered a steamboat—that is, he got aboard a steamboat—and in the company of our very gallant Secretary of Legation (who has since joined the very excellent and honorable order of doubtful politicians), paid his pennies and steamed away for Blackwall. Here he and his friend sought the Brunswick, a very grand hotel, where now and then the vulgar do dine, and console their love of fashion with much show of dishes and very aristocratic prices. And now, to Smooth’s utter astonishment, on being bowed into a gorgeous hall by lackies in ordinary, who stood like tailored mummies along the halls and passages, he found it taken possession of by some hundred and fifty of both sexes, gaily attired, and altogether presenting the brightness of a bridal party. There were knights and baronets, great and small; some wore an insignia, but nothing else to distinguish them from the very vulgar. And, too, there was Sir William Busey, a good diner-out, and always ready to do such noble deeds. All stiff and staid, sallied up and down Sir James Muke, affecting to feel much annoyed because vulgar citizens would not regard him in the same distinguished light in which he contemplated himself. Indeed, were Sir James’s manners taken in evidence of his distinguished position, the verdict could not fail to be in favor of his only being set down a very distinguished bore. However, on the principle of forgiveness being sweet, did Smooth forgive Sir James, and charge his manners to defect of early bringing up.



## Page 88

“And, too, there was, all reserve, smiling and dignified, Sir Memberman Plenat, who wore no toy of rank, that article being largely developed in his manly bearing. There were also, be it known, other barons and baronets, some of whom were equally imbued with their own importance, others quite modest and gentlemanly in their demeanor. But, to make the greatness of the occasion complete, there was the little Lord Mayor, who, like a mirror reflecting a sun-shower, loomed forth in all the greatness of his own light. Of ladies there was no lack. Some were of well established celebrity; others were decked in costly fabrics to create a celebrity; a third were fair to look upon. The English ladies seemed round of person, buoyant and joyous of soul: the American queens of beauty (their faces sparkling of love and gentleness) moved to and fro, like sylphs of some fairy land, making splendid the scene. The dashing New Yorker, her smiles, unerring arrows, piercing whither she shot them; the vivacious and intelligent daughter of Massachusetts, all sensitive, modest, and graceful; the placid *belle* of Pennsylvania, whose fair complexion drew upon her all admiration; the bright-eyed Buckeye, with face so oval, than whom none was more coy, nor ever shot a glance or stole a heart so well; the rustic daughter of Down East, who affected great contempt for all superior people, and declared the queen not a whit better than anybody else; the buxom Green-mountain girl, whose motion was as crude as her cheeks were rosy; the New Hampshire prude, lisping, regardless of Murray; the statue-like Baltimorean, with queenly figure and all lovely face, dazzling in her beauty, like a diamond among stones less brilliant; the flirting blonde of Washington; the gracious Virginian, with features so classic and serene; the daisy-like daughter of Connecticut, ever ready to give out her wild unmeasured laugh—all were there. And then there came the imperious Carolinian, whose stately step, Grecian face, dark, languishing eyes, and thoughtful countenance, drew upon her the admiration of many an envious eye. And, to make complete the group, there moved haughtily along the proud Madame of Alabama, affecting the possession of each good and gentle attribute of womankind. She would have us know how much attention she drew upon her while being presented to ‘England’s queen,’ forgetting that it was merely the effect of her badly arranged lace. Indeed, the conclave mingled most socially. My Lady Flippington seemed not above a modest and very sensible condescension to the very level of the vulgar who surrounded her, and whose friendship she seemed to court.



## Page 89

“Citizen Peabody, as much good nature in his broad face as benevolence in his great heart, moved king among his guests, bestowing a smile here, and a cheering word there; but more particularly consoling the old maids, with whom he is a great favorite. No sooner had the genteel waiter announced the readiness of the festive board, than each gallant sought him a fair partner, and filed off in procession, those not fortunate enough to possess such an accompaniment being compelled to bear up with one of their own harder sex. Smooth was among the most fortunate, having succeeded in fettering himself to a Kentucky *belle*. Down a long, circular stairway, the procession proceeded, inspired by sweet music, and soon reached a spacious hall, set out with tables stretching along its whole length, and bedecked with the choicest viands, delicately overlaid with fresh-plucked flowers, impregnating the very air with their delicious odors. Indeed they looked more like beds of bright flowers trellised with silver and gold. A din of confused voices resounded throughout the hall as all took seats who could, while not a few added to the confusion by appropriating to themselves the seats of others. Mr. Smooth, being a man of the world, and Mr. Pierce’s minister extraordinary, took the best seat he could find, and made himself quite at home. Opposite him loomed out the hard, knotty face of Sir James Muke, who, suffering under the most painful grievance of having been deprived of his seat, so generously provided in a space to the right of the chairman, let loose some very unfashionable and badly moulded oaths. As if this were not enough, Sir James, whose temper had fairly boiled over, and to the great annoyance of less dignified ears than his own, did hurl most indiscriminately at the heads of astonished waiters several oaths less vile, but more pointed. ‘Soup! soup!’ he demanded impatiently, at the very top of his voice—a voice that sounded like the creaking of a door troubled with a chronic disease. Albeit there was no measuring the latitude Sir James would have allowed his feelings to take in demanding *soup*, and be-d—mn the astonished servants, had not Lady Constance Caution, who sat all calm at his left, reminded him in softest accents that ‘Citizen Peabody always invoked a blessing before he gave soup.’ Sir James in response kindly thanked my lady for her timely admonition, listened to the blessing as it fell solemnly upon his ear, bowed and extended his plate as the spontaneous Amen concluded the seemingly anxious moment. Calm but well directed was my lady’s rebuke; deeply did it tell upon Sir James, who, more in imitation of Smooth’s coarse manners, behaved henceforth with more regard to the feelings of those near him.



## Page 90

“It was now time to discuss the well-ordained set-out of viands. Round after round, the most delicious, came on with that disorder so characteristic of English servants. It will, Uncle Sam, be scarcely necessary for Smooth to add that great skill was displayed in safely depositing the meats and drinks in nature’s most appropriate depot. Most cheerfully was it performed to the accompaniment of music, merry laughs, and flashes of well-worn wit: the only discord discoverable, or which could offend delicate ears, being that one or two English Gentlemen, of very polished manners, obstinately refused to be contented with the long list of wines provided by the generous host, and must needs display their cultivated taste by ordering bottles of a name scarce known, assuring the polite landlord that they themselves would pay the shot *did Citizen Peabody fail to stand it*. Mr. Smooth had not the least objection to this delicate proceeding inasmuch as it illustrated a principle, and contrasted strangely with those much cultivated manners facetious gentlemen who so often waste ink in discoursing upon the vulgarities of Americans would have us fashion from. Wishing, however, these gentlemen may display better manners next time, we must beg the reader’s pardon for thus digressing and proceed.

“The meats having laid a very decided foundation upon which to build a tabernacle of joviality, and the nectar adding its exhilarating power in erecting a substratum for the fine work of the festival, it became necessary to top off with spicy speeches, which might indeed be compared to a compound of salt and cream very liberally mixed. From among his guests and great folks Citizen Peabody now rose, somewhat nervous, and with becoming dignity delivered himself of a very piquant speech, the bone and marrow of which was that Americans from home being moved by those sentiments the appearance of things new and strange naturally produce, the sequence was that they looked with an interest divided between reverence and curiosity to see their Minister; such a gratification he was only too happy in being the medium of affording. Nor, when he relieved that worthy representative of a tax his purse could ill bear, did he consider it less than a very agreeable duty. In reply to Citizen Peabody’s toast, ‘Peace and continued friendship between the peoples of England and the United States,’ the guests filled a bumper, and with three hearty cheers let the liquid run down so smoothly. Sir Arthur Coddlecomb’s name being coupled with the toast, and that compound of self-importance and bad grammar esteeming himself a great speaker, rose, and relieved himself of what is commonly called a very neat and appropriate speech. To Smooth his mind seemed on a wandering expedition; notwithstanding, he took occasion to refer to that approaching curse—an Eastern war, and also to divest himself of some very fine words, highly complimentary of America. Marked applause followed the speech, and Sir Arthur sat down bowing.

## Page 91

“The present Lord Mayor!” being drawn into the order of toasts, the individual filling that office, a firmly compacted figure, with well-rounded limbs, and a broad, pleasing face, set off by the addition of a well-lined nose, full intelligent eyes, a brow nicely arched, and organically well-developed, and surmounted with a superstructure of dark, glossy hair, tinged with grey, rose to reply. My lord, in addition to being rather shortish, possessed a countenance indicative of amiability rather than strength of mind or force of character. ‘Silence!’ echoed and reechoed through the hall, and for a few seconds all was still. Then the badge-bedecked figure, with dignity all sublime, rose to the order. His dark eyes wandered to to the right and left, then over the banqueting scene, and again toward the ladies. Smooth would here say, by way of interrupting his lordship, and for the better information of his readers, that Sir James, becoming somewhat civilized—perhaps he should say tamed,—and made conscious that he confronted Mr. Pierce’s special minister, pledged him in numerous glasses, and being now somewhat mellow, cooled away into an all-refreshing nap, during the enjoyment of which he, with unpolished bows, made known his approbation of each happy sentiment contained in the speeches.

“His lordship (the reader must now return) here commenced drawing from the cavities of his deep mind all the nice sayings of which his speech was so beautifully made up. Again he paused, made several gestures with his right hand, declared war upon all obstructing coughs, elongated his importance as never did peacock on a shingle, and proceeded: ‘My lords and gentlemen!’ Loud and good-natured laughing brought his lordship suddenly to a stop. ‘My lord is not in the—’, whispered Sir Matthew Moore, who sat all facetious at his lordship’s right. Sir Matthew, significantly touching his lordship’s elbow, while casting a sly wink across the table, enjoined;—‘Fellow citizens and ladies, your lordship!’ His lordship’s face dispensed a few gorgeous blushes as he hesitated, and with an angular motion of the head, he convicted another cough, and made the very best kind of a bow acknowledging the default. ‘Ladies, gentlemen, fellow-citizens!’ continued his lordship, not having altogether gained the firm footing of his equilibrium—which, however, was much relieved by sundry well-modulated *bravos* from the assembly—I ‘ave the ‘onor’ (his lordship must be pardoned for his onslaught upon the h’s) ‘in happearing before this respectable body of Hamerican gentlemen hand ladies!—ladies hand gentlemen! (his lordship suddenly corrected himself), let it not be thought that I ham bestowing flattery when I say I esteem it an ‘onor which I cannot too highly characterize, and for which I am so deeply indebted to my friend who ‘as so long and nobly contributed to the durability of friendly intercourse between the two greatest and most enlightened peoples on earth—the



## Page 92

man whom I am compelled to view as the greatest living diplomatist of *the hage!*' Here the company, with one accord, made a bow, while Sir Matthew interrupted his lordship by whispering, 'Nicholas of All the Russias excepted!' His lordship, with a peremptory glance at Sir Matthew, the meaning of which it was not easy to mistake, continued, somewhat testily:—'I will make no single exception for any such renegade!' Turning to the chairman, he reminded minded him of Sir Matthew's rejoinder, which he assured him he could not consider, unless indeed he sacrificed the high functions of that great office to which the voice of a people true to their traditions, and Providence, had so significantly called him at this all momentous moment—the breaking out of an Eastern war! 'No less surprized than hoverjoyed am I to meet so *respectable looking* an assemblage of citizens of that great country in the West, which we naturally view as the exponent of true independence, as well as our great hoffspring. Would *hi*, as the great representative of this city, be saying too much while asserting that in my 'umble opinion no one part of this expansive hearth (great applause) could send forth so respectable and orderly an assemblage of persons.' The ladies here shouted, and waved their handkerchiefs. Having received this distinguished compliment with due dignity, he commenced drawing aside the curtain that we might know more of his early history, which he felt assured in his own mind could not fail to hinterest the citizens of the United States in general, seeing that he belonged not to the 'haristocracy.' (This was received with a perfect explosion of applause.) In the days of his youth, when geographies were made without reference to correctness, and the study of globes was considered equal to the minds of those only who were learned enough to raise the devil, had he been taught from one of those imperfect pasteboards that Hamerica was an immense expanse of forests, inhabited by wild Hindians and curiously formed barbarians. And the impression thus made, he assured Mr. Smooth in particular, had so enrooted itself in his mind that he ever and anon found himself most mysteriously contemplating the want of a state of civilization in that great and glorious country. (Deafening applause). Here his lordship's animation was at the highest pressure; indeed so high was it, that a very respectable gentleman, sitting not far from Smooth, bowed, and suggested that the little Lord Mayor must have mistaken the present company for his dining senate. 'Now,' continued his worship, emphatically, 'nothing could more happily 'ave affected a change in my mind, than the beholding with my own eyes the lovely fair ones and respectable persons here present. To that great country, Hamerica, shall I hereafter look for the noblest results to civilization and mankind. (Cheers). It is now nearly two 'undred years since the foundation stone of that great republic was laid by



## Page 93

the immortal Washington.' His lordship's speech was again interrupted by a demonstration of surprise on the part of the audience. He paused a moment, as if questioning the cause. Sir Mathew's aid was again called into service; reminding his lordship that his history was at fault, he added, in a tone most prudent, 'Not yet one hundred, my lord; 1776 marks the date of the declaration of independence.' Thanking Sir Mathew for the kindly hint, he apologized to his hearers, and proceeded. 'One hundred years, then have hardly rolled around, and we find that wonderful country presided over by a commoner—the choice of a free people, who raise him to that proud eminence once every eight years—vieing (here Sir Mathew again interrupted by saying, 'Every four years, my lord!') with the oldest and most powerful nations of Europe. Thanks, Sir Mathew,' interpolated his lordship, rather tartly, turning round. His Honor now proceeded for some time on a rather smooth course, except that he left out a great many h's and put in a great many a's. The great minds of America, he said, had done a world for her greatness. Here he condescended to pay what he was pleased to consider a very deserved compliment to General Flum of New York, whose broad and deeply wrinkled face he espied at the extreme end of one of the long tables, where it loomed up like a careworn lantern amidst a cluster of delicately tinted foliage. America, said his lordship, sought her great men, not from among the effete walks of the haristocracy, from the more legitimate hemisphere—the common walks of life. With a strange elongation of the body did our speaker emphasize the remark. Great men were the gift of an age, and a nation's fortune; and with which he was more than happy to say Hamerica had been blessed—would that his conscience and love of truth would permit him to say as much of his own country! He saw the personification and embodiment of America's great minds in the countenance of his much esteemed friend General Flum, whom his very soul joyed at recognizing present. (We will here add, by way of parenthesis, that the knowing ones of New York had a less exalted opinion of Flum's talent, which had remained hid under a pewter pot, but for General Pierce, who dragged it to the light of day for the purpose of eventually harmonizing his cabinet). Fortunate was it for the welfare of a great country that such men existed; they seemed born to a special purpose, which to him was a medium of conserving and protecting the great international well-being of the two peoples. That purpose was the greatest the world could contemplate in this great age of pounds, shillings, and pence; and with such a mind as he knew General Flum possessed, and the stronger arguments with which the generous host had conciliated all differences international, the two countries were sure to continue in a bond of friendship. To this distinguished compliment our general was pleased to make an approving bow. Again, his honor, in compliment of himself, informed



## Page 94

those present that nothing could be more significant of divine will than that at this momentous crisis, when a bloody war was on the eve of hurling its vengeance over Europe, and devastating the nations, he should be called to administer those high functions of a nation the duties of his office involved; and, too, when an opportunity would be afforded him of exercising those mental gifts with which God had happily and liberally endowed him. With the full force of this valuable interposition he had not a doubt but that the peace and harmony of the world would again be restored. Nor should her Majesty's ministers ever ask in vain his advice;[\*] and, as to the right of impeaching them, he would tenaciously reserve that to himself on all occasions. Whenever they evinced want of experience, his knowledge of intricate questions and mystifying diplomacy should always be at their disposal. A single flourish more, his face glowing earnest, and the little great man proposed (having reiterated that great men were the gift of an age!) 'The great minds of America!' This inspiring sentiment he coupled with the name of General Plum, and sat down amidst a shower of very good-natured applause.

[Footnote: His Honor recently brought forward in the Board of Aldermen a resolution having for its object the impeachment of Lord Aberdeen and his cabinet.]

"This compliment, as the vulgar say, took Plum all aback. He rose in all the dignity of a Pierce diplomatist; his face brightened, conscious of merit; his tall loose figure elongated; he mastered several very ill-positioned coughs, and with glances very congressional, as if seeking a reportorial eye, spoke as modern politicians mostly do when President-making. But before Smooth proceeds to transcribe the elements of his speech, some description of his person may be necessary; in truth, he hears the reader demanding it. Plum is a long-jointed man, tall and coarse of figure, has a broad inexpressive face, with a spacious mouth and thin lips, disclosing irregular and discolored teeth; to which is added a sharp, projecting chin, prominent cheek bones, lazy grey eyes, deeply sunken under narrow arches slightly fringed with short, sprouting, reddish hairs, and a thin high bridged nose, forming a curvature on the ridge, and twisted to the left at an angle of some twenty-two degrees. This singular deformity of the nasal organ arose from the fact of its having been in contact with the hard hand of a pugilistic congressman; at least so went report. To those exhibiting nice taste for the appearance of our political gentry, we would say that the general, not at all like Smooth, added to the beauty of his *personel* a low, reclining forehead, superstructed with bright crispy hair, that stood confused all over his head, and gave him the appearance of having been chased by some infuriated bull. Of the general's general estimation of his own capacity, Smooth is sure the reader will not impose a penalty so far beyond



## Page 95

his humble capacity as that of finding within this narrow world of ordinary presumption anything with which to compare it successfully. Having had many misfortunes in his upward career of political life, which was singularly marked with disappointments, notwithstanding he had lent forcible aid in making many a President, he never has permitted the strongest opinion of his own talent to die out from his mind; and now that that well-cultivated opinion is made stronger by the all-important verdict of his eloquent worship, how can he resist the real proof of his being a much-neglected great man? 'Mr. Chairman, and fellow citizens!' ejaculated Flum, nervously. 'My friend, the Lord Mayor, has paid a well and much deserved compliment to our country, our country's institutions, and our country's great minds. So, far, ladies and gentlemen, as that compliment applies to myself, I may or may not have deserved it; delicacy and reserve are always the noblest attributes of great men. But—and with all due deference to those accomplished gentlemen of England do I say it—it is to the democratic character of our institutions that we owe the usefulness of those great minds, as reflected in our country's greatness. Yes ladies and gentlemen, the democracy!—'

"Here Flum was interrupted by Sam Spooner from Boston, who sat at his left, and with a gentle touch on the arm, reminded him in a careless whisper, that Citizen Peabody, although a very unostentatious man, was no democrat; nor was it certain the ladies would all be inclined to father his adoption.

"Flum, somewhat nonplused, allowed a smile of endurance to invade his broad inexpressive face, and rejoined with what he was pleased to consider very nice wit. 'If Citizen Peabody,' said he, 'be not an independent democrat I am exceedingly sorry for it—nothing more being required to make him a perfect man!' At this the company set up one of the very best-natured laughs ever rung out of human organs. Flum, not comprehending its meaning, continued, ere it had subsided—'I hold nothing more imperative than that our generous host, Citizen Peabody, should at once declare his intention of not only becoming a round, sound democrat, but joining the Young American party; which will in truth be a more forcible proof of the purely democratic spirit of that diplomacy he has so worthily founded, and which can now claim so many happy results as its offspring. No system of diplomacy heretofore established has been so redolent of influences tending to strengthen the bonds of international amity; for, indeed, meats and drinks are all-powerful.' Here some indifference was manifested on the part of the English aristocracy present, which, causing a momentary suspension of the speech, produced a very unexpected calm, much to the astonishment of Flum's own dear self. 'Well, I apprehends the gist on't—democracy don't go down, no way, this side the big pond. But, if John is old, and has got his noddle so full of antiquated



## Page 96

nonsense that he can't get an idea into his head suited to the exigencies of the times, democracy, with its all-elevating power, will stand by him, give him new sinners to sustain himself, and carry him through those struggles aristocracy has not nerve to surmount.' (Cheers). Having literally illustrated every beauty to which democracy was heir, wasted several well-constructed and not badly directed compliments on General Pierce's patriotism, called upon those present to come boldly out and imitate Young America in all his go-ahead proficiencies, Flum turned to his worship, on which wonderful embodiment of statesmanship and experience he intended to return the compliments that functionary had so flatteringly bestowed. As disappointments will occur, even with the greatest of men, so did Flum find himself totally inadequate to the discharge of this duty. There was, however, a responsibility resting upon him, which he must, considering that it touched that which was an honor to England and the English nation, discharge. It was, that he had to congratulate old England on the possession of such men as his Worship—men born to the exigencies of an age, and in whose charge the distracted affairs of Europe, now threatening the peace of nations, would be sure to find a satisfactory solution. Here his honor made a most appropriate bow in acknowledgment, while a few gentlemen, rather loquaciously disposed, smiled and Miss Mapplebank, from Arkansas, covered her face with her white handkerchief. It was evident to all present that the two greatest men of the two greatest countries had met on a great international platform (the banqueting table), and as the exchange of verdicts upon the capacity of each other only served to make stronger the opinion they had always entertained of themselves, everyone present was ready to throw up his or her hat in compliment of a discovery which must reflect to the great good of nations in general. Flum ended his speech, the mediums had met; international unity was perfect. Mr. Peabody bowed, the great men signified their acknowledgment, the company rose as the general made his last flourish and wiped the sweat from his brow, and all adjourned in the very happiest phase of good humor. Smooth being somewhat modest, and always bashful when in the presence of ladies, did not make his speech until they had left. It may be well to say that Mr. Smooth's speech was gracefully responded to by Citizen Peabody, who expressed himself delighted, and had no doubt but that in the care of Mr. Smooth, General Pierce would make an unexceptional President. After this, gentlemen feeling very jolly, we all adjourned to the gorgeously furnished hall up stairs, where we joined the ladies, partook of most delicious coffee, enjoyed many happy salutations and cordial greetings. The Lord Mayor and Flum having embraced in style truly Roman, and pledged themselves over a cup of coffee, never to lose sight of their own greatness, nor to forget the beneficence of that all-wise Providence



## Page 97

that had called them into being to struggle with the great events of the age, the company dispersed homeward, delighted to the very heart. If there was one who did not feel a glow of satisfaction, admonishing him, as he wended his way homeward, to lend his influence for the maintenance of that mutual good feeling which should exist between Englishmen and Americans—between nations so kindred in spirit, and whose interests radiated from a common centre, he must have belonged to a class Smooth would not deign to designate. Citizen George would that England and America shook hands, remained friends, and left the gunpowder and big-word business entirely to newspapers and small politicians of the Pierce stamp.

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### SMOOTH LOOKS IN UPON THE MIXED COMMISSION.

“Mr. President Pierce, who was by his friends supposed to be a comical and very small miniature of General Jackson’s political school, and whose cabinet was of the Bunkum stripe, intimated to Minister Smooth, in one of the interviews he had with him, which were numerous and very confidential, that in his tour over Europe it might prove profitable to the country in general were he to keep a sharp eye on the movements of a very respectable firm which did business under the name and in the style of Soule, Saunders, and Co.—funny functionaries, who were now cutting figure No. 1, and expecting him (the man Pierce) to cut the smaller figure No. 2. No one personally acquainted with the merits of the aforesaid gentlemen would be surprised to hear that they had threatened kingdoms, emperors, and kings, astonished peoples, and given deluded individuals wonderful opinions of that country which could send such embodiments of its wisdom and spirits to their aid. Indeed, Smooth found himself, while in Europe, made an exception to the generality of Mr. Pierce’s diplomatists, whom, it was generally admitted, had either shown spunk or turned gentlemen fighters to no account. It mattered not how much these strange sprigs of capricious Young America misrepresented American manners, education, and sentiments; no, to revolutionary spirits of the *real-red order* were they the all-great of America’s bone and soul. But let us not arouse the gods by recounting their many follies; the generous soul of America has indeed been compelled by them to father many an extravagance; and, too, though more modest, had not Mr. Pierce delegated extensive powers to the Tomkin’s family for the very harmless purpose of transacting over the world such business as old Sam had several times declared unnecessary, and which was in opposition to the interests of the nation, the said Sam being expected to pay all the shot. Pierce said Smooth must keep an eye practically to windward in reference to the business this species of gentry were sent to perform. Hence, acting from principle, which was Smooth’s motto, and with a full knowledge that Sam was curiously



## Page 98

good-natured, had broad and ever open pockets to accommodate that worthy characteristic, which no one thought it any harm to relieve, he gave his (Smooth's) assurance that the charge of neglect never should be laid at his door—that he would watch the Tomkineses! To deny the existence of a singular prompting to kill time over aught that Sam stood sponsor for, was a very good-natured absurdity; few indeed could be found who did not consider him an old foodle, who had fathered more expensive abortions than any other individual, and was willing to father more. How, then, could Mr. Pierce help viewing with suspicion the performances of those tool-grinders he had sent abroad! The amount of kitchen labor he had himself performed and the number of times he had laid on the grindstone to the turning of his man Fourney, formed no excuse; forsooth, it enabled him the more clearly to comprehend the ins and outs of this wholesale style of coming possum over poor old Sam, whose credulity was only surpassed by that fatherly old gentleman, Mr. John Bull, whom millions love to live upon, and spend their lives in getting out his affections and his purse.

“Now John and Jonathan had for many years amused one another with the long-drawn music of diplomacy, played on very expensive keys, made with the express view of settling all ungrateful international growlings. Diplomacy, nevertheless, found these growlings beyond its power to reconcile; and now, having worn out its pipe over them, they were shuffled off upon the genius of a mixed commission, which high convention was expected to exert common sense and forego etiquette, and result in a mutual settlement of all outstanding questions since 1812. But, by a mysterious process, which never fails of effect in such cases, a deal of time had been unprofitably consumed by this supposed immaculate commission. And now the high contracting parties sought an extension, that much more might be consumed in the very same way. Uncle Sam being very good-natured, the request could not be refused.

“Through the Strand to Wellington street, Mister Smooth wended his way, and soon found himself between rows of high and stately buildings, in one of which, all calm and easy, sat the convention. Entering a narrow arch to the right, he passed down a passage so intricate and dark that it had the appearance of leading to a cave, and in a few minutes was confronted by a polite attendant, who ushered him into the presence of the international dignitaries, then sitting round a large square table, in the centre of the room, in moody contemplation. The room was high of ceiling, about twenty-five by eighteen feet in dimensions, and in appearance very well adapted to the pursuit of knowledge, for the display of legal ability. Upon the table, which seemed somewhat infirm, lay in excellent disorder, a few massive books, two green bags, a jackknife, Murray's Grammar, Walker's largest Dictionary, four large pipes, an ample supply



## Page 99

of fine-cut tobacco, and sundry very bad writing materials. In one corner of the room spread out a green screen, behind which was various simple but very useful ware; this, together with two extra chairs for strangers, standing at the other corner, constituted the furniture. There was a strong legal air about the table, notwithstanding its promiscuous burden. At the head of it sat like Cicero—but he had none of Cicero's genius in his soul!—a man moody of countenance and portly of person: he was called the Umpire, and they said he was chosen because of his birthplace being America. Some had gone so far as to characterize the choice an evidence that Mr. Bull was inclined to act upon the square, and permit Cousin Jonathan to have it all his own way,—never for once keeping in mind that it mattered but little where a man's birthplace was, if he had long since forgotten the spirit of its institutions. Indeed, as far as sympathy and manners are concerned, an American may be more than an Englishman, and *vice versa*. Smooth does not mean to insinuate that the case is illustrated in the present functionary, whose face was of that stern cast which at times would lead to believe it unhappy under the fatigue of a too solid body. To this singularly stern face was added a nose, facetious gentlemen might be inclined to call the ripening fruits of good wine, while pervading all was an air of sordidness curiously at variance with the good parts repute asserted he possessed. Smooth would have taken him for a man whose mind was of a mechanical turn; for at times he would become dreamy, his eyes would close within leaden lids, and his body seem prone to cool away into sleep's gentlest embrace. Again he would, as if with much effort, raise those leaden eyelids, draw forth a languid breath, stretch his arms athwart, and, as if 'twere pain, listen to the legal logic boring its dryness into his very soul. The tax did indeed seem beyond his power of endurance.

“Being introduced all round, Smooth commenced the conversation by saying, in a warm and good-natured sort of way:—‘Well, Citizens!—how do ye make out to get time over the bank? S’pose it’s because Uncle Sam stands at the gangway serving the shot?’ They did not seem to brighten up at this remark. It was evidently viewed as rather out of place; for the Umpire quickened his nodding, and the other five functionaries constituting the convention permitted their faces to yield looks by no means significant of good-nature. Quoth, by the way of conventionality, were they right glad to see Minister Smooth; further, they shook him warmly by the hand, and made many inquiries about Pierce and his policy—a thing he never had, hence the impossibility of enlightening them. Mr. Pierce had an eye to Cuba, but no policy whatever with regard to the getting of it: in addition to this, Pierce himself so far defied analyzation that many grave and experienced diplomatists had declared the problem beyond their power to solve.



## Page 100

“Again, our grave conventionists said they had heard it whispered that Minister Smooth (generally called Solomon Smooth, Esq.), being special Minister of Mr. General Pierce to nowhere in particular, had secret instructions to arrange matters for the holding of an extraordinary convention at Ostend; which said convention, being principally composed of very respectable foreign gentlemen, would especially take into consideration the Cuba question, as also the deciding the point as to whether the Spanish spirit of the people of that island would detract from the national purity of Americanism. In the event of Cuba forming an integral part of the federal compact, a grave question would here be involved. Assuring them they were not wrong in their conjectures, Smooth was invited to sit down, in a very honorary position, where, having examined certain papers pertaining to previous proceedings, and passed an undivided approval upon them, he remained in all his dignity, listening with great legal seriousness to the very important case then being argued by General F——, whose eloquence was of the ‘rip-roarer’ style, and whose tragical flourishes were as terrific as dangerous to the limbs all persons in proximity. Smooth’s seat was at the left of the Umpire, that functionary’s right being flanked by a gentleman lean of figure and studious of countenance, said to be the American Commissioner, a worthy person of great legal abilities. A little below Smooth sat the compact figure of a man in a genteel garb; an air of amiability sat on his countenance, which ever and anon seemed playful; indeed, the very soul of geniality darted from a pair of large blue eyes that gave great softness to an oval face, nicely outlined in its parts. In a word, he was what might be called a very promising limb of the modernly honorable law profession; nor would our opinion of him have been less exalted had he refrained from the very innocent sport of amusing himself with blowing peas through a quill, which he did in all the playfulness of youth, his head being level with the surface of the table the while. We had never supposed him the British Commissioner but for the assurance of those in possession of stronger proof than we had been permitted to see. A little below him, and with seeming indifference to the arguments of which General F—— was relieving his mind, sat a sharp-featured man, whose lithe figure, clear complexion, quick gray eyes, finely arched eyebrows, well-developed brow, and head, superstructured with a profusion of light Saxon hair, that hung soft and smooth down his neck, an even cut mouth, with thin lips, slightly turned, and disclosing teeth of great regularity and pearly whiteness,—a nose high, sharp, and strictly Grecian, gave him a personel of more than ordinary attractions. Smooth apprehends the reader will not charge him with a diversion when he says that any lady of taste might have become enamored of this gentleman without for a moment subjecting



## Page 101

herself to the charge of stupidity. Queen Victoria might, indeed, claim for herself the merit of having done a pretty thing for Cousin Jonathan; for the two pretty gentlemen she had chosen to represent her in the mixed commission bespoke how much she had regarded the value of personal beauty in the settlement of those claims, so long outstanding, and so beset with grave difficulties. Notwithstanding all this, the last gentleman was said to be young, but a clever lawyer. Now a play of the humorous invaded his face; and while from his eye there came out a strong love of the ludicrous, a curl of sarcasm now and then ruffled his lip. They called him the British agent—in other words, the Counsel for Her Most Gracious Majesty. Smooth had no stronger evidence of this fact than that the gentleman seemed very contented with the way time went, amusing himself with making paper spy-glasses,[\*] with which he quizzed objects on the floor, then took lunar observations through it, the broad disc of the Umpire's red face affording the medium of a planet. To General F——, who was then in the full pressure of his speech, making his, to him, crushing arguments a legal treadmill for his handsome brother, he seemed a perfect pest, inasmuch as whenever the General had got a real stunner of an argument on the crook of his mind, and just where he would be sure to lose it if the course were not left clear, he was sure to interrupt him with some annoying question, which in most cases amounted to nothing less than disputing the premises assumed. The General had not received these interruptions with so much perturbation but that they were always coupled with a sarcastic leer, the significance of which had not been well directed, nor should ever be indulged in by legal brethren engaged in the settlement of grave international questions. The reader may say:—'who so cruel as to begrudge the legal gentry their little innocent sport!' As the British Cabinet is at times a sort of toy, with which the facetious House of Commons loves to play the game of knockdown (just for the fun of seeing how much trouble it costs the nation to build it up) so the good-natured gentlemen of this mixed commission seemed to view the gravest international questions.

[Footnote: The writer here describes what he saw, without any attempt at ridicule.]

“‘I reiterate!’ continued General Flum, for it was no less a personage than he who poured out his eloquence to the Convention: ‘If the gentleman for t’other side of this question was only to read Kent’s Commentaries, or take a peep into one Story’s pleadings, ’twould do him more good nor all (we quote verbatim) the stale law he’s larned in the Inner Temple—’twould!’ Here Flum paused, and majestically turned round, as if to see how his antagonist felt. His legal brother was very quietly pursuing his lunars with the paper tube, expecting soon to work up all the curious angles of the Umpire’s face. To properly intersperse



## Page 102

this amusement he would now and then bestow a good-natured and very sly wink upon a wag who sat at the opposite side of the table, ever and anon tickling with the feather of his quill the nasal organ of the Secretary, who had just melowed away into a delicious nap. Flum proceeded: 'I mean no disrespect to the proficiency, or to the very high position which my learned brother holds in this Convention; but what will be said by the two governments when it is found that among the great array of cases brought before this high tribunal so few have been settled without a reference to the Umpire? I sincerely believe that did Her Majesty's Councillor exhibit more readiness to meet our demands with a liberal and becoming spirit, many of the cases which have passed before this high tribunal might have been settled with little consumption of time, and at small cost to the nation. I know General Pierce won't like the way things are done here, and how can I doubt, seeing the distinguished person present who represents him in the capacity of special Minister (here Smooth acknowledged the compliment by making one of his very best bows), that he will be made acquainted with the facts.' The Umpire, his countenance quickening, would inform gentlemen that the many personalities and invidious references he had so often heard reminded him rather of the pettifoggers of a police-court than the high representatives of two great governments, met for the purpose of dispassionately discussing the merits of grave international questions. He had become wearied over such a useless waste of time, had purchased a whole library of law books (which he hoped never hereafter to have occasion to use), and must content himself with honor for his recompense. Now he was willing to submit to the world whether there could be any honor conferred upon him by sitting from day to day, listening, at the same time using every effort to keep awake, to the legal *cross-shots* of gentlemen not inclined to agree to anything. The Umpire ended in a voice deep and musical, drew himself again into his attitude of contemplation, and like an Egyptian Sphinx seemed gravely studious with himself.

"The American Commissioner approved of all that had fallen from the lips of the honorable gentleman. So did the English Commissioner, who suspended his little amusement of the quill and the peas, and commenced examining the pages of his Vattel. Having laid aside the paper spyglass, our English agent rose quickly to his feet, and with eyes darting legal tenacity, said he had a few remarks to make in reply to what he considered had very improperly fallen from the lips of his legal brother. He did not intend disrespect to the very honorable Umpire, nor the gentlemen Commissioners, when he said that the rules on which the business of the Commission had been conducted seemed to him to be a complete mumble, growing deeper and deeper with difficulties. Language had been used in that forum which would be more genially localized in Whitechapel, Drury Lane, St. Giles's, or the Surrey Side: he was sorry to see his transatlantic brother so familiar with the piquant jargon of those atmospheres it were well not to be too familiar with.



## Page 103

“May it please the Umpire, I ask the protection of this tribunal from any such imputation as the gentleman’s insinuation would leave me under,” said the General, almost bursting of anger.

“There seemed to be a nice little difficulty brewing, which threatened a readier dispatch of business than that which had marked their efforts in the settlement of claims outstanding. Here again the Umpire, with the aid of his two Commissioners, interposed for the peace and respectability of Mr. Pierce’s family. And here Mr. Smooth is happy beyond his power of expression to state, that after a very few unmeaning explanations, the gentlemen Councillors bowed politely to each other, laughed with buffoonish good-nature, nor seemed a whit less than the very best of friends. ‘If General—will proceed with his argument!’ said the Umpire, gravely, by way of what writers call parenthesis. ‘Then, to the point of this case: now, ye see, the law on our side of the water aint a bit like it is here, on this;’ specially with cases of this kind. This is the case of a vessel with niggers on board, bound from one part of the United States to t’other, but driven by what sailors call stress of weather into a British port called Bermuda, where the natives (report says they are not very enlightened), not having the fear of God before their eyes, nor understanding the constitution of the United States, nor comprehending the principle by which certain democratic States in the free American Union make good property of such things as men, did regardless of the laws of those States, insult the sovereign flag, which was alike the protection of property and citizen, no matter in what part of the world it floated, and set all the niggers free! After consuming an hour in arguments of this stamp, the General claimed to have made out his case, inasmuch as the niggers being property to the laws of the States to which they belonged, and the flag of the United States being absolute in its character of a protection,—no matter under what local jurisdiction,—the claim against England for compensation was as just an one as ever man could present for man; did she withhold payment, it must be at her peril.’

“His legal brother now rose, a good-natured smile playing over his sharp face. Before commencing, he would say he wished his learned brother had taken a more dispassionate view of the case, and laid down a basis of broader principles. Much of the difficulty in settling the many claims that had been presented for adjudication arose from the fact of his learned brother laying down rules to suit his own case, which he would not admit when applied against him. Further, he had not the most faint idea of the nigger question being dragged before this tribunal for adjudication. He had hoped that that question might be left for settlement on the soil of America, where those best acquainted with the evil could most readily find a remedy. But if it were true that the flag was



## Page 104

inviolable, and that such was held as law, and regarded in good faith by the federal government of the United States, how came it that certain States in the federal compact so far disregarded the rule as to scoff at the idea of the flag being superior to the municipal regulations of the port; invade the decks of British vessels, regardless of the flag; and drag from beneath its folds British citizens, whom they incarcerated and made criminals merely to suit the caprices of a municipal statute? Strange indeed was it for a nation great as was the American to lay down a principle of foreign policy the action of which could only be allowed when it suited the immediate interests of that nation, and was rejected when it came in collision with them. He would tell the learned representative of that nation, that the spirit manifested in such a course to him 'seemed more to comport with that specious style of conducting business better understood among hucksters!' Here the man of the American side of the house evinced some excitement, and quickly rising to his feet, said he would not stand silently by and hear such imputations cast upon his house, country, and people. The judiciary of the United States could not be impugned—none was purer; while the foreign policy of the United States stood out a model for the nations of Europe to pattern from. A counter interruption again took place. The Umpire drew a long breath; the good-looking English Commissioner heaved a sigh, and again commenced amusing himself with the quill; the sedate American Commissioner yawned, and turned contemplatively the leaves of a commentary; to end, they all seemed seized with the yawning fever, which was kept up until they laughed right earnestly at one another, the handsome gentleman stretching his arms athwart, and making a hideous grimace. At length this state of things was put an end to by the Umpire, who did hope gentlemen would see, in his dinner hour having arrived, the necessity of either resting the arguments here, or postponing them for another day.

“In rejoicing, her Majesty’s sharp featured Councillor having pronounced a high eulogium on his Honor’s power of endurance, and the onerous duties imposed upon him by the Governments which he so nobly sought to serve, and from whom the mere honor afforded but a meagre compensation, (inasmuch as he felt convinced the proverbial ingratitude of Governments would be carried out in their not even compensating him for the large outlay he had been constrained to make in law books) hoped he might be permitted to make a few more remarks. His honor bowing assent, the well-looking legal gentleman, in blandest accents, proceeded to say Jonathan must not lay a foundation for others he was first to knock down; for if a rule applied to great principles it must not be made subservient to small exigencies of an opposite character: Jonathan must bow to his own stumbling-blocks. It did, however, seem that this Commission had been



## Page 105

viewed by certain parties as a sort of *ola podra*; before which deluded persons thought nothing more certain than that their manifold grievances would be patiently heard, their claims find a ready settlement, and their family affairs all be handsomely arranged. There had been men from the coast of Africa seeking a protection under cousin Jonathan's wing, by which their demands on Old John were to them certain of being paid. There were good men from Manchester, who, forgetting their anti-slavery sentiment's, sought a relationship with our noble cousin which dated from previous to 1812, and under the shadow of his wings now sought to make the rascally Britishers pay for certain slaves frittered away from them while residing in Georgia, during the last war. There too, were noble Dukes and Earls presenting claims against our cousin for certain lands in Florida, presented long since to them by some imbecile king, who would upon the same style of conditions, have given away the whole Continent. The said gentlemen had long since forgotten the titles, and were only reminded of them by the existence of this Commission. English gentlemen from Mexico sought, through the virtues of this Commission, pay for property appropriated by General Scott during the Mexican war. Pensionless widows thought it the grand centre of generosity, and sought through it compensation for dead husbands. Holders of Mississippi bonds regarded it a perfect El Dorado, at the shrine of which those long repudiated mementoes would be duly paid, hopes and angry passions requited, and old Mississippi herself again, as bright as a new-coined Jackson cent: and last, but not least, gentlemen with very credulous and speculative faculties, and who held the most doubtful species of Florida bonds, had made their hearts glad on the certain payment of them by the Commission. 'In a word,' said the learned Councillor, 'nothing can be more certain to my mind (and I am borne out in the belief by the variety and character of the claims presented to this Commission) than that the whole world is beginning to look on our worthy transatlantic cousin as the most generous, if not the most credulous, fellow extant! Whether his model friend George Saunders, can take to himself any merit for having created this now very general opinion in Europe (by virtue of his most extraordinary circulars), Smooth is unable to decide; but certain is it that every disaffected subject on the continent who can get up spleen enough to fancy himself a much injured republican—' Here General F—— interrupted, by submitting to the honorable Umpire whether these remarks were not gratuitous, irrelevant, and improper. The Umpire, having given his opinion that they were unduly long (extending a whole hour beyond his dinner-time), begged the gentleman would turn the key to his concluding remarks. 'I have only another remark to make,' rejoined the gentleman with the sharp face: 'If Sydney Smith had lived, there would have been more wit and sarcasm levelled at this



## Page 106

mixed Commission than would have filled an octavo volume. I cannot forbear to say, however, that strange as is the character of many of these demands, claims, and grievances, some of them might have been settled without such a deplorable waste of time, had it not been for the interference of that phantom devil, Mr. General Pierce's black pig, who is always construing principles to suit his purposes. So avaricious is that animal, that no amount of swill seems to pacify his desire to overthrow principles and defeat great objects. No place would seem too obscure for the brute to get his nose into; no demands too egregious for his appetite; no rights too daintily established for his disregard. He is here, there, and everywhere—demanding with the same ferocious spirit. We had hoped Mr. General Pierce would keep him at home during the deliberations of this Convention: let us console our disappointment by trusting to what the future may bring forth.' Here the Umpire's patience was at an end—patience no longer remained with him a virtue. He rose moodily from his seat, said the sitting would adjourn until to-morrow, and betook himself to his dinner, which he added he feared would get as cold as the gentlemen's pleas. This was rather abruptly bringing matters to a close. The legal gentlemen, as if disturbed elsewhere than in their thoughts, looked terror-stricken, packed up their law tools, shouldered their green bags, and, in the company of Mr. Smooth, sought a place whereat to bestow good care on the inner temple. Smooth, with all deference to the opinions of the very respectable gentlemen of the mixed Commission, begs to inform his readers, and Mr. Pierce in particular, that they never will catch him looking in upon them again.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

SMOOTH RECEIVES THE DOCUMENTS, AND CALLS A CONGRESS AT OSTEND.

"Several months having passed, during which no further instructions from the General came to hand, I began to think he had forgotten my mission, and taken himself to dieting on gunpowder and War-Messages for the next Congress. Then I received a private note from his boy Caleb, in which he stated very confidentially that everything was waiting the next turn in the Brigadier's mind. Caleb's letter discovered much impatience with his position, and a good many sly remarks which were intended as a hit at Marcy and his budget. I should tell the reader that an additional cause of my anxiety was the not receiving a reply to a private and confidential note to Pierce, in which I remonstrated with him against the propriety of holding a thing so open to base ridicule as a Congress of American Ministers at Ostend. That fraternity of infallibility, kings and princes, might become somewhat uneasy at its presence, many honest-hearted republicans would be deceived, and its result be only the illustration of an unprecedented amount of folly on the part of the American Executive. But the thing was a great



## Page 107

pet with Caleb, Jeff, and Pierce, who knew that Marcy would have to father the abortions, which were generally laid at his door. With all these very natural difficulties before me, I decided to charter the next Collins steamer, and proceed to the White House, there to learn in person what the boys were doing. I was anxious to know what had become of Pierce and Papa—whether Papa was yet administering the pap-spoon to the General, by way merely of counteracting the effect of the charcoal being *piled on* by the boys—Jeff and Caleb. Now, lest there should be any one in Washington unwilling to separate Smooth's better inclinations from the general character of the Convention to be holden, he would here say that the very best of his abilities were exerted with the General against the policy of making his Ministers cut so ridiculous a figure in Europe. He knew also that Monsieur Souley would take upon himself all the cooking business, and have it all his own way, as they say in England.

“One morning, while consoling myself with the prospect of soon leaving Europe, its aristocracy, its blighting kingcraft, and its squabbles, who should confront me but grandfather Steady, a monster despatch under his arm, on which loomed out in all its scarlet the great seal of the State Department. Steady had recognized ‘*Confidential*’ on the envelope, and bore it to me safely ensconced beneath the ample skirts of his coat. ‘Something of great importance for Minister Smooth!’ said he, making a very diplomatic bow as he extended the packet, made his compliments, and retired. Steady having disappeared, I opened the packet, and, equally surprised with the reader, what should I find but a State document of great dimensions, commissioning Smooth without further delay to call together at Ostend, or such other place on the continent of Europe as was celebrated for its pure air and good liquors, a Congress of American Ministers! Three several times did the commission reiterate—‘Pure air and good liquors!’ as if the tastes of the very respectable gentlemen forming the Congress made such adjuncts inseparable from the prime object of their deliberations. For some time did I exert my most mature deliberations to get the diplomacy of the thing square into my head, which I thought was more than had been done by the State Department. Well, you better believe it was a puzzle! It was so Dutch, as we say. I was directed particularly to consult my old and much-tried friend, James Buckhanan, whose sanction and presence at the gathering was necessary, as well for the purpose of imparting an air of dignity to the Convention as counteracting the fast spirit of those gentlemen, who had gained a doubtful notoriety through their extensive dealings in cheap popularity. Marcy added, in a private and confidential note, that he felt inclined to question the policy of inviting certain gentlemen, but as a matter of etiquette it could not be foregone; and then he was anxious to keep



## Page 108

peace in the house, I was ordered to bag Buckhanan, and, if against his will, carry him captive; to summon Monsieur Souley, who was an excellent cook, not a bad fighting man, but a diplomatist fit only for the small work of the *carbonari*; to dispatch Mason, who they said was cultivating his French, with the hope of being up in the language of diplomacy in the course of six years more; to enjoin Mr. Fay, well known in Switzerland for his love of quiet life; to inveigle Mr. Belmont, who at the Hague had taken upon himself the reforming his brother Israelites, and turning to account sundry Dutch bonds; to do as I pleased with Mr. Daniels, who had sustained the character of America by affecting contempt for all the aristocratic snobs about Turin, who would to his annoyance crowd themselves into his opera-box, and make too free with his fair favorite; to be sure and capture Mr. Jackson, through whose courteous and dignified demeanor America was making herself respected at Vienna; to send an escort for Mr. Spence, who had endeared himself to his fellow-countrymen in Constantinople; and to send a jackass for Mister O'Sullivan, who had at Lisbon become celebrated for his misfortunes at bagatelle and chess—to drum them all together for the one grand object. As for Seymour, Pierce thought it not good policy to disturb him, seeing that nothing had been heard from him since he found his way to St. Petersburg. With such spirits as these, Europe could not fail to be astonished; and then, when it was borne in mind that the consideration of its distracted affairs was the object No. 1 of such a Convention!

“While calmly cogitating the first and last move in the getting up of the thing, my lodgings, ‘42, Bennet street, St. James’s,’ were invaded by the man Dudley, who declared himself a special minister of Mr. Pierce, who sent him as envoy in general to Mr. Smooth, under whose directions he would proceed to get together the Congress at Ostend. I examined his credentials carefully, and finding them of Mr. Pierce’s legitimate stripe, commenced comparing notes and arranging the preliminaries. He said, Pierce told him I would have a hard tug with old Buck, who was like an aged turtle, and never moved until a great deal of fire was applied to his back: but then his friends said he was fast, once he got going! Notwithstanding Buck had very confidently told a friend or two there was no understanding Pierce, Pierce said he understood him, and, with Saunders to lend a hand, the getting steam on him would not be so much of a job, after all. I must here say to the reader that we had not long proceeded with our conversation before the fact that our man Dudley was commissioned to play the part of Corporal Noggs to the fire-eating portion of the Cabinet, at the small end of which Mister Pierce was appended, discovered itself. This fact fully established, I sat down and commissioned him, first—to keep his mouth shut; secondly, to proceed immediately to the



## Page 109

Continent and get together the boys; thirdly, to enjoin upon every one the necessity of declaring the object of the Convention to be the relief of mankind in general; and fourthly, to be careful while in France that none of Consul Saunders' *epistles to all oppressed citizens* were found in his pocket,—that functionary being held as the great revolutionary star, sent from the West to move the dead waters of an Eastern world.

“Having dispatched the man Dudley on his mission, with many bows and much esteem for his high consideration of my position, and acting on the intimation from Pierce, I packed up my portfolio, and in a Hansom cab made the best of my way to 56, Harley street,—a large mansion, in one of the back rooms of which they said my esteemed friend James Buckhanan had for some time past been burrowed. That is, Mrs. Sprat, who knew all the gossip of the legation, declared such to be the fact. She saw very little indeed of the ‘Governor,’ whom she believed smothered in his diplomacy, for he appeared never to want anything but the spittoon, and now and then, at long intervals, a clean pair of stockings. Arriving at the door, I rang lustily the bell, and soon there appeared a very stiff flunky, in democratic livery of bright colors, who bowed me into a great hall, and after grinning at me for about a minute, said he reckoned I was a citizen o’ the United States. ‘From Vermont, I take it?’ he continued, in quick succession. I told him it was no matter about that; if he had no objection I would take a look at his governor. While I was deliberating, the best-looking ‘yellow fellow’ outside of Carolina made his appearance, and immediately commenced taking charge of me. He said he understood diplomacy all up, (having studied dancing and attended Mrs. Sprat’s tea-parties for more than two years!) and would put me through if I said the word. Then he added, with a *sang froid* that seemed quite grateful, that though he wasn’t exactly governor of the establishment, he would show me up to the man who was, and under whose dictation Mr. Buckhanan had for peace sake accepted a fifth-rate position. On my motioning him to proceed (he seemed much inclined to affect a good deal of etiquette) the fellow led off, through a long dark passage, crowded with empty Genessee flour barrels, champagne baskets, boxes of cast off pipes (breathing redolent of tobacco), decrepit arm-chairs, old foils and boxing-gloves, numerous empty beer-bottles, a lot of worn-out dancing slippers, and a quantity of second-hand nightgowns and side-saddles. What use diplomacy had for these abused relics we leave the reader to conjecture. Opening a door on the left, my guide with a bow accompanying a graceful bend of the body, ushered me into a spacious room, with the announcement:—‘A gemman fum de States, Mr. Prompt!’ No Mr. Prompt could I see, such was the state of the atmosphere. In fact, I was set upon by a perfect fog of tobacco smoke.



## Page 110

“Well, stranger—glad to see ye this side the big pond!” croaked out a little sharp voice, peculiarly nasal. I replied I thought it was rather foggy about these diggins. ‘No matter about that,’ he rejoined, ‘we do clean business in this establishment, notwithstanding the puffing, we deem it necessary to keep up in diplomatic matters.’ The atmosphere clearing a little, and objects becoming bolder outlined, I discovered a figure so singularly lean and sharp of visage that you would have sworn him peculiarly adapted by Providence for cutting his way into a better world. Upon the walls of the rooms, which were very dingy, hung suspended, tomahawks, bowie-knives, scalping-knives, bows and steel-pointed arrows, an innumerable variety of dressed scalps, much worn Indian uniforms, and various other things—all adapted to Western warfare. Here and there stood sundry reed chairs and cronic tables, of Florida pine, while the floor was very liberally set off with what are vulgarly called spit-boxes, which, unlike the pages of an antiquated Bible that lay neglected in one corner, had been very generally used. Smooth would here say that such adjuncts as the latter, seemed to be, judging from their presence in all our Legations on the Continent, inseparable from Pierce diplomacy. In the present case there were, in addition to the above-named fixtures, seventeen patent rat-traps, with which members of the Legation amused themselves when not invited to dancing parties. Smooth could not help thinking there was no need of the latter pieces of furniture, while Mr. Prompt, the sharp gentleman, was in the establishment. Indeed, Mrs. Grundy would have said he was sharp enough to be used as an instrument for splitting the nicest diplomatic points; while the promiscuous relics of antiquity arranged along the passage she would have sworn illustrated nothing so nicely as Pierce’s confused policy, the saddles being indicative of how easily he rode over the credulity of the people.

“In the centre of the room stood a five-legged round table, somewhat nervous and infirm of age. Upon it stood, badly arranged, two tumblers of Cuba sixes, an ample stock of fine cut tobacco, about a dozen long and much discolored pipes, a spacious ash-box, and the dirty boots of Prompt, his lean figure sprawled back in a dilapidated arm-chair, a long nine in his mouth, from which he incessantly puffed an immense volume of smoke. Prompt’s face was a perfect picture of edge-tools; and with his easy air generally, his hands stowed away in the ample pockets of his nether garments; his passion for the Byronic—made known by the extravagant roll of a turn-down shirt collar—and his bushy hair thrown back on a veiny and narrow forehead that seemed to have been cut away to fit his hat, had an appearance easily imagined by those who have witnessed in New Hampshire the general make-up of an itinerant stump orator. I bowed as he cast his eyes along down my figure, and gave a friendly wink. ‘From York State, I take



## Page 111

it?' he continued. I replied I had been in York State, but was born on Cape Cod. 'Well,' he rejoined, 'don't matter where a feller's born nor grow'd, only he's got the right sort o' bone and siners in him.' The general appearance of things had mightily changed since I last visited the place—in truth, I could scarcely believe my own eyes. Mr. Prompt now drew forth a handful of long nines, said he never liked to smoke alone, and invited me to join him. I excused myself as well as I could, adding that I had no small vices. The truth was, the spit-boxes, and rat-traps, and a large supply of tobacco, looked so suspicious, that I was at a loss how to comport myself: I feared I had got into the wrong box. 'Anyhow,' said Mr. Prompt, 'bring yourself to a mooring—remember we treat all citizens alike here—and be quite at home in the establishment. Smooth, I believe, is the name?' He looked at my card as I bowed, expecting every moment to see him rise from his easy posture. With a sort of languid endurance he said the establishment was at my service—that anything I desired would be put through like Jehu. A set of snobby fellows, he said, had for a number of years made a den of aristocracy of the place, but the aspect of things had been changed now to suit the good fellow-spirit of our institutions. Here he drew a deformed hat over his forehead, and let fly a moist projectile; which, instead of taking effect in a box of saw-dust, expanded ineffectually upon the face of a female dog-iron. I suggested that it warn't so bad a shot. He replied, he reckoned—Just at this moment the full yellow face of the negro protruded itself into the doorway. 'Mas'r,' he ejaculated, 'dat's da geman (pointing to Prompt, whose face was seen to contract) what do up all da plomacy ob dis establishment.' The yellow face withdrew behind the green baize. All this time I had been careful not to disclose to Mr. Prompt that I was minister in general to Mr. Pierce.

"'Citizen,' said he, continuing his cigar, 'that ar nigger's sassy enough for three legations. Pierce sent him here;—for what, no one about the establishment can tell. Anyhow, seeing it's you, I was about giving out an idea of what an interminable muddle Pierce would get everything into if he had but his own way; but, as there isn't time now, and as you won't join me in a cigar, suppose we send out and have a first-rate brandy-smash?'

"This I respectfully declined; I thought it would give him so much trouble. Indeed, he said there was so much to do about the establishment, and nobody to do it except himself. In reply to a question, he said, the governor—meaning Mr. Buchanan—had worked himself out, and was laid away to dry. At present he alone constituted the establishment. There used to be a secretary (the salary, he had reason to believe Uncle Sam yet paid) but nothing had been seen of him for several months: when last heard from, he was entering into a partnership with Monsieur Souley for the purchase



## Page 112

of Cuba, at any price. As for the attaches, one got no pay, and was expected by the government to do a deal of work, while the amount paid to the other was so small that he very wisely spent it in cab-hire to see the sights, which it just covered. One might be almost sure of seeing the former gentleman on the approach of a court concert, while the presence of the other at the legation prognosticated the advent of a drawing-room. In fact, Mr. Prompt said, with considerable logic, that when people were only half paid they were sure to do nothing. As for himself (here he smiled, and commenced a new cigar), why he did up the diplomacy of the establishment by the job—that is, he absorbed in his lean person the functions of minister plenipotentiary, secretary of legation, and gentlemanly attaches. And for the performance of their duties (the pickings were not worth mentioning) he would, at the end of a few years, make out his account against Uncle Sam, whom he was sure was too straightforward and generous not to allow it. 'Fact is, stranger,' he reiterated with great assurance, 'I am almost worked to death here.' A monster gray cat having entered the room, and inspected curiously the several rat-traps, Mr. Prompt, as if much annoyed, drew himself with great effort from the crippled chair, and drove her unceremoniously out of the room, accompanying her retreat with Peters on diplomacy. 'Then, Mr. Prompt,' said I, 'may I consider myself entirely in your hands?' Again spreading his boots on the table, and languidly elongating his lean body, he replied, 'nothin shorter!' In answer to a question, he said he could fix me out with anything—from a passport to a grindstone. In fact, he was a man of universal qualities, and could accommodate the needy with almost anything. He could issue a passport for the infernal regions; he could give a card to dine with old Jones when one got there; and by way of facilitating matters, lend him a saddle to ride there. I admitted he was exceedingly generous, and well calculated to bring out all the various functions known to diplomacy; but, having no taste for the sport he proposed, intimated my preference for a box at the Opera, or an invitation to dine with her Majesty. 'Well, I do declare,' says Prompt, who was seized with a very troublesome cough, 'if you ain' got a-head on me there!' Seeing his confusion, I begged he would pardon the intimation. In reply, he good-naturedly drawled out, 'them things, somehow, don't come within the privileges of this establishment. Can accommodate ye with a box at the Theatre Royal, Westminster—play the very best sort of patent farces in that national place of amusement. Then they've an audience so forbearing, that it makes no matter what they play, and the fun of that establishment beats bull-fighting all holler. Should the low-comedy man some call Pam, and his walking gentleman, John, chance to have steam up, you will be sure to get your money's worth. Take my word, said he: Covent Garden



## Page 113

and Drury Lane are but dull show shops compared with it.' Again I thanked Mr. Prompt for his kindness, and told him I would wait till the next bull-baiting came off— understanding from good authority that such amusing spectacles in that house had frequent possession of the boards. Did I want to revel in the sights and dark places of London, Mr. Prompt said I had better wait the return of the absent secretary, which could not be more than six months hence.

### CHAPTER XIX.

#### SMOOTH DISCOVERS HIMSELF.

"'Now, citizen!' said I, thinking it was about time I disclosed to Mr. Prompt who I was, and also the character of my mission, 'as you seem to be the establishment in general, and can grant such very accommodating passports, let me inform you that I, Solomon Smooth, am Mister Pierce's Minister Extraordinary, to Europe in particular.' Mr. Prompt's sharp visage now became sharper. 'Pierce,' I said, 'had commissioned me to call together all the boys, in congress at Ostend.' In testimony of what I had set forth I produced the document, at the sight of which he relieved himself of a very handsome bow, brought his lean body to a perpendicular, and, with an effort at modesty, laid aside his hat and cigar; this I regarded as creditable to the establishment. 'The governor's cum, Mas'r Prompt!' exclaimed the negro, again thrusting his full yellow face into the door. Prompt was evidently abashed at this sudden announcement.

"'I'll see the governor, if you have no objection,' said I, attempting to relieve his quandary. He replied he had none whatever; that I would find him a trump, though rather low. 'He seldom comes out of this place!' ejaculated Prompt, leading the way through an extremely narrow and crooked passage into a dark cloister-like room, lighted by a small lamp that shed a sickly light over the few antiquated pieces of furniture it contained. 'Minister Smooth will please to introduce himself!' said Mr. Prompt, ushering me into the room, and closing the door as he retired. Descrying through the pale glow of the lamp my venerable friend Buck, who was seated at a table in the centre of the room, amusing himself with the cat Prompt had so unceremoniously kicked out of his presence, he immediately recognized me; the reception I met would have done honor to companions in the Continental War, meeting after a long absence. He said Saunders and his boy Dan (that is, he was boy to Dan) had reduced his light wonderfully. Here he began pricking up the wick of the old lamp, while I drew up a seat and commenced without further ceremony disclosing the object of my visit, and making known to him some of Pierce's opinions (private) on matters in general. 'Read this carefully,' said I, handing him my instructions from the State Department. He took the document like one compelled to do a thing against his will, while I attentively watched the changes that came over his countenance



## Page 114

as he read it. 'Indurable Pierce!' he muttered, adding a languid sigh. Then his portly figure seemed to expand, his hair to grow whiter, and his general appearance to assume a more venerable air, as he read the portion that particularly directed me to bag him, pro or con. Indeed, his crooked eye became straight with indignation, while his neck no longer retained its wonted curve. 'I have studied the man, but find I yet know little of him!' said he, recovering his usual calmness, and shaking his head significantly. I inquired if he meant Pierce. He replied, testily, in the affirmative. 'Several times has he made me cut a ridiculous figure in the eyes of the nation. I cannot disclose my true position,—he knows that, but will have me a partner to this most stupid of projects;—well, well!' Here he seemed in the act of yielding to his despondency, when to revive him I presented several private notes which I had received from Pierce, explanatory of his views with reference to the immense benefit that would accrue to the nation, and manifest destiny, from this great congress. 'Now Smooth,' continued the old man, relieving his mouth of an encumbrance, which, missing its aim, took effect in the face of the cat, which set up a fearful yell and scampered out of the room, 'although I can't understand Pierce, I have great confidence in you, and there is something so ridiculous about this affair that I feel like relieving my mind to you, which I do without prejudice. I care not to examine your confidential notes; they are doubtless of a like character with those I have myself received from him on this very subject. The man seems crazed. He has inundated me with confidential trifles about Cuba, the affairs of Europe, the Central American question, and the holding a Congress at Ostend. I am bored to death with his opinions, which, on the policy of the latter, are cheap indeed.' The old man now became exceedingly nervous; indeed, he seemed like one laboring under the first symptoms of an over-dose of Parr's Life Pills. 'Smooth! I am sacrificed; yes, sir, literally sacrificed to all his folly! The despatch bag has groaned under the very pressure of his nonsense, which I am compelled to read and commit to the flames, lest our nation should suffer by its disclosures. I have appealed to him on behalf of my conscience; I have reasoned from the depths of my experience; I have besought him to spare my reputation—and here you bring me fresh proof that it has all gone to no purpose.' I could not help pitying the venerable old man as he shrugged his shoulders, and gave such a desponding look. 'Pierce,' he continued, 'will smash the democracy before he has done, by simply making it ridiculous. Thrice have I remonstrated with him in all my power of persuasion; but it has fallen harmless at his feet, for here he is, up again and harping. He singularly argues in his private despatches that Europe being in a fuzzle generally; that England having enough to do at keeping her grumbling



## Page 115

people quiet, and fighting her old friend Russia; that Monsieur Napoleon, the very Republican Emperor, having three large kettles of fish to fry—one in helping England to whip Russia, by which means he hoped to wipe off an old score; the second, to affect a great determination to fight for the independence of the Turks, who say they will lend a hand when they get in cash; and the third, to crush all revolutionary movements at home; and that all having enough to do in their work of protecting despotism and neglecting liberty, the time is singularly opportune for America's making one grand demonstration. Thus, he said, Pierce argued. It was all very well showing a saucy front to mankind in general, but if we undertook to bag Cuba, there must be something more than threats and war messages to back it up.' I could not throw up my commission; therefore begged my friend Buck would consider my position, and excuse in me what seemed fast. And then I had despatched my Corporal Noggs to arrange matters with Monsieur Souley, who was to play the part of engine-driver, crowding charcoal for the whole team. After the manifestation of much indecision, my friend Buck consented to go, at the same time stipulating that he should not be led by certain fast spirits. 'If I go, Smooth,' said he, 'it will be with virtuous reluctance; the whole thing is sure to come out. Further, my boy Dan (a sharp fellow he is!) has gone on a little affair respecting Cuba, by which he expects to make hit No. 1.'

"At this moment we were interrupted by the brusque figure of George Saunders appearing in the room. George instantly recognized me, and said he anticipated my mission, having received sundry private and very confidential letters from Pierce on the same subject. It seemed that Pierce and his boy Fourney had written any amount of private and confidential letters on this to be kept very secret affair. George made himself quite at home. Indeed, the uninitiated might have mistaken him and the cat for fixtures of the establishment. Calling me on one side, he begged I would consider Mr. Buchanan entirely in his hands. In order to bring his speed to the right gauge, Dan and himself had, he said, spent several months hard labor; but now he was happy to say they had found the key to his movements, and nothing more was wanting. As for Buck's presence at the Ostend convention, just leave the arranging that to him. Further, in order to make a demonstration while it was sitting, he would write an epistle to the Emperor of Austria, forewarning him of the sympathy in America for the spirits he held down in oppression. This would be a decided hit, he added, with a knowing wink. So confident was George of his mastery over the venerable old man, that I felt it would not be prejudicing Mr. Pierce's interests to leave the matter entirely in his hands: so bidding them a very good morning, I signified my intention of calling again in ten days, when I expected he would be ready to move on; if not, I should be under the painful necessity of bagging him, as directed by the State Department.



## Page 116

"I had left the legation, and was passing into Portland place, when, to my surprise, I was overtaken by the indomitable George, who insisted that I join him in some gin-and-bitters at the first drinking-place. To have declined George's amiability would have been immaculate folly: he always bagged his friends, precisely as Pierce directed me to bag the ambassador. Having stopped at the first crossing, as they say in Georgia, we drunk ourselves, wished Pierce much joy with his project, and parted, George saying he would turn steam on the old man, and have him all right when I called.

"Prompt to the hour, no sooner had the allotted time expired than I presented myself at the Legation with an express wagon, for the accommodation of the old man indispensable. Corporal Noggs had got the boys all right on the continent, and such a jolly time as was expected! George had evidently been screwing up the old man, for I found him in the very best humor. There he sat, portly and venerable, surrounded by boxes, carpet-bags, and trunks; all, he assured me, containing various diplomatic implements of great value. At his feet purred the cat diplomatic, as if anxious to accompany him. 'These boxes are a great trouble to me,' said the old man, getting up with some effort, and pointing to three, about two feet square each, and labelled as follows:—No. 1, '*Cuba by purchase*,' below—'*Copies of Correspondence with our Minister to Spain, some years ago*,' at the left corner the words—'*Promiscus*.' No. 2. '*Cuba at any price*'—underneath—'*This side up, with care?*' No. 3. '*Cuba of necessity, and as a link in the manifest fulfilment of destiny?*'—underneath—'*Handled only by the experienced porter*.'

"The hall now rang loud of confusion,—the fiery-eyed cat ran screaming to the door, maids' eyes were seen wanting to weep, Prompt affected great grief,—he would be worked to death,—porters were seen carrying out the luggage, and then waited to convey the old man. Then Prompt said—the negro, as if to make the picture complete, was making all sorts of grimaces in a corner,—if Dan should by some accident return, what a deal of extra work he would make! But Smooth made up his mind that such complaints were the natural consequences of an irregular system. At last, having got boxes one, two, and three nicely cared for, we bundled in the rest of the traps, following then with the old man indispensable. Saunders being present by appointment, insisted upon his right to drive the team, and suddenly springing upon the box, seized unceremoniously the reins, and put the horses into full gallop. Increasing his speed, until it became frightful to delicate nerves, the poor old man's fears for his safety became so excited that it required all my strength to keep him from jumping out and breaking his neck, notwithstanding I had tucked him away so nicely among the boxes before starting. Down Portland place, through Oxford



## Page 117

street, up Holborn, and down Cheapside, to the Bank (astonishing the natives as we went) we drove, and from thence to St. Katherine's Dock, where was moored the trim little steamboat chartered to convey Mr. Pierce's plenipotentiaries safe to Ostend. Buck was in a sad state of excitement when we stopped; he resembled an individual just escaped from a perilous adventure. He discharged himself clumsily from the wagon, his face undergoing singular changes of color the while, and cast a few savage glances at Saunders, who very composedly sat on the box endeavoring with might and main to suppress a vagabond laugh. 'Now, Saunders,' indistinctly sputtered the old man, as that bluff-sided individual turned upon his seat, rather knavely casting a comical glance over his shoulder, 'I'm not afraid—my courage never fails me; but that steamer don't take me to Ostend if you're a passenger! Mind that now!' Saunders lowered himself gravely from the box, and with serious countenance assured the old man that no danger could result while he drove the team. In reply to this, the old man declared that with Saunders on board a blowing-up was certain. The much-dreaded gentleman, however, soon quieted the envoy's fears by assuring him that accompanying us to Ostend was farthest from his thoughts, he having made all the necessary arrangements for throwing a bomb-shell into the camp from this side of the water, as directed by the Uncle Caleb and the boy Fourney. Boxes one, two, and three being safely on board, we supported the old governor after them—Saunders on one side, and Smooth on the other. Then the bell rang, and the steam thundered and roared, and the little craft glided on her way, Saunders waving his adieus from the wharf, and crying out at the very top of his voice—'Don't forget Cuba!' and 'go it, Buck! Go it, Smooth!!'

## CHAPTER XX.

### ARRIVAL AND GRAND RECEPTION AT OSTEND.

"Our passage was attended with extremely pleasant weather; and nothing remarkable occurred, except that the Dutch crew thought Mr. Buckhanan a very great man, and the object of his mission the overthrow of European dynasties in general. Twice they undertook to regale him with sour-kroust, which he pronounced inferior to that made in York county, Pennsylvane. As to me, they declined to be convinced that I was not Governor of Kentucky, having a singular belief in the peculiarities of that State for growing long citizens—the tallest man always being elected governor. Perhaps I should have added that the Schiedam was only tolerable, the brandy bad; and that Buck, having forgotten his tobacco, was compelled to resort to very bad Dutch loggerhead, with which he kept the swabs busily employed.



## Page 118

“As we entered the port of Ostend, once so celebrated for the defence of its garrison, a salute of thirteen guns was fired from the old fort, which we attempted to answer with a rusty swivel, Buck waving his hat, and singing ‘Yankee Doodle’ to the burghers who filed along the dilapidated dyke. As the steamer neared a landing-place, we descried the coarse figure of Corporal Noggs, surrounded by numerous of his fellow citizens, prominent among whom was Monsieur Souley and the Chevalier Belmont. In addition to these welcoming spirits, there came also a Dutch band, which, ere we had made fast alongside, struck up something they intended for *Hail, Columbia!* The reader will please appeal to his imagination as to what our reception must have been, when I tell him that shouts and huzzas, interspersed with this discordant ‘Hail Columbia!’ rent the very air, and made faint the roaring of the steam from the funnel of our little craft. Boxes one, two, and three, were now sent forward under an escort to the hotel, while a triumphal chair secured to two long poles was placed in proper order for the reception of my friend Buck. Rather against his inclination, and not without expressing some doubt as to the propriety of displaying so much pageantry in a foreign country, was he packed into it by Monsieurs Souley and Belmont. Corporal Noggs now formed in order the procession, which moved in state through the city, headed by the band playing the ‘Rogue’s March,’ which it mistook for ‘Yankee Doodle.’ Such a funny procession! The reader may imagine the figure cut by my venerable friend, when I tell him that the triumphal chair was borne on the shoulders of Monsieurs Souley, Belmont, Daniels, and O’Sullivan—the two former being in the lead. Close in the rear of the chair, your humble servant, Smooth, took up his position, riding a female jackass, an animal domesticated by Monsieur Souley, under whose saddle she had borne up until the flesh was nearly off her bones. This was tapered off with an everlasting string of seedy citizens, for whom an innumerable quantity of goats seemed to have a fellow sympathy, so close did they follow. At the hotel, from the balcony of which streamed the stars and stripes, the uproar and confusion was beyond description. Could some of the old burghers have risen from the tomb, they might have imagined a modern siege of that city they so nobly defended in times gone by. Staggering and sweating, the four envoys bore their precious burden to the great porch, whence he was escorted to the balcony, upon which he stood, like a Roman of old, and, by the advice of Monsieur Souley, delivered a stunning speech, that versatile functionary translating it into Dutch. It will scarcely be necessary to add that the speech proved a decided hit, and was received with shouts and acclamations. Not a little done over, the old statesman was now regaled on delicious kroust and gin-slings, and put carefully to bed by a Dutch chambermaid. This was at three o’clock in the afternoon. At seven I marshalled all hands for a grand banquet, which had been prepared without any regard to expense, it being intimated that Uncle Sam would settle for the whole thing.



## Page 119

“Fresh and refreshed we all appeared ready for action, and as bright as could possibly be expected after such a fatigue. The table was set out in grand style; indeed, it literally groaned under every delicacy of the season—not excepting krout, the glows of which impregnated the atmosphere. Buck said he would sit opposite the krout; but that was objected to, on the ground of his eating so much as to change the tone of his speech, which was expected to be more than usually spirited. After so little opposition from Monsieur Souley, who wanted the place himself, it was voted that I should take the chair. Of course I could not refuse the honor; but in order to illustrate the three principles of our political policy, I was cautious to stipulate that Buck sit on my right and Monsieur Souley on my left. Here we were—steady, very steady, and very fast. Belmont insinuated, rather ironically, that Buck could no longer be considered of the steady school; in fact, Saunders had so cultivated his component parts that he might now, without any fear of contradiction be put down as remarkably fast. I need scarcely add that the viands were discussed with great gusto, Monsieur Souley absorbing so much of the *fricasee frog* that his glossy black hair, which had before beautifully undulated over his shoulders, now curled tighter, his eyes sparkled brighter, his face became more olive, and his periods more intensely French. O’Sullivan, too, had procured some capital Irish whiskey, which he said he already felt in his boots. At ten o’clock there was a general secession of knife and fork, and a resort to the less tasteful amusement of speech-making. Souley, however, had all the while said all manner of things about, and brought all sorts of charges against Louis Napoleon, whose government he denounced in very general terms, not dreaming that that shrewd sovereign had introduced two spies in the capacity of waiters. The cloth being removed, Monsieur rose, considering he was in duty bound, and commenced throwing off the rounded sentences of the first part of a very long speech,—at one moment denouncing princes and kings in general, and in the next threatening to smother Spain with an interesting exposition of her perfidy. Her puppet government was a base mockery; he said Espartero had grossly deceived him!—Here he was brought to a stand by Mr. O’Sullivan, ‘It’s meself thinks the gintleman ’s about debatin matter what ‘ll cum afore the Convention to-morrow,’ interposed that gentleman. Monsieur Souley replied somewhat tartly: he hoped the gentleman from Ireland would not interrupt him. Order! was now called for on every side, and an appeal made to the chair, without whose interposition a savage encounter must have resulted. The whole company were now on foot, interposing for peace; nor had I time to assert my authority, when, decanters of port and claret standing close at hand, Souley seized one, and O’Sullivan the other, as if for weapons of mortal combat, and



## Page 120

commenced a series of threatening menaces. The waiters were not accustomed to such feints, and one, before we were conscious, of it had run down stairs and alarmed the house. Landlord, servants, and a whole troupe of police, came rushing into the hall, as the two gentlemen of Verona, revealing the joke, made the politest bows over their glasses, which they gracefully emptied. I was about deciding that Monsieur Souley's language was decidedly personal, when he proclaimed his determination to postpone his speech until to-morrow. He would however, conclude by proposing a toast, which he need scarcely add would be heartily responded to by every one present. He would propose the health of the venerable statesman on the chairman's right—a man who had long and worthily maintained the highest rank among his country's statesmen, and whose opinions (although he differed with them at times) were world-wide! (Great sensation). Mr. Buchanan now rose, evidently affected by the immensity of the cheers. His mien was at once dignified, and when contrasted with the promiscuous countenances that surrounded him, wore an air singularly American. He began by saying he was happy to say he did not feel himself a stranger in a strange land. (This being translated into Dutch by Monsieur Souley, the invited guests present received it with loud acclamations). We read the same books; we were animated by a kindred love of liberty; we spoke the same language; we enjoyed the same immunities of a constitutional government; and that spirit which animated us to fight for liberty had its origin in the same stock! Here Mr. Belmont interposed by reminding the venerable statesman that the Dutch of Pennsylvania and New York could not be said properly to represent the whole American Union. Order being demanded and restored, Mr. Buchanan apologised for the grave error, which he charged to the delicious quality of the krout. He seemed unconscious of what he had been saying, and suddenly became aware that he had mistaken his theme, and was letting off the big end of his model speech, with which he had so often entertained his friends at feeds given by sundry Lord Mayors of London. The joke was too good; the old man could not suppress a laugh at his own mistake, and sat down, intimating that as he would have something to say to-morrow he would now bring his speech to a close. (Uproarious applause). Again Monsieur Souley rose, and amid shouts of—'question!' said the question was of no kind of consequence, that he always went on the principle of making himself heard. Further attempts to rein up Monsieur Souley would have been sheer madness; so he continued his speech, which included fifty irrelevant topics without discussing one. He even charged Louis Napoleon with poisoning the champagne. Whatever of truth there might be in the charge, we only know that the speaker ere he had concluded his speech found himself standing alone, the whole Congress having dropped off into a profound sleep. Becoming indignant



## Page 121

at this display of indifference, he stopped suddenly, commanded the waiters to wake up the sleepers, and himself commenced an uproar by smashing the tumblers and decanters, after the fashion of a French fiddler in for a frolic. The company with one accord offered an apology, joined in drinking the health of the speaker, charged the delinquency to the strength of the poisoned champagne rather than that of the speech—which was narcotic, rather), and adjourned to meet in Duitenethipicgnisher's Hall, at twelve o'clock on the following morning. I must not omit to inform the reader that those who were unable to see their way up stairs were carried there by the waiters. Smooth, as a matter of course, had no bricks in his hat.

“Bright and early on the following morning I tumbled out, made a hasty toilet, and set about waking up the Congress of sleepers. Souley I found in a sad plight; Buck was snoring like great guns; O'Sullivan I thought had either been dreaming of the Pampero expedition, or taken too much whiskey during the delivery of Monsieur Souley's speech; Belmont had made a pillow of his Dutch bonds—indeed the only specimen of humanity up and moving was Corporal Noggs, who expressed his anxiety to know what Marcy would say were he an eye-witness to the preliminaries. As for Pierce! it mattered little what he thought, he being a mere cypher among the boys. Having succeeded in moving the Congress we sallied out to view those suburbs so full of historical lore. To our surprise we were surrounded wherever we went by a clamorous and grotesque crowd of discontented individuals, each bearing a document in his or her hand, on which was prominently described the great seal of the United States of America. For a time the mystery involved seemed as undefinable as the jargon of the motley group. Indeed, the whole city seemed not only agog, but panic stricken. Nor was its influence confined to any class. It had delved alike into the palace of the king and cabin of the burgher. Wherever a delegate made his appearance he was sure to be followed or surrounded by a clamorous group, pouring forth its jargon in a rhapsody of praise to America, which singularly enough they supposed had sent the first instalment of her intention to overthrow the dynasties of Europe, and relieve mankind in general. Monsieur Souley, whom they happily mistook for a Greek, was the only member of the Congress exempt from the annoyance.

“A little more light was soon reflected on the mystery! Saunders had inundated the city—not with his promised bombshells: his missile was more alarming, but less dangerous. Having ingeniously changed the object of a very long epistle, he dedicated it to the French people instead of the Austrian Emperor. The mould of its dictum was decidedly strong; but in order to add more point he gave his periods a peculiar slant, at the head of Napoleon the Third. That a fellow-feeling as lasting as the mountain chain existed between the French and American peoples, there



## Page 122

was, according to the circular, not a doubt. In reference to other heads, there were strong doubts! The Congress now assembling was an earnest of what he said: that *august* body George strongly recommended to the esteem of all aggrieved citizens. Did any one doubt the genuineness or the national character of these epistles he had but to refer to the great seal on their front, which was none other than that of the Legation at London.

“The reader may now easily imagine our increasing difficulties. On proceeding to the Hall at the appointed time, I found our Ministers in a general state of alarm. Souley had received a private and very confidential letter from his agent in Paris, forewarning him of Louis Napoleon’s intention to descend upon the Congress, perform a *coup-d’etat*, and having nicely bagged the game, appropriate it to his own table. In view of this, Monsieur Souley recommended an adjournment to a more congenial atmosphere. Messrs. Buckhanan and Belmont rising together, objected to any such movement, inasmuch as it would discover a spirit of weakness, to guard against which Uncle Caleb and Master Fourney had given express instructions. Here a long cross-fire of discussion ensued. I thought it had neither head nor tail, and was something after the order of what Mr. Pierce conceived to be the object of this Congress, for it resulted in nothing, the speakers all agreeing to withdraw what they had said. As a first move to the organization of the body, it was agreed that Hanz Voghnine, who was privileged to open a bar for the sale of good liquors in one corner of the hall, would be the only outsider admitted. Hanz was accordingly examined in reference to his being a spy; the result being satisfactory, he was enjoined to keep nothing but a first-rate article. On the second balloting I found myself elected President, which high distinction, having been conducted to the chair amidst soul-stirring acclamations, I acknowledged in what is generally termed a neat and appropriate speech. Noggs was at the first ballot elected Sergeant-at-Arms and door-keeper in general, the duty of which offices he promised to fill to the very best of his abilities. A vagrant-opinion was rife that Monsieur Souley would have filled the office of door-keeper much better, himself being so easily opened and shut. However, as Noggs had been voted the office, we all reconciled ourselves to the selection, each member providing himself with a gin-sling, and taking his seat. A silence, as of the tomb, prevailed, while I rose to open the proceedings of the first day. I first made my own bow, then drew forth the State paper commissioning me to call together ‘this august body.’ Mr. O’Sullivan suggesting it was agreed that there being out so many documents of a similar character the reading was rendered unnecessary. I bowed to the decision. A similar fate awaited an attempt to read several of Mr. Pierce’s private opinions. Mr. Buckhanan said we better hear what



## Page 123

Pierce had to say, and then make up our minds as to whether it was entitled to the consideration of 'this important body.' Monsieur Souley replied, with great fervency, that it were better Pierce be left entirely out of the question, and the Congress proceed to deliberate on its own hook. A good many dissenting voices here interposed; but the speaker, very pertinaciously, said he had the floor, and was prepared to discuss the question with any gentleman (here he turned a meaning glance at Buck) disposed to accept the challenge. The dread of a lengthy speech brought gentlemen to their senses: rather than endure it they agreed that Pierce should be left entirely out. It was, now generally expected that Monsieur Souley would sit down. No such intention had he. Turning to me, he bowed, and said: 'Your Excellency will observe, that as the order in which the many questions to come before this Congress has not been produced, and the question of the acquisition of Cuba to the United States being the most important one in the schedule, I move that the order be suspended, and that the discussion of that all-important subject be commenced.' Souley was inclined, I saw, to absorb time very unprofitably. I was about to pronounce him out of order, when there came a loud knocking at the door, followed by a band attempting to play a Dutch medley. The door was immediately thrown open. Ten citizens, savage and hairy of visage entered, to the consternation of the Congress assembled. One of their number advanced, having exchanged the countersign with Noggs; but he failed to make himself understood until Monsieur Souley politely tendered his aid, introducing him in succession to every one present. They were, according to the rendering of Monsieur, a deputation from the '*Very ancient and honorable order of Red Republicans*,' who, having become aware of the many grand objects for which our Congress was convened (as set forth in the circular of the great Saunders), had appeared before it to pray that their grievances might be duly redressed and themselves reinstated in the government of France. Monsieur Souley made a speech of more than ordinary length on the subject, which he brought to a close by calling upon the President (me) not to permit this patriotic body of suffering men to depart without an assurance that their case would receive immediate attention. This I did in the very best manner possible, adding that Hanz might treat them to gin-slings all round. This done, Monsieur politely bowed them into the street, the last bow being his very best. The reader will by this time have discovered that Monsieur Souley constituted the Congress and Mr. Pierce thrown in.



## Page 124

“Scarcely had the deputation of very ancient and honorable red republicans taken itself into the street, when entrance was demanded by a deputation from ‘The Hopeful Order of Polish Exiles.’ The individuals constituting it were lighter of person and complexion than the reds; and, too, there was about them an air of melancholy which at once touched the tender of my feelings. They bore with them a long petition, and humbly but devoutly prayed America to make their cause her own (here they produced several of Saunders’ circulars): they asked only to enlist in her bond of brotherhood. Long had they waited the coming of this day—the day when she would invade Europe, and fight the battle of Liberty against despotism. Sweet was the recollection of a fatherland; to them it became sweeter as they contemplated that great star of liberty all powerful in the West. They spoke Scandinavian in silvery accents. Monsieur Souley’s genius was for once at fault: he spoke only French, Dutch, and bad Spanish, rendering it necessary to call in the aid of Hanz, who, having rendered it into Dutch, Monsieur did the rest. Dismissing this very distinguished deputation with a positive assurance that their case should be at once referred to the great George Saunders, nothing more was required. ‘I would suggest,’ spoke Mr. Belmont, rising with great gravity, as the satisfied gentlemen made their last bow at the door, ‘whether it be not necessary to close the door against further deputations, it being expedient to proceed with the transaction of more important business?’ To this Messrs. Sullivan, Buckhanan, and Souley rose, greatly agitated. Souley said he had the floor, and would not yield an inch. Mr. Buckhanan had only a word to say. Mr. Sullivan gave way. Monsieur Souley said he had great sympathy for all oppressed citizens. He could not but characterize such language as had been used by the learned statesman, Mr. Belmont in reference to these very respectable bodies, as contrary to the spirit of our institutions. Mr. Belmont bowed, and left the speaker to indulge his love of speech, which was again interrupted by a terrific thundering at the door, which opened,—not to a deputation, but to a whole platform of rejected humanity, presenting the most grotesque appearance. Falstaff’s invincibles would convey no comparison. Some were hatless and shoeless; some had sleeveless coats and tattered trousers: others had collars but no shirts; all had faces immersed in massive beards. Two-and-two abreast, they walked, in with an independent air, each provided with a Saunder’s circular, and took up a position in a half-circle just behind the seats of the several members of the Congress. The person who represented them, and who could boast of but one shoe, and one sleeve to his coat, and had a countenance smothered in hair, now approached Monsieur Souley as Monsieur Souley approached him, and both bowed. I ought to have mentioned that this last procession was preceded by one of their number, wheeling



## Page 125

a barrow, on which was a monster petition, specifying the fifty thousand grievances they hoped would be redressed by the Congress. Buck, who it was more than suspected looked with suspicion upon the mixture of reds in general, was seen squinting steadily in the faces of the savage-looking intruders, while others could not suppress a laugh at the singular quaintness of the picture they presented. The leader having extended his hand to Monsieur, a consultation ensued, and was continued with innumerable gestures, grimaces, and contortions of the face. The Chair begged to remind gentlemen of the importance of time. The Chair hoped Monsieur Souley would find it convenient to report. That versatile statesman replied,—He had the honor to inform this august body, that these gentlemen—externally so deficient!—constituted the ‘Forlorn Order of Very Red Republicans.’ Here Monsieur turned to the forlorn order, as it, with one accord bowed, in confirmation of what he said. ‘Gentlemen!’ continued the speaker with a rhetorical flourish, ‘you must not judge these men by their exteriors. We have here the rough bark covering the fine tree. Gentlemen! have not these men hearts of oak, nerves of steel, and bone that, like their souls, never breaks in time of need?’

“The Chair thought it time to interrupt the speaker by inquiring what the forlorn order prayed for? Monsieur Souley resumed. ‘Learning from the authority they held in their hands (epistle de la Saunders), what were the true objects of this Congress, they had nobly come forward to tender their services, and to express in person their readiness to take up arms in America’s cause. He proposed a vote of thanks for this patriotic manifestation.’ This was voted without a dissentient voice, seeing that it cost nothing. The spokesman of the order again held a consultation with Monsieur Souley, the result of which was, that gentleman’s making a charitable appeal to the Congress, and concluding by proposing that a contribution be taken in aid of the forlorns. This brought Mr. Belmont suddenly to his feet. He would oppose any such thing. Their difficulties had already increased beyond calculation; and, were this proposition acceded to, it would not only confirm a singular belief outside—that the object of this Congress was the general relief of mankind, but so increase their responsibilities as to render it impossible to proceed with legitimate business. No sane man—much less one accustomed to dealing in coin—could have entertained such an idea. I need scarcely add that the proposition was negatived without a dissenting voice, Monsieur Souley not voting. It was now pretty evident to all present that the Congress would have its time and attention pretty well absorbed in receiving deputations of citizens deluded by Saunders’ letters, and listening to the very pathetic speeches of Monsieur. The day was now far gone; the Congress began to feel its appetite; the forlorns withdrew in discontent; the presence of many other deputations surrounding the doors was announced; and the Congress drank all round, and adjourned to meet on the following morning for the dispatch of business.



## Page 126

“The ‘following morning’ came, and with it troubles insurmountable. Scarcely had the Congress resumed its sitting, when an avalanche of deputations was announced, waiting an audience. Monsieur Souley proposed that they be received in their order. Of course I was bound to submit his proposal, but could not suppress a smile. I thought the order would be the most difficult thing to ascertain. However, as we are naturally good-natured, and love to turn the gravest subjects into the lightest jokes, that they be received in their order was agreed to without a dissenting vote. By four o’clock in the afternoon we had received and heard the prayers of all sorts of deputations. There was —‘The Ancient Order of Roman Republicans;’ the ‘Lone Band of Oppressed Brothers;’ the ‘Universal Brotherhood of Exiled Patriots;’ the ‘Hopeful Band of Hungarian Refugees;’ the ‘Polish Perpetuators;’—in fact, there came all kinds of orders, and bonds, and leagues, and societies, all with innumerable grievances about they knew not what. There were the oppressed, and very oppressed; the hopeful, and very hopeful; the patriotic, and very patriotic; all praying that their grievances might be redressed. Indeed, they illustrated the fact that Europe was in no want of spirits. Some of these forlorn brothers marched with bands of music, not only keeping the city in a state of general alarm, but seriously disturbing the nervous systems of many very respectable persons, high in office.

“It was now six o’clock, and as the Congress was hungry, and fatigued with its labors, and Hanz was literally worn out with mixing slings and smashes, I rose to propose we adjourn until to-morrow, seeing there was no time to receive any more deputations; but was interrupted by Noggs, who significantly announced a platoon of soldiery in front of the hall. Monsieur Souley now turned a pale brown color; Belmont was seen looking for a back-door; and Buck’s hair changed two shades whiter:—indeed, the alarm that had prevailed in sundry palaces outside seemed to have seized upon *our* Congress.

“‘A demand from the King!’ announced Noggs, with ominous accent. Suddenly a suspicious-looking gent, smothered in dark uniform bespread with a profusion of lace, was ushered in, and with an elastic step, and quick, wandering eye, approached gracefully the President (me) and announced himself as King’s Messenger. For a moment he stood uncovered, as if taking a bird’s-eye-view of the mental qualities of America; then, raising his right hand, which held a scroll, he extended it to the Chair as Mr. O’Sullivan demanded—‘Hats off!’ The silence of a minute was then broken by Monsieur Souley, who, having regained his courage, interposed sarcastically,—‘a messenger from the King of the Dutch?’ The official gave a glance in return, and bowed. A seat was now provided for the stranger, who, as he was about to sit down, intimated that in the event of the terms of his Majesty’s proclamation not being complied



## Page 127

with, painful as it would be to his feelings, he would, in deference to his orders, be compelled to resort to arms. It was a moment full of painful anxiety: the Chair cast an eye over the document, as every one waited with eager suspense its being read aloud. At length, summoning to my aid all the dignity my composition entertained, I rose as each restless eye denoted hope and anxiety, and said I would read the King's commands, which were to the following effect:—'That whereas sundry evil-disposed persons, not having the fear of God before their eyes, and representing themselves as citizens of the American Republic, have come into this country with ill intent, and have, in defiance of law and order, held sundry meetings for the purpose of conspiring against the peace of the State and safety of the throne; and whereas the said persons herein set forth have, since their landing on our beloved soil, conducted themselves in a manner so riotous as to cause suspicion of their deliberations, be it known to all concerned in this mysterious gathering, that by this my proclamation I forbid the holding of any such assemblies; and further, that unless that now in deliberation be at once dispersed, the persons found engaged in it will be dealt with according to the law made and provided for the punishment of vagrants in general. Signed and sealed with our hands, &c., &c.' Need I say that the reading this proclamation created a wonderful sensation, which was here and there interspersed with marks of contempt for its authority. The Chair, I insinuated, would await any remarks. Mr. Buckhanan immediately rose, and proposed that we bow to the authority, and move to a more congenial atmosphere. Messrs. Souley, Belmont (having come back), and Jackson, rose to oppose. The King's Messenger also rose: seeing the first symptoms of a powerful opposition manifesting itself, he would warn gentlemen of the Congress that it was of no use—they must move on! By way of adding tone to his demand, he intimated that it might be necessary to motion his guard. As things began to look rather squally, I said the Chair would like to say a few words, provided Monsieur Souley did not interrupt, and was perfectly willing to yield the floor. That gentleman firmly declined; adding that he stood upon the order of his reputation, nor would ever yield to Pierce, Marcy, and the King of the Dutch thrown in. He firmly believed it a trick of Marcy's own; he was known to be in league with the Queen of Spain, Louis Napoleon, and the Dutch King, with whom he had compromised the Gibson case. Mr. O'Sullivan, with good logic clothed in very bad English, now rose to the rescue, and was fortunate enough to hit upon the identical expedient by which we all got honorably out of a very bad affair. He proposed (Mr. Souley continued talking) that it being evident to this Congress that insurmountable difficulties of a local character having arisen, thereby impeding the progress of legitimate business; that



## Page 128

whereas the oysters are found to be diseased; the gin-and-bitters intolerable; the champagne poisoned by Louis Napoleon; and the sour krout absolutely indigestible, an adjournment is thereby imperatively necessary. In consideration of all the foregoing facts, the speaker moved that this Congress do adjourn to the more congenial atmosphere of Aix-la-Chapelle. The motion was carried with shouts of laughter, and the Congress broke up in the very best humor, leaving Monsieur Souley in possession of the floor. In addition to this, the King's Messenger was carried captive to the first hotel and treated, while Noggs received orders to draw on Sam for all outstanding bills.

“On the following morning the Congress took up its march for Aix-la-Chapelle, resembling somewhat the children of Israel on their historical pilgrimage. In straggling order did the grotesque train wend its way,—Monsieur Souley mounted on the before-named jackass, which, having so long been accustomed to Monsieur's riding, obstinately refused to be mounted by my friend Buck, who was in consequence seated on boxes ‘*one, two and three,*’ which were placed on a Dutch van, and drawn by two more docile donkeys, bringing up the rear. The world knows the rest—that is, with one exception! Buck told me, very confidentially, that the Congress had been fast enough for anything; that Pierce was soft enough to think good would come of it; and that he only put his signature to that remarkable document proclaiming our natural right to Cuba with virtuous reluctance,—merely to keep peace in the house!

### CHAPTER XXI.

#### FASHIONABLE DEBTS AND FASHIONABLE DIPLOMATISTS.

“In days not altogether halcyon, I had a venerable great-uncle, a quaint specimen of human infirmity, the singularity of the parish. Though eccentric at times, he was not destitute of good qualities. These, had they been properly applied, might have served to distinguish him among men in what is pedantically called the higher walks of life. But he had a fault, and one that is very unpopular even at this day: he would get vexed at the short-comings of his neighbors, at whom he would level truths exceedingly unpalatable. Indeed, he never failed to put very keen edges on his sayings. Even now, I have the old man in my mind's eye, as in the hey-day of youth my boyish fancy sported with his infirmities. Never shall I forget his slender, stooping figure; his bright bald crown, curtained with locks that pended snowy over his coat collar; his weeping, watchful eye; his tottering mien; his high and furrowed brow, lengthening a sharp, corrugated face; his blunt, warty nose, made more striking by a sunken mouth and the working motion of his lower jaw; and his crutch, for he was a cripple. They left a deep impression on my mind. I speak of him as he was in the dawn of his eightieth summer—when pale blue spots bespread his hands, and his bony fingers



## Page 129

he would when excited frisk across the polished crown of his head. His great hobby was his knowledge of diplomacy. And, too, he was forever talking about the affairs of the nation, and would not unfrequently get put out with the whole parish, because it withheld from him, he said, that deference his experience was entitled to. He had, many years ago, been in some way attached to the diplomatic corps, which he ever after regarded with a sort of religious awe; and whenever a strange fit came over him he would do something he said was to prop up its dignity, of which none could be more jealous. I have, known him declare, that to maintain untarnished the character of the polite corps, he would swear by its virtue and his crutch. He would not have it held in suspicion by the vulgar world, and would go straight into a fit of sickness at the news of one its members doing aught to sully the fair name he described it as possessing. Sometimes I thought my great-uncle had been attached to some foreign mission in the mean capacity of butler, or footman, for he was scrupulous of his bow, had an excellent taste for wine, and would spend much valuable time in bringing to light and brushing, and then putting carefully away again, certain velvet inexpressibles of great brightness, and richly embroidered waistcoats, of wonderful length. 'These,' he would say with an air of exultation, 'have a mysterious but mighty influence in changing and directing the affairs of powerful nations.' He had also a boyish fondness for displaying a lithograph of the Countess Hopenpap's family arms, presented, he said, by that august lady to the legation, of which he had the honor of being a member, and from thence stolen by Thomas, footman in ordinary to the establishment. For this heinous offence, Thomas, though his knowledge of etiquette was invaluable to the mission (the gentlemen up stairs always fashioned their bows after his!), was discharged, having been detected in the act of offering it for sale at the counter of a dealer in old clothes.

"On the other hand, there was that about my great-uncle which completely overthrew the suspicion of his having been a kitchen diplomatist: he was an excellent judge of dancing, and what stronger evidence of his forming one of the polite body up-stairs, does the reader want? In addition to this,—he not only discoursed glibly about diplomacy, but sagaciously gave out that he would turn his back to no one in his knowledge of treaties; which said knowledge, and his crutch, he was always ready to swear by. Those great brass buttons with the eagles, and his blue small clothes, too, he wore to the day of his death. The parish had a feeling that no fourth of July could be celebrated without him; and I well remember how on that day I used to think him rather too fond of laying his crutch over the heads of all who differed with him on a question of state policy. My readers will please understand that I have no particular interest in raising the question as to whether my



## Page 130

great uncle got his knowledge of diplomacy up-stairs or in the kitchen. The fruits of my research would neither be interesting here, nor serve the object I have in view. Enough is it to know that he would now and then get into a funny vein, and in the outpouring of his child-like enthusiasm, let out some exceedingly rich jokes, touching the manner in which certain gentlemen paid their, to him, most fashionable debts. And, although the old man did at first seem himself to enjoy the recital, he was as sure to end in a great passion. And with every deference to the feelings of certain of Mr. Pierce's gentry, who have so recently figured upon the stage of London and Paris fashionable life, I may add that he would testily declare nothing would so please him as to cudgel every diplomatic dandy that brought disgrace upon his country abroad and left his countrymen to bear the smart. Indeed, he once honestly admitted that foreigners were just foolish enough to look for exponents of our national character among our representatives. If they were not inclined to form the most exalted opinion of it through that test, it was because they never once took into consideration the nature of the accomplishments necessary to our office-holders, at the door of which the blame lay. My great-uncle said that it was not that two or three conducted themselves in a manner unbecoming their positions, but, that, representing us in a national capacity, they saddled the responsibility on their honest fellow-countrymen. This, to me, had something about it I could not clearly understand; but I have since thought that if my eccentric uncle had lived to this day, and been in possession of his crutch, a reckoning with General Pierce had been the result. Either he had made the splinters fly, or that worthy gentleman's ear tingle with certain facts relative to the manner in which his gentry have strutted upon the stage we have before mentioned. I say this of the old man because his regard for the feelings of the nation was almost equal to his reverence for the diplomatic body. And I am sure he, in the earnestness of his soul, had prayed Mr. Pierce to take into his pious consideration the means of remedying an evil so gross as that of his diplomatists making it the fashion of paying their debts with that sacred character the comity of nations has granted all missions. He would have told General Pierce that he was but a man, whose little day would soon pass on the wheel of time, but that the country had a name to maintain among the nations, an exacting posterity to account to! Will his men in the bye-ways have done anything to which it may recur with pride? The stages we have twice named can answer.

"The story of Mr. Secretary Bolt, as facetiously related by my great-uncle, when in one of his funny moods, may not be inappropriate here, inasmuch as it bears a strong resemblance to certain realities perpetrated at this day, but which my habitual modesty forbids me transcribing here.



## Page 131

'Of Bolt, morally,' my great-uncle would say, 'nothing have I to say.' This said, he would rub his hands awhile, and then continue: 'He was correct of person—extremely so—had fine limbs, was tall of stature, courtly in his movements, spoke with great preciseness, and a clear, musical accent; had model features, was not a little vain of them, and always employed a tailor prince, who dressed him with exact taste, but at an enormous cost. His motion, too, was as graceful as needs be; indeed nature had done well her part, lavishing on his person a goodly number of those endowments so necessary to a modern diplomatist, whose chief function is to ornament the drawing-room, and create a flutter among certain of the fair sex. You must understand that in Europe, as well as America, the corps diplomatic rules the roost of fashion, and, in addition to its enrolling within its precious precincts numbers of the legitimate aristocracy, creates a great fluttering among that of a more doubtful hue, who seek it and worship it as the idol of their ambition. It always reminded me of birds with weak minds permitting themselves to be charmed by snakes. However, be this as it may, the knowing ones of York State (Bolt was a three-quarter blood Dutchman, and from that State!) declared it no scandal, when they said his great popularity with the ladies more than made up for his lack of law knowledge. Honester people said, if his mind was not exactly Websterian, there could not be a doubt that nature had intended him for the profession of diplomacy rather than one requiring more profound thought. His make-up was unexceptionable, his smile exquisite. Then he had dark moustaches, which he would gracefully finger into such an exact curve; and he had his small whiskers so neatly combed, and every hair on his head lay in unexceptional smoothness. The legation was not a little proud of Bolt, and on drawing-room days, when he blazed out in his gold lace and sword, would delight in watching the many dark, languishing eyes that would ogle him over the down of gorgeous fans. Bolt was not dead to this admiration, for we learned, from the constant wandering of his eye, that he rather appreciated his own popularity. For a lady to say she did not admire Mr. Secretary Bolt, was strong evidence of her want of taste. I do not choose to enlighten the world as to how Bolt came to be Secretary of Legation!' Here the old man would make a desperate flourish with his crutch, by which I was led to believe that the means were none of the cleanest; in fact that they were of a character very similar to those used at this day, and to which may be traced the cause of certain of Mr. Pierce's diplomatists having so distinguished themselves in Europe. 'Zounds!' the old man would continue, testily making a cross on the floor with his crutch, 'a desperate set was soon made on our Bolt by that little world of fashion and intrigue which, lizard-like, crawls about our Legations, and did more particularly so about the one he honored



## Page 132

with his handsome person. The Countess of Longblower, very distinguished (according to the gossip of the kitchen), and wife of the celebrated Earl of that name, took him at once into the velvet of her good graces. Here, after a little ripening at the hands of Samuel, the polite footman in ordinary, he shone out the star of her small but wonderfully select firmament. There were suspicious whisperings and some scandal concerning what afterwards took place between my lady and Bolt; but as scandal and diplomacy seemed inseparable to an European atmosphere, we as noiselessly as possible laid the charge at the door of a certain sin.' Here he would fling down his crutch. 'The Countess's carriage was forever at the door, waiting the pleasure of Mr. Secretary Bolt; he had a plate reserved at her table; he was the Adonis of her drawing-room; there was a seat for him in her opera-box. In the front of the latter, facing the stately front of her ladyship, one of her sweetest smiles forced over her hard face, sat the handsome Bolt, now playing with the tassel of her fan, then passing upon the Cavatina a sort of rosewater approval. He had a fund of small talk always at hand, and as her mightiness was extremely fond of such wares, so also did Bolt become a very agreeable person. The Countess, too, would smile so condescendingly, and keep up such a conversation with her eyes, now and then glancing at the Earl, who dozed at a respectful distance in the rear. If unexpectedly he exhibited signs of consciousness, Bolt would immediately divert the subject by passing some facetious criticisms on the rotundity of the primadonna. And then my lady would chime in, having enjoyed her laugh: 'Your lordship never did enjoy anything.' The Earl's nap over, and the last act near its close (her highness never condescended to remain for the vulgar ballet, and generally retired at the close of the fourth act), our hero would tenderly arrange her satin, make himself so polite! and then she took his arm so condescendingly, and exchanged the sweetest glances! How often I pitied the poor Earl, as in the mightiness of his gravity he would bring up the rear, bearing her ladyship's perfumed cambric. Several times a tingle of wrath came over me, and I could not resist the thought, that had I been in the place of the poor Earl when my lady hung so rollickingly on the arm of Secretary Bolt, and sailed with such an affected youthfulness through the grand hall, to the no small danger of all muslin dresses in the way, my crutch had served as a means to separate them. The old man, with weeping eyes, would now finger his bandanna and resume his crutch. And then Samuel, in the full blaze of his livery, would stand conspicuously at the grand entrance, and ere her highness's head loomed out at the top of the great stairs, announced her coming in a voice that seemed to strike dismay into all unliveried bystanders.'



## Page 133

“One thing Secretary Bolt would, do that always displeased me, as did everything that tended to lower the dignity of the corps. It was this:—My lady loved dearly her drives in the park, and took them nearly every day, at the most fashionable hour of five. Bolt, in cloth exquisite, had always his seat at her side, where his special office seemed that of nursing her favorite poodle and smoothing the Earl, who on the front seat sat with icy straightness, all over with cheap compliments. This was all very fine as far as it went! Being proud of Bolt, as I have before related, we generously overlooked in him those errors which are rather the result of vanity than the natural offspring of an imperfect education. But we, as a nation have a worthy aversion to paying a dear price for the maintenance of dignity; hence Bolt, whose salary was but a paltry pittance in an atmosphere of singular extravagance, soon found himself becoming involved for the adjuncts necessary to such a connection. A happy thought, however, soon flashed across his mind: was he not protected by the sacred character of the mission? Of course he was!—away all misgivings! What was the contemplation of such dreary matter to the pleasing recollection of those fair ones whose hearts he had made flutter! And then, not a day passed but he received no end of pretty missives, perfumed and enveloped with curiously wrought lace, and virtuous satin,—all bearing the tenderest burdens of love and despair. Bolt was indeed fairly set upon by rival candidates for his heart, which was supposed to possess a large portion of susceptibility. Nor were his admirers merely confined to the satin and velvet of the aristocracy, for ‘pretty Betty,’ maid of all work to the Legation, and on that account so vain of the honor that she would not condescend to associate with servants not attached to the corps, was by Thomas, a wonderfully sagacious footman, discovered to be the writer of an highly scented missive, directed as an arrow at the heart of Bolt. That this little shaft of the tender passion contained some truly original lines the enlightened cannot doubt; and I think I may assert without fear of contradiction that Betty did in these lines, notwithstanding they evinced a sovereign contempt for orthography and versification, discover a deep knowledge of diplomacy. I say this for the reason that her diction could be construed to mean anything but what she intended; albeit there was such an openness about it generally that any clever gentleman might walk in at the back door. I thought it highly creditable in Betty to attempt a thing so mighty as the conquest of Bolt’s heart—indeed there was an admirable heroism about it; but it caused a great flutter in the kitchen, where the sensitive Thomas brought forward a motion for her extradition. Thomas would not for the world have the character of gentlemen up stairs sullied by vulgar hands.



## Page 134

“Bolt had scarcely reached the full blaze of his glory when a series of material obligations truly alarming commenced; and as I then regretted the manner in which he discharged them, so am I now less ashamed to relate them than sorry for their existence on the page of the past. As nearly all Bolt’s acquaintances had carriages, it seemed imperative on him to follow their example, which he was not long in doing. And this item of expense necessarily entailed that of two very worthy gentlemen—viz.: Mr. Fripp the coachman, and Mr. Still the footman—without whom no turn-out can be considered complete. Well, these worthy personages were put in possession of the carriage, but scarcely a week had passed before a great deficiency was discovered. Messrs. Fripp and Still had acted in similar capacities to my Lady Brackenbridge, and now declared it beneath their dignity to remain in a service not honored with livery. They laid their grievance before Bolt, who, appreciating the deficiency, forthwith ordered the requisite plush and cockades, to the no small joy of those worthies. If you ask me the cost of these adjuncts so necessary to a very fine gentleman, my answer is that I cannot enlighten you; and this for the very reason, that the cost of an article depends very much on the manner in which you pay for it.’

“As my great-uncle said this he would grasp tighter his crutch and look wrathfully about the room for a seat. ‘Bolt!’ he would continue, having adjusted his shabby drab hat, ‘soon learned that in Europe tradesmen are exceedingly impressible, and notwithstanding they are held in utter contempt by the fine gentlemen of the diplomatic world, will be their humble servant to any amount, asking no other security than the, to them, immaculate character of the mission. I do not mean to say that Bolt made such facilities a study; nor would I be understood as casting a sneer at the diplomatic body in general, but when modern instances prove notorious facts, how can I turn a deaf ear to the belief that our diplomacy has embodied another function?—that of practising the most fashionable way of paying the most fashionable debts. Pardon this little digression. There was a never ending demand for Bolt’s custom. Mr. Peppers, the distinguished jeweller of Regent street, would fill his order to any amount; Broadwood & Willow, tailors in ordinary to Her Majesty, always had a newly arrived fashion, the senior partner knew his honor would be pleased with; Dole, the wine merchant, who counted his customers among the first nobility of the land, sent a list of his very best importation, humbly soliciting an order. And as Mr. Secretary Bolt had not the least objection to being driven into dignity, he would order all sorts of things, from a diamond bracelet down to a tin tea-pot for Mrs. Loveleather the laundress. It was wonderful to see how credulous these tradesmen gentry were, and how they would chuckle over an order from one of the legation. But I must here say that Bolt found



## Page 135

a clever diplomatist in Thomas, who was one of the best brought up servants in Picadilly. Thomas had no end of accomplishments, and as a certain vice in a servant is necessary to certain poor aristocracy and deeply involved diplomatists, so also could he lie with a facility truly incredible. If the history of Bolt's wealth, as related to certain tradesmen by Thomas, could be handed down to posterity, I fear my friend Cresus would find himself eclipsed. This it must be borne in mind was before Thomas found himself dismissed for purloining the family arms of the Countess Hopenpop. And while on the subject of purloining propensities let me here say that I fear the vice of stealing family arms did not end with Thomas, but was transmitted by some of his more fortunate brethren up stairs to certain diplomatic gentry of Mr. Pierce's choice, else how comes it that they, notoriously plebian, made cockades and carriage doors bear strange devices.'

"My uncle continued: 'While as many as fifty good gossipers predicted daily the marriage of Bolt to some aristocratic belle, there came along a lady of the name of Mrs. Bolt. This person, whose name Mr. Bolt had been extremely careful not to lisp, caused a desperate sensation among his admirers. My Lady Longblower was seen to cool away like liquid tallow, while not a few who had been equally fervent just before, said it was a very impertinent thing in Mr. Bolt. But as that gentleman took a more philosophical view of the matter he returned the compliment by introducing his lady to several of those damsels who had but a few days before themselves hoped to win his heart. Indeed the arrival of Mrs. Bolt, though it brought things to a more legitimate platform, did not in the least lessen his material responsibilities. Mrs. Bolt must have more fashionable apartments; there was that splendid diamond bracelet at Peppers'? she must have that rich honitan cape and accompaniments at Stebbin's? drawing-room day was approaching, and nothing less than one hundred and fifty guineas would suffice to purchase the dress she would be presented in; Madame Lacelooper, milliner and dressmaker to the Court, urged the necessity of her orders being in at an early day; and she must have that set of furs at Orchard's, and Mr. Bolt must give a brilliant introduction party. Many as were the poor fellow's previous wants Mrs. Bolt's arrival seemed to increase them four-fold. Nor would it have done for him to have intimated a necessity for retrenchment, inasmuch as she was equally determined to keep up the dignity of the establishment, and would not hear a word about limitation in anything. The poor fellow now began to think a time was coming when his diplomacy would be put to the test. He, too, had an eye to a little popularity at home, liked to be thought well of by his fellow-citizens, who, when abroad invariably want to see all the sights and dine with their Minister, and to that end gave them dinners and sundry other little things. Everything except



## Page 136

his salary Bolt found enlarged, and as his time had been principally taken up with the issuing of orders, so was it thereafter to be arranging certain payments. Isaacs, the Hebrew gentleman who took corners of advance checks for the convenience of his very aristocratic friends was seen frequently about the premises, looking very serious. Six months passed and circumstances were changed with Bolt. The Countess Longblower no longer permitted him to sit at her side and play with the poodle; his fair admirers had lost all their compliments; and it became absolutely necessary that Mrs. Bolt return to the more humble precincts of her home on the other side of the water. When Peppers called for that trifle of ninety-seven guineas—pay for that necklace that shone so about Mrs. Bolt's neck when at Court—it was curious to see how the genius of Mr. Bolt would come out; and how in conjunction with Thomas' sagacity quite a comedy of sharps would be played. Thomas tended door, was rather sleepy of countenance, but could assume an air of great consequence, and would receive his importuning visitor with unexceptional bows. 'Peppers I think you said?' Thomas would politely inquire, smoothing his chin reflectively, giving his ear a knowing cant, and concluding by whisking his fingers through his powdered hair. 'Mr. Peppers presents a little affair this morning;' he would announce blandly, having left the gentleman standing in the hall. Mr. Bolt, who occupied a sumptuous arm-chair in the parlor, and generally sat reading leisurely the Morning Post, would receive this announcement with some change of countenance. 'Peppers! Peppers!' he would reiterate, Thomas watching his every movement. 'Blast the fellow—he's a perfect torment'—Thomas would interrupt by inquiring if he should bow the individual out. 'Say, Thomas,' he would rejoin, 'that we are engaged to-day studying treaties and cannot be disturbed—that he must call at a future day.' Mr. Bolt would with great complacency, turn to a more comfortable position in his great chair. Thomas always executed his mission with great skill, informing the unfortunate individual that a little misunderstanding having broken out between the two nations, the Legation was extremely busy in the study of treaties, and could not be disturbed. Having digested this piece of information rather doggedly, Mr. Thomas would politely bow the gentleman into the street, watching his departure through the side lights. Another time, when Broadwood called for that trifle, having a deal of ready money to make up, it was despatch day; and upon the same principle despatch day came so often that people began to think the Great Republic engaged in one eternal controversy with the nations of Europe. Bolt never could be seen on despatch days. The man with the bill for the tin-teapot was alike unsuccessful; the gentlemen up-stairs walled themselves up in despatch days, while Thomas politely bowed out all-importuners. They were a scurvy



## Page 137

lot, and might have known better! Mr. Bolt thought, as he contemplated the sacred character of the mission. I well remember how I laughed once, when Madame Lacelooper's man of business drove Mr. Secretary Bolt, as I thought, into close quarters. Thomas, in order to somewhat diversify his apologies, had three different times satisfied this person by informing him that the gentlemen of the Legation were in consultation with the Prime Minister; but this time he was determined to see for himself, and regardless of Thomas' assurance pushed his way into the presence of Mr. Bolt, who I need scarcely add was extremely put out. 'I ask your honor's pardon' spoke the man; 'you always come,' petulantly interrupted our hero, 'when we are in a uproar.' The man replied with a bow, that it was the first time he had gained an audience. He came from Madame Lacelooper's, and would be extremely glad if Mr. Bolt could make it convenient to discharge that little account, which had stood over for some time. It was only two hundred and fourteen pounds, he said, in reply to a question from Mr. Bolt, who encouragingly took the missive from his hand. 'Thank you—thank you!' the man continued, evidently encouraged as our hero cast his eye over the long list of items, so neatly carried out with heavy numbers of pounds, shillings, and pence. 'Rather heavy,' sighed the astonished Secretary. 'I suppose you have orders for all these little affairs?' The man replied that he would have them forthcoming if necessary—that Madame Lacelooper's was one of the most respectable establishments. With a gracious bow, reaching his hand for a book which the expectant gentleman mistook for a bank-book, Mr. Bolt replied that it was on that account he gave it his patronage. The gentleman thanked him for the honor, and hoped he would continue his favors. And while this little episode was performing in the great parlour, Mr. Thomas was exercising his skill in diplomacy at the door—informing gentlemen that Mr. Bolt was engaged over important State affairs, and politely bowing them out.'

“Then Mr. Bolt having worked the gentleman's anxiety up to the highest pitch, would take up his great gold pen, and on a piece of whitest paper, figure, and figure, and figure, multiply and subtract, contort his face and nervously frisk his fingers through his curly black hair. It was all to no purpose, however he could not twist the plaguy figures into a favorable balance. In fact the balance, despite all his diplomacy, would get on the wrong page. At length, having exhausted patience and found language to adapt himself to circumstances, with great blandness of manner he would beg the gentleman, convey his compliments to Madame Lacelooper, and say that her little matter will be discharged at a future day. His balance, he was surprised to find, did not enable him to meet it today; and he further regretted that a very disagreeable affair having sprung up between the Emperor of the French and his government, requiring for a few days



## Page 138

all the attention of the establishment, deprived him of the opportunity of repairing to his banker's for the purpose of enlarging his deposit. Ordering an attendant to bring in the treaties of 1812, he added how sorry he was to give Madame Lacelooper, for whom he entertained the highest regard, so much trouble. Legations were peculiarly situated at times, he said. In reply to an intimation from the gentleman in waiting, he said, gentlemen of the diplomatic corps never paid in piecemeal. Here Thomas would put an end to the comedy by announcing the arrival of the '*Minister for Foreign Affairs*,' and politely bowing out the retiring gentleman, who, you may well imagine, maintained a reluctant gravity. There was no end of these little diplomatic comediettas, while Bolt honored the mission with his presence, ending in what was long afterwards esteemed a capital joke, which, though somewhat against my feelings, I will confidentially relate. Bolt had named a certain day when all his little affairs would positively be arranged, and this dawned of a calm and sunny autumn morning, when everything about the Legation seemed to repose in peace and quietness—when wars and obdurate creditors were forgotten, and we plumed ourselves on the happy issue of several important international questions. One very important member of the corps, however, seemed to have something of great importance evolving in his mind; this was the sagacious Thomas, who paced the hall with more than ordinary superciliousness, now and then arranging his livery in the mirror. About eleven o'clock there came a great gathering of serious-looking individuals at the hall door; among them the quick eye of Thomas discovered the following very respectable gentlemen, viz.:—Broadwood, of the firm of Broadwood & Willow; Dole, the distinguished wine merchant; Staple, the bootmaker; Madame Lacelooper's man of business; and Peppers, the jeweller. The opening of the door was succeeded by a great rush. Having expressed some surprise at their mistake in calling so early, Thomas received his visitors with his customary equanimity, and begged to remind them that three o'clock was the hour appointed for the interview between themselves and Mr. Bolt. Here he threw a sly wink at Peppers, which that gentleman rendered into an intimation to remain, while he politely bowed the remainder out. 'Wonderful assurance, these fellows have,' said Thomas, turning to Peppers, who began to think he was all right, 'they won't learn etiquette.' As he concluded he turned to have a view through the side-light at his friends outside, who hung contemplatively about the door, then addressing the inside gentleman—'Peppers, I think you said?' he continued, working his lips and smoothing his chin with the fingers of his right hand. That gentleman bowed affirmatively as Thomas advanced a few steps toward the parlor door, and then hesitated, as if in a deep study. 'Peppers, Peppers, Peppers!' he accented somewhat curiously, until the creditor had well nigh lost his patience in suspense. 'I beg your pardon, sir!' (Thomas faced about with an entirely altered face), but, may I, ah!—hem,—you see; there is a small affair in the way, Mr. Peppers. The truth is, Mr. Bolt has ceased his connection with this establishment.'



## Page 139

“I must see him, nevertheless,” replied the obdurate creditor, permitting his suspicions to get the better of his judgment. ‘If you do,’ rejoined Thomas, bowing, ‘you may have a longer drive than is agreeable at this season of the year.’

“You don’t mean to tell me that he has left?” demanded Peppers, stamping his foot, and allowing himself to become generally excited. ‘Now, my friend,’ Thomas replied in the coolness of his nature, making a motion to open the street door, ‘just take the matter like a philosopher; don’t let such little affairs trouble a man of your standing. The fact is, between the sundown of one day, and rosy dawn of another, our gallant Secretary just stepped out—that is, Mr. Bolt has bolted!’ Thomas bowed him politely out, and I leave you to judge how many indignant threats were thrown out by Peppers, and what occurred when he related the climax to his fellow-creditors, who having a suspicion that all was not right, waited his appearance among them at the corner of an adjacent street, against the lamp-post of which they entered a protest deep and solemn. My great-uncle having concluded his story, adjusted his crutch, wiped his weeping eyes, relieved his hoarseness with a small quantity of temperance bitters, and limped away.

[Note I.—The chapter is respectfully dedicated to General Pierce.]

[Note II.—The fastidious—I mean those rather inclined to facts, may, to please their peculiar taste, transfer the scene of Mr. Secretary Bolt’s exploits to Paris; they may also add a date more modern.]

## CHAPTER XXII.

### HOW SMOOTH GOT HIS MANNERS.

“Readers, and fellow citizens of these United States in general! know ye, that I, Solomon Smooth, in the first person singular, as Uncle Sam Houston used to say, being worn out with the fatigues of the Ostend-Aix-la-Chapelle Congress, crossed the Atlantic in two steamships—wanted to do both a good turn—got busted up by neither—and at last found myself calmly luxuriating in the velvet and damask of the ‘White House.’ By way of keeping up the spirit of Young America, I knocked down all the attendants, stalked in like an independent citizen who felt he was part owner of the establishment, spread myself upon the softest sofa, and demanded the flunkey, who stood trembling in the doorway, to bring me a Turkey ottoman, on which to advantageously take the measure of my extremes. Believe me, Sam, I went it in the way of comforts. The flunkey shook his head, and kept up a significant silence. This was rather too much for the patience of any respectable gentleman; and being aware that the General had not learned him proper manners, I got up and brought it myself. Nor yet did it seem just the thing—something was wanting to complete the free-and-easy, to which end I pulled out a real Havana regalia, and puffed away so comfortably. Then I ordered the flunkey, whose hair was seen stiffening



## Page 140

on his head with fright, to bring me a spittoon—felt sorry I neglected to import one from some of our European Legations!—or I'd hurl the liquid every which way—perhaps storm his high-colored Persian rugs! I was about to lay off in the very bliss of comfort, when Pierce, followed by his black pig, came laraping into the room, looking as amiable and undecided as ever. 'Smooth,' he exclaimed, greeting me with a heartiness of hand little expected, 'I am so glad to see you home once more!' Here he suddenly paused, gave out ominous looks, lowered his voice to a whisper, and continued: 'In the name of forgiveness, where did you contract such manners?' A little cold sweat bespread his brow just then. 'Upon the faith of my high position,' he continued, 'I thought my sending you to Europe would have proved a polishing machine, and prepared you for shining in society.'

“Mr. Smooth,' I modestly returned, 'would prefer the General sat down and calmly listen to how he came by his pretty manners. Somebody has said, a man was known by the society he keeps. Be this as it may, General, I don't come here to cast a single reflection on you; nor would I proclaim to the fellow citizens of these United States that you are in any wise accountable for what I am going to say and disclose.' The General, somewhat struck by my demeanor, took a seat, nervously, and applied his ear, while I extinguished the cigar, and commenced summoning my thoughts. 'Having no manners when I left home, General, I naturally depended for them upon those whom my mission brought me in contact with. Now, General!—and this I would were held strictly confidential between ourselves—when I got on the other side of the water, (here I gave him a touch he understood), being your Minister in General I naturally fell in and associated with your Ministers in particular; and such a lot they were! I couldn't trust my virtue in the company of one of them: albeit, in their company, you were sure not to get into decent society. Foreign victims of misgovernment had long viewed America as a land from whence came the plain unostentatious gentleman of sense. How sad to think that they had of late been so grievously disappointed! They are only men of coarse manners, and low of bringing up, assuming the democrat, while aping the snobism of the aristocrat. General, they are of your own selecting; and, mark me, I only name it here out of sincere regard for you, not expecting it to get abroad. In fact, General, the people of Europe find they have been deluded. They see us affecting contempt for the very fooleries we seek to imitate; they see these, your chosen, playing the coarse ruffian to the end. To the foreign mind Americans are America—to its chosen they look for the embodiment of its institutions It cannot comprehend that the mongrel-mixture you have sent abroad constitute the very essence of that ill opinion gained of us by misrepresentation. This, General, is strictly private—only intended for your



## Page 141

own good. It were folly to look for pretty manners in me after my connection with your chosen on the continent of Europe! In London I found things all in a fuddle,—the head of the house having dwindled into obscurity, while the juniors had been in all sorts of business but that for which they had been paid and sent to discharge; indeed, the revolutionary business, into which members of the house had largely entered, had brought it into all sorts of difficulties and disgraces. Again it was currently reported that, for being too deeply engaged in the affairs of others, two of the smaller functionaries had found themselves locked up in a police-station, and only unlocked themselves with that protection which the sacred character of the mission is supposed to grant:—in fact, General, and I advance the intimation for your own good, the only thing in real good order was the smoking and spitting department. In Paris the house was a dead lock, inasmuch as the head couldn't understand a word the French said, either about himself or his government; while the retinue were all familiarly known at the cafes. In Madrid, the head of the house, not having the value of discretion before his eyes, had fuddled away all his influence, having fought sundry duels, written himself down an ass in controversy with editors, and failed in his proposal to build up a young republic on the ruins of an old and dissolute monarchy. Forcibly as the truth may depict our singular misrepresentation abroad, we cannot forbear to say, that, so far did this very French-American representative carry his fighting proclivities, that a single instance of their being excelled—our fighting London Secretary, who had challenged a score of very aged gentlemen (and had been equally courageous were they double the age!) without finding a single one to accept—could not be found. At the Hague, the very respectable Hebrew gentleman, who conducted the affairs of the house, had opened a barber-shop, where needy gentlemen could be shaved *ad libitum*—provided always they brought a certain description of notes, nor were dainty about how much were taken off the corner. The house at Lisbon, report said, had got into very orderly disorder, which was not in accordance with the character of the very respectable Irish gentleman who kept it, and who could absorb whiskey and tobacco with any other respectable gentleman from Kilkenny. To the denizens, among whom he had made an extensive acquaintance, his being an American and speaking such very good Irish and bad English was a perfect mystery. You may be sure he likes well his situation, and finds the duties of a Minister Extraordinary much preferable to leading the retreat of a *pampero* expedition.' Here the General significantly opened one eye and shut the other: 'Only telling you this for your own good' I watched him anxiously as he grasped me by the hand, and replied: 'Smooth! the boldest stroke in my administration does not please me so much as sending you Minister in General to Europe. But can half you say be true?'



## Page 142

“True?’ I rejoined—’too true for delicate ears! General, you may accept my word when I say it is not so much the public duties as the private affairs of men you have got to keep a close eye upon; when the private affairs of public men get astray the public suffers: this is borne out in the result of your having appointed foreign gentlemen to misrepresent us abroad. Your house at Turin is fashionable, but sorely scandalized; the people there love the *fair*, but expect fairer things of Americans. Your son of Moses, who plays so well his part at Alexandria, is a bird vain of his feather, and may to-day be seen carried through the streets in something resembling a clothes-basket, and to-morrow in the market purchasing Nubian slaves fair to look upon. These things may be necessary to a very fine gentleman in Alexandria; but the being who performs them at the expense of his country well earns the pity of its people. And while I am on this theme, General, I cannot in justice pass over one whom I say in all seriousness has, when contrasted with others, won for himself immortal honors; I mean our worthy representative at St. Petersburg, who understanding no language but his own, and that very imperfectly, has the great good sense to say nothing, seclude himself from the society of the Czar, and seek only the enjoyment of his own melancholy contemplations. Now General; however much you may esteem the doings of your chosen, there is in Europe but one opinion of their manners; and that opinion being, I regret to say, not the very highest, will for some time to come measure our influence at sundry Courts. I got my manners, General, by mixing with your chosen!’ The General here drew a long breath, said dinner was almost ready; would I not change the subject, and talk about the war business, and such things.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. SMOOTH PROPOSES TAKING MR. PIERCE’S FIGHTING BY THE JOB.

“Mr. Smooth, a young man of the fast school, has been calculating, during his tour in Europe, the saving it would be to nations if they would but let their wars out by the job to some enterprising fellow-citizen. He reckons, in a funny sort of way, he would then pay just in accordance to the amount and quality of thrashing it were necessary to inflict upon the enemy. That it would divest war of its glories, and ambitious men of their zeal, he never had a doubt. War taken by the job, at a given sum for thrashing the enemy right soundly, would resolve itself into a mere trading commodity, fit only to be dabbled in by shopkeepers and stockbrokers. By this turn in national affairs, Kings and Czars might curtail their ambition, and their devoted subjects, being paid to fight by the lump, would hurry through their contract. General Pierce, too, would find it decidedly more convenient, inasmuch as it would save his benevolent people the trouble of inflicting that most unwarrantable rebuke—sending



## Page 143

bread to the hungry people at Greytown he has made homeless with his bombshells. Smooth leans no disrespect to Mr. President Pierce, who, since his wondrous victory over the Mosquitoes, has disappointed the world by demonstrating the singular fact that he has a gunpowder policy, which he develops when he can find objects sufficiently small for his purposes. Heretofore, Smooth had got an idea in his head (crosswise he admits), that if Mr. President Pierce had anything assimilating to a policy, it must be like his grandmother's hard cider—the longer it remained exposed the flatter it became. That this was an egregious mistake, is fully proven to a mistaken world by the dauntless and immortal Admiral Hollins (he should be promoted to the rank), who, to give positive evidence of the size of his master's spirit, just battered down a defenseless town or two. It may turn out that the bombshelling was only to practice a little in that sort of gunnery, and that using up the property of American citizens to illustrate the war principles of Uncle Sam was merely an evidence of spunk in Mr. Pierce, who expected his people to knock under.

“Smooth has been at the White House, seeing Mr. Pierce, and cautioning him about the look of things abroad, lest they get kind of snarled up.

“Being a genuine New Englander, with real Puritanic blood in his composition, Smooth considered himself a good sort of man,—rather a desirable neighbor, conscientious, extremely disinterested, and always ready to do a bit of a good turn, never forgetting number one. Smooth was just going to ask the General if this was not so, when he smiled so free and easy that it settled the point shorter.

“Now, Smooth, you've seen a good deal, I reckon, and must be a man of profound opinions: tell us, are we going to get fuddled up in the breakers on the other side of the big pond?” inquired the General, looking so serious that Smooth made it a point to get his ideas squared up.

“Somethin for us citizens to have a go-in-at, you means, I s'pose?”

“Yes!” replied the General.

“Smooth reckoned 'twas best to have an understanding about how much he was going to get from Uncle Sam's chink-locker for doing the thrashing for these United States afore he said much about what was going on in the world. Uncle Sam was a good old soul, and, seeing that he did not keep the best cash account in the world, Smooth had no objection to entering into the tin business with him, now that he had a large stock on hand. Smooth, however, must make one single proviso, and that is, that he be always permitted to work out the p's and q's of his own demands.



## Page 144

“Ah!” replied the General, good-naturedly; ‘Smooth, you’re a sharp fellow, with gumption enough to see through a thing or two; but remember, if we contract for the licking, with some enterprising individual, we must pay by measurement. There’s the democracy to please, the country to satisfy, Young America to provide with clean shirts! I thought my gallant fellow Hollins would have done that when I sent him to *let strip* at the Greytowners; but, as the result was different, a body can’t always tell how such things’ll turn, I now think of letting him out to the Emperor of Russia, who having granted him means of developing his fighting capacity, by investing him with full power to thrash the allied fleets of England and France, would not hesitate to pay a large amount of revenue into the treasury of these United States for his daring services. But you see, Smooth, my government is merely an experiment, which may or may not please, and in this sense your experience will be extremely valuable.’

“Smooth saw Mr. President Pierce wanted experience; but, at the same time, he was fearful the General would get the points, and out-general him. However, as it was always better to have confidence in each other when pursuing a political question, and knowing the General to be a sort of clever fellow, ready to do almost anything, he entered upon the decyphering. There was the S.S.S. (Sickles, Souley, and Saunders) Company, doing a slap-up business in Europe! He must have them thrown in. While the head of the firm was generously lending a hand to turn mother monarchy out of doors, and the in-door partner was making sad use of the stock in trade (which consisted of a very large supply of letter-writing material, only to be used for disseminating republican principles), the junior of the house, taking advantage of the opportune moment, thought it quite in keeping with the spirit of the times to make a spec on his own account; and to that end the said junior partner (not the least sagacious of the three), with a bill of sale of Cuba in his pocket, had just stepped over to Washington to consummate the purchase, and revel awhile in the damask of the White House. Borland, finding no more congressional faces to smash in Washington—from which city it was considered General Pierce had removed an intolerable perplexity by sending him to foreign parts—had been recompensed by the smashing of his own, in Central America, where he had raised a tolerable sort of a breeze. He, too, must be thrown in. Seymour, the blue-stocking governor, of whom so much was expected, and whose mission to the god of all the Rushas, American statesmen looked upon with great anxiety, it was currently reported had burrowed in a snow-bank somewhere in the interior of the amiable Czar’s vast dominions, not one word having been heard of him for the last nine months. That he had not lent material aid to the fighting Cossack, was a source of grievous dissatisfaction to Young America.



## Page 145

“Smooth spread all these things out before the General, just as clear as water. To get Cuba—which was not just ready to hook on—and St. Domingo, that it would take some nice diplomacy to make consider the annexation question, and a few slices more of Mexico, ready to make fast any moment; the Sandwich Islands, yearning to get in; Central America, hardly worth taking in, but nevertheless acceptable, on the ground of carrying out the universal plan, and Canada only requiring a little more coaxing, Smooth thought the cost could be reckoned down to a close figure. But there was Uncle Johnny, and his newly-coined friend Louis Napoleon, to be kept shy while all this was going on; and just there the plague and expense of the thing hung. However, Smooth scratched his head, and made up his mind to enter into a bargain to do the licking at a fair showing, cash down. As to the brush between Nicholas and his neighbor—unhappy wretches; one always wanting to steal the bits of stray territory—Smooth found it painful to keep his fingers out; but there was this to be taken into consideration: the getting his fingers in might be the getting out of his commerce, which said commerce was the model machine of the Model Republic’s power.

“Mr. President Pierce fully believed that Nicholas of all the Rushas had got his eye set to the East, notwithstanding he had quite enough to do in the West; and, though he declared himself moved only by christian visions, it seemed curious enough that he had not the slightest objection to raising most un-christian wars. Nicholas was shrewder than a Connecticut tin pedlar, and more ambitious than a South Carolina politician, who, ever and anon, is ready to war with the Britishers, because the *fools* obstinately refused to admire slavery. Nicholas had got himself into an interminable fix. Mr. Pierce, merely to please the youthful democracy, would like to lend Nick a hand to unfix himself, but the hitherto dormant power of the nation quickens to action, and says, ‘It won’t do, Mr. General Pierce!’ Forced to submit, the General consoles himself with the fact that his friend Nicholas will draw himself into his invulnerable shell, sing the Te Deums, and trust the fate of war, for a dozen years or so, to the All-wise Father.

“‘Now, General,’ said Smooth, addressing himself to Mr. President Pierce, ‘the items are all down!—there will be warm work, depend upon it!—and seeing how Uncle Sam’ll have to scratch in somewhere (just to make a point or two), Cousin Caleb and me will take the job of doing all the necessary fighting on both sides the big pond, and getting all the stray territory required to complete these United States, for eighty-six million dollars—two and a half per cent. off for ready money. Might as well let Smooth have the shiners, seeing how me and Caleb would give security to do the fighting up brown; and then somebody was getting the tin out of Uncle Sam’s big bag in a fast kind of way that nobody could explain. Smooth begged Mr. President Pierce to give the thing a few turns over in his head, and when the problem came as clear as daylight, send him his figure by the first post.’ With this, Mr. Smooth retired to the National.



## Page 146

### CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. PIERCE SENDS SMOOTH DOWN AMONG THE BRITISHERS.

“Mr. Smooth (I write after the style most in fashion), having been associated with Mr. Pierce, whose Minister in general he was, as has been set forth in this history, is come to be regarded as a very dangerous individual. It is astonishing with what facility we gain bad repute from association with a certain class of men and things. Our country is a stalwart oasis, rising in reproachful greatness over the old and dwindling dependencies around it; but our Pierce government is a waste in its centre, contaminating and casting the blight of intrigue upon those connected with it. It builds bulwarks for itself, and breaks them down with the mere fog of its own breakers. It, like a dauntless boy, seizes the helm of State, and steering by scheme instead of compass, runs the ship ashore in unknown seas. As Smooth is a national Christian, he believes the timbers of the old ship tough and strong, or they had been bilged ere this. But, while speaking of contamination in connection with Mr. Pierce, he (Smooth) is forcibly reminded of the similarity between it and an episode in the life of his great-grandfather. This venerable ancestor, when fine society was less tenacious of its associations, entered upon the cultivation of pumpkins as a business, but in after life, as the novelist has it, became a railroad president, and as an inseparable result, a great financier. When in the latter position, being a very sensitive person, he tried to get rid of the odor of the pumpkin business; but all to no purpose. Do what he would, go where he would, contribute to what he would, mix with what society he would, be as generous as he would, people were heard to whisper ‘pumpkins;’ and to construe his motives as prompted by the same spirit which induced him to make a business of cultivating that vegetable. A similar odor, arising from his connection with Pierce, Smooth found clinging to his garments. The world in general viewed him as a dangerous man, for the simple reason that his master was regarded with the same eye of suspicion. Pierce was not ignorant of this, and to obviate Smooth’s difficulties, said he would send him Down East, as before related. Being of an undecided turn, he could not make up his mind about the war business in Europe, nor could he exactly define where he stood with regard to Central America. He would like to give me (Smooth) the job to do the fighting for these United States, for he felt sure I could not fail to make a grand affair of it. As for Caleb being taken into the contract (he, the General, shook his head doubtingly), he had some doubt of the policy; he was fast enough, but there was no knowing which way he would turn at any moment, nor was he at all times to be trusted. For the present, Smooth must be contented with a first-class mission to Down East, where he would settle the fish and other questions



## Page 147

international; at the same time, he might be evolving in his mind the affair of the war. Did Minister Smooth deem it expedient, he might without prejudice, taking the Ostend for example, call together on the Island of St. Paul—or, if preferable, the Isle of Sables—a Congress of American Ministers, provided, nevertheless, he invite Major Hammet, of the Pictou Mission, and Governor Darby, of the Isle of Dogs. Pierce strictly enjoined that no letters be received from Monsieur Souley, nor his dogmatic Secretary, and that the subjects to be discussed were the internal affairs of Baffin's Bay, Greenland, the North Pole, the Labrador Coast, and the straits of Bell Isle—from which the importation of cod oil had sadly fallen off during our fish difficulties. Not to weary the reader, Smooth is here happy to relieve his mind by stating that simple prudence restrained him from calling together this august Congress; he left it where he found it—in Mr. Pierce's fruitful head.

“Conscious of the necessity, Smooth bound Mr. Pierce down to detail, particularly stipulating that he should bear the ultimate responsibility in the event of failure. Now to the result!

“His opinion of the Novascotians had always been favorable, and when he left Mr. Pierce it was with a promise that he would do all he could to enlighten them. But as impressions will change at a nearer view, so when he got wrong did he regard both the quality and quantity of their radicalism as injurious to the best interests of the State. There was in the little green-hilled province an endless amount of political talking done, with so small an amount of patriotism evinced, that we were not at a loss for the cause that had kept the State in obscurity. Then there seemed so much government, that everything was ungoverned. And he (Smooth) thought there was a want of activity, physical as well as mental, and a recklessness of getting into debt to Mr. John Bull, who never could infuse a sufficient sense of honor into his Colonial subjects to make them pay over, or regard their obligations. Want of energy and a criminal dependence upon the 'home Government' for assistance, with which to develop the resources of the country, resulted in a want of confidence in the State's own means to better its condition. The Home Government, and an imported Governor, were blighting to their vital energies. This subject, however, is not fruitful, hence his reader will please accompany him to a different. Having left Pierce for a time, Smooth, with that resolution so characteristic of his countrymen, wherever found, entered into the codfish business. Transforming himself (after the manner of his uncle Jeff Davis), into a captain of the fishing schooner Starlight, which said schooner he ran over the treaty line straight into Fox Island, on the coast of Cape Breton, where he proposed making the acquaintance of the inhabitants, and, if possible, a treaty of friendship and commerce. The waters



## Page 148

in and about the port were alive with mackerel—the finest, plumpest, fattest, and most willing fish ever seen in any waters. They sported round us, looking clever enough to make all on board the schooner believe they wanted to come on board. The crew felt like scraping acquaintance with them, favoring them with a hook, and the like; but then there interposed that great bugbear—the treaty line. Hard was it to tell where this line was; it might, for aught to the contrary, be on the top of a wave, upon which we might be tossed, much against Smooth's inclination, far into the unlawful side. Being, however, inside of the line and surrounded by mackerel, one would have supposed the Nova Scotians had been on the alert catching them. The case was just the reverse, for not a Nova Scotian was to be seen. To Smooth's mind this was making a law to protect the lazy, something he never approved of, more especially in these days of energy and railroads. A determination was come to, after mature deliberation, that fish there were and fish our boys must have, so you must lend an ear while Smooth relates the manner in which he got them. Deacon Hawkins kept an inn for the entertainment of man and beast. It was not the very best kind of an inn, for it was managed by the deacon's wife, whose parsimony and love of Friday evening meetings had lost her nearly all her guests and driven her children barefoot into the street. On the day following the Starlight's arrival, as luck would have it, a 'political meeting' was to be holden at the Deacon's, when a considerable amount of first-rate drinking was sure to come off. Smooth, being Mr. Pierce's minister in general, was honored with an invitation which he declined in consideration of his anxiety to be among the mackerel. Something must indeed be done for the mackerel; the case was a serious one. Had the Britishers shown a resolution to be among the fish, Smooth had lent them a hand to secure the whole shoal, and then brought them back, merely to avoid the penalty of the British law, and secure the bounty given by ours. Well, the Britishers were all gone to a political meeting, where a noisy politician of the name of Joe Howe, and another of the name of Doyle, having come all the way from Halifax, and brought with them other great men of the political world of Nova Scotia, would relieve themselves of ponderous speeches, to hear which all the old men of the parish would take their promising sons. Smooth never regarded political meetings over highly, and had more than once thought those so earnest in attending them had done much better attending their potato fields. With this opinion made stronger in the present instance, he counselled Mister Splitwater, the mate, whose logic never was known to be at fault. Splitwater, agreed that it was expedient to be in pursuit of the fish while the Britishers were attending their political gatherings and prayer-meetings. Mackerel were right knowing fish, he said, and could with good feed be coaxed



## Page 149

across the line, and into the waters not held sacred against American hooks by British law. And to this end a goodly amount of bait was ground up; and the wind coming in the quarter most favorable to our movements, canvas was got on the Starlight, and in charge of Splitwater, who was directed to keep a bright eye on the warships, she put to sea like a thing of life dancing with snowy wings over the blue, blue waters. While he was taking care of the fish, Smooth remained on shore, keeping those who attended the political meeting all right, and making a speech or two when called upon.

“To hear the eloquent Joe Howe tell the Nova Scotians what they would be were it not for James Johnson and Toryism was really very amusing. He forgot to tell them that he had no serious objection to being made Colonial Secretary seeing that a nice little salary was attached. When Smooth made his appearance at the political gathering of course no one thought there was any fish-taking going on. Then he endeavored to make the credulous citizens feel free and easy, entertaining them with jokes of a strong kind, and explaining the crude process of electioneering down in Texas and Arkansas. No sooner had the politicians got through their speeches than they retired to what was called an ‘open house,’ where all good radicals could drink *ad libitum* and make merry. Smooth was honored with an invitation to join in a few joyous glasses, but he rather doubted the policy of drinking so much election liquor. It might under certain circumstances serve the ends of politicians, but never the greater interests of a nation. A drinking man is sure to fool himself in the end, nor can a man serve the interests of the State who neglects his own. But, be it here understood Uncle Sam, there is a philosophical way of applying the practical to make things profitable, which may be carried out with more facility by making oneself cheerful and courteous with those among whom we may be cast. This Smooth always aimed to do.

After a while Smooth calculated how he’d got politics enough; an’ knowin’ how Splitwater was ‘commodatin’ the mackerel outside the line, he steps down to Deacon Sam Moody’s prayer meetin’, what they holds at night after the ‘lection meetin. Here it was all right; Smooth was just as much of a Christian as anybody could honestly be, and a longer face nobody could desire. Smooth, at the Deacon’s, was-well known for his pious principles; but the good folk about there had never seen Smooth in an anxious way. Well, the deacon congratulated Smooth on his appearance, his spiritual welfare, his happy prospects of something beyond this. It would have done you good to see the brothers and sisters crowd round him, lookin’ so excited ‘bout the care of somethin’ anybody can take care of without neglectin’ business. (We here give Smooth’s language in its crude state). It was amazin’ to see what an amount of pious a fellow could get into his face, and then



## Page 150

get his face into a right focus; but when brother Smalwood invited him to pray! that was shavin' the thing a little too close—more nor a man what was thinking about Splitwater and the mackerel could shoulder. Had not a mite of an objection to 'commodatin' the good folks with 'most anything, or puttin' on the longest and seriousest face out doors—a face that would beat the Deacon's; but couldn't go t'other thing. Smooth could rather beat the Deacon on a serious face; but the old hoss was a regular steamboat when it come to exhortations and such things. Wouldn't 'a done to have a brush with the Deacon, without being sure of beating him, for he was mighty egotistical about his prayers. Well, there was no help for it, we must feel kind and happy to see so many happy ones around one, who could not? It was strictly in accordance with Smooth's philosophy to make people as happy as possible, and so he kept asking anxious questions, gettin' satisfactory answers,—answers that would be sure to make me all straight in the pious, with a day or two's consideration.

“In this way the spirits kept up until the pleasant hour of midnight came; then the Deacon invited me to go home and hang up at his house. It was just the thing for Smooth, but he had to decline twice before he got over the polite so to accept: and then he knew Split was taking the mackerel aboard like sixty. So he went home with the deacon, turned in for the night, and knew nothing more till daylight.

“Now he must disclose how the Starlight and Split got along, coaxing the mackerel with fresh bait, just as General Pierce does the Soft Shells. Split meets the schooner Spunk, Skipper Pluck, afore he begun to get to the line, outside of which he could fish according to law. Split and he were old cronies, and they just *heaves to*, and has a talk about what's best to be done. 'Twarn't long afore they had negotiated the plan, which, when carried out, they were to divide the spoils equal. Seeing how the Britishers, every year, pay over a million pounds sterling for keeping open the fishing question, driving the fish out of the water with big man-o'-war ships and steamships, and making a deal of pleasant fun for a great many fine gentlemen who threaten to swallow a fisherman for taking a fish; and that the United States pay about one-fifth as much for the privilege of sending some of their big ships to help the Britishers play the genteel, while hoping that stupid diplomacy will long continue to give them the same Opportunity, Split and Pluck reckoned how they'd come a point over the Britishers.

“The great point was to steer clear of the big British steamer, Devastation. Pluck said he seed her steamin' away down to the northward t'other a'ternoon, and so it was agreed that Pluck, with the Pinkey Spunk, should run down in her track. If he sighted her in the morning he was just to *play her about* some, until Split got the mackerel on board. And so, instead of the Devastation going



## Page 151

in search of him, the Spunk went after her, and, as luck would have it, met her just inside of the treaty line. The Spunk pretended to be shying—put on the rags as if he was going to try legs with the Devastation. Crowdin' steam like all Jehu, down the Devastation came, as if she were going to smash the Spunk, and blow her to Daniel's dungeon. Bang! whang! boomed a gun or two, but seem' how ther' warn't no iron fallin' about, Pluck reckoned he'd keep her to it a time longer, knowin' in his soul that every mile further he got the Devastation away from the Starlight, so much the better for Splitwater and the mackerel. It warn't long, afore whir! ziz! ziz! came somethin' what made a mighty splashin', and looked savagarous, square across her stern sheets. Pluck reckoned how the Britisher had got his dander up, and about cleverest thing would be to round to, seem' how the feller was wastin' his shot, and sendin' things what might save a body the trouble of puttin' on a night-cap about bedtime. 'Now,' said Pluck, 'the Devastation feels kind a out o' sorts, and 'll just knock the Spunk into an apple dumplin';' but she didn't! Well, the skipper and his dandy officers came on board, looking all so shined up, and vented their indignant feelins' by takin' it all out in a shower of cussin' that would 'a made yer hair stand on end straight. In a few minutes more, a feller in a monkey jacket, a brass button on his hat, and otherwise officially costumed, put on the dignity of the quarter-deck, and out-talked the skipper. 'Now, why the devil didn't you come to when you saw our signal?' says he, with a face of daggers, and looking at Pluck as if he was goin' to spring the main-mast with his teeth. 'Hand up yer papers here—quick, bear a hand! Take off yer hatches, too; you've been fishing inside of the *line*,' he grumbled out, as quickly as you'd overhaul a chain cable. Pluck bore it like a philosopher, cool and quietly. 'No we hain't nether, stranger; hain't hooked a fish for two days. Can't 'commodate us with a sup of fresh water, can ye? Wanted to get a chance at the shore, but ain't had one for more nor three weeks; true! by Christopher Columbus,' rejoined Uncle Pluck, puttin' on the most innocent face ye ever did see.

“We'll talk about that by-and-by,' says the Britisher. 'If you'd a cum to, like a man, as you should, and not given us this long chase after you, you might have had some claim to our generosity. We are only carrying out Her Majesty's orders for the benefit of the Colonial fisheries.'

“Lord love yer soul, stranger! had I but known that, ye wouldn't a seen this salt-water citizen about these diggings. Pluck had been hum, helping Cousin Gethro to keep school—would!

“Never mind that. We don't want yer Yankee soft sauder! Bear a hand, get your hatches off, and your papers up!

“Ye hain't seen Uncle Caleb's craft—her name's the Winking Weazel—as ye come from down north, have ye?' inquires Pluck, giving the mate a side wink.



## Page 152

“What the devil do I care about yer Winking Weazels? I’m quite certain you have been fishing inside of the line, or you had obeyed our summons properly,” he growled out again, like a bear in trouble. ‘Blow my buttons, if I warn’t most scared to death when I seed ye comin’! Couldn’t tell what on ’arth ye wanted; and I know’d that if there war’ a chance at all, it was to run. If I’d know’d ye war’ such a clever lookin’ fellow, and that ye warn’t a going to hurt a body, I’d come to quicker nor lightenin.’ Pluck got all the philosophy in his natur’ up. ‘Suppose ye step down into the cabin and have a leetle of somethin’ to take, seem’ what a tarnal ugly fog’s comin’ up. Tom Blowers ’ll get all the things clear, so ye can take a look round, and be satisfied how we ain’t been takin’ advantage of the law, while you and me wets t’other eye with a little what won’t taste bad,’ continues Pluck, doing the polite all up. The good natur’ of the chap was a good way down’ in him, but talkin’ of a little drop just dropped into the right place, brought it up all over him. ‘Well, seeing it’s you, providin’ it’s right good, I don’t mind,’ he replied, reflectively. It warmed up the tender spot in his stomach, and, going down below, he wet t’other eye twice. ‘Stonishin’ to see how good the critter got all at once. He was just the best natured Britisher that ever came along. ’Twas just the medicine to cure his disease.

“Now! here’s the dockermments’ (Pluck hands him the papers), ’and ye can take a squint into the hold. Hain’t touched a fish for three days. Just so, stranger,’ rejoined Pluck, tellin’ the cook to get the skipper of the Devastation to be kind enough to lend him a keg of water.

“Schooner Spunk, of Barnstable, 84 tons burden, Jacob Pluck, master, &c., &c. Mighty formidable combination,’ ejaculated the Britisher, lookin’ his eyes almost out, and runnin’ the forefinger of his right hand over the Spunk’s Certificate. Then turning to Pluck, a sort of half-way grin of good nature on his countenance, he continued: ‘You Yankees are curious specimens, after all. Pretty generous, good-natured when it’s profitable, hard to understand, and as cute as—’

“Don’t say the last!” interrupts Pluck. ‘Seeing it’s you, citizen, we wont argue that point just now. Satisfied on the dockermments, ain’t ye?’

“Confound the dockermments! I don’t want to bother myself with them. Mind your eye next time; cover when you see the signal,’ says the Britisher, whom Pluck had got nicely smoothed down.

“Reckon how there won’t be any mistake about it next time. Give us yer hand, captain.’ (Pluck shakes hands with the Britisher). ‘They say the Pinkey, Starlight—you know she’s a ripper to fish inside of the line!—got into a monstrous shoal of fresh mackerel day afore yesterday, and is now takin’ on ’em like sixty, inside of the line, down *north-east* of us.’



“Do you tell me that? That fellow Smooth at it, again, fishing inside of the line? And inside the point as well, I suppose?’ The Britisher looked surprised, and listened attentively to Pluck as he assumed an air of innocence.



## Page 153

“Just so! Smooth is the keenest feller. Don’t care a whit about the line; and the Starlight’s so mighty used to fishin’ inside, that even the fish seem to have a likin’ for the skipper.’

“I’ll see after that treaty-breaker, I will,’ growls the chap, changing his good natur’ into bad again.

“Down *north-east of us* ye’ll find him, inside the point,’ continues Pluck, looking all over serious.

“I’ll catch the fellow, and right soon, too;’ and, being right good friends, they shook hands, and the Britisher left, quite satisfied. Just as he, in his boat, was leavin’ the Spunk for the Devastation, Pluck bellowed out, fearin’ he’d forget it, ‘Keep a straight course, *north-east* about two points east! about two points east! and yer sure to come upon him.’ The last thing Pluck saw of the Devastation, she was heading for *the supposed spot*, steering away, drivin’ all the fish into the middle of the Atlantic, and expecting to find the Starlight where Pluck said she was.

“No sooner was the Devastation put all right than Pluck hauled his wind, and next mornin’ came up with the Starlight, which had taken about eighty barrels of fine fat mackerel. The game being nicely played, the Starlight and the Spunk both run in for a shelter, where the spoils could be shared according to practical diplomacy—not the diplomacy that has been twenty years gettin’ the question into an interminable difficulty. This done, Smooth, having helped the folks on shore with their political meetings, and prayer meetings, and consultation meetings, stepped on board again, and took command of the Starlight without any extra trouble. But that was not the end of it. The looks of such fine fat fish raised a mighty fuss in the town, everybody forgot the politics and the prayer meetings, and begun to talk fish. They declared the Yankees had encroached on the Britisher’s rights. Despatches were next day to go to head-quarters, a whole British fleet was wanted, and must come down and seize Smooth’s Pinkey, the Starlight—fish and all. The whole talk and noise didn’t make much matter to Smooth; he didn’t believe in talking—acting was his motto—go-ahead. ‘Blow away, citizens—blow away! A little more energy is worth the whole. There is fish enough for us all; but politics and prayer meetings will not catch them.’

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE PIOUS SQUIRE.

“The good people of Nova Scotia were, in days gone by, exceedingly given to Toryism, and, as was then held to be the natural result, very loyal. To such an extent was this loyalty and love of Toryism—as it was then called—carried, that a person who consumed ‘Yankee goods’ was seriously suspected of some improper design against



the State. The consumption of British manufactures and British-grown produce was, on the other hand taken as strong testimony of loyalty and confidence in the wise powers protecting



## Page 154

the interests of the State. The very presence of 'Yankee goods' was ominous of evil; and as it was desirable the good people should be kept well up to their Toryism, many were the means resorted to for forcing the exclusive consumption of British produce. Tea from the United States was prohibited for the benefit of the East India Company—powder must be British! Tobacco paid imperial and colonial duties approximating to a prohibition; and the consumer of the weed was considered quite an extravagant aristocrat, who either had dealings with smugglers, or was wasting his fortune in the ways of the devil. In a word, imperial and colonial duties dried up the energies of the people, and gave new life to a contraband trade that was fast destroying the best interests of the State. The result was, that the best smuggler was the most desperate fellow; but it generally happened that the man who said most against 'Yankee goods' was sure to be deepest implicated in contraband trade.

"To be a scientific smuggler in those days it was necessary to be a justice of the peace: and if the office were coupled with that of church warden so much the better. About this time there was, in the Bay of Fundy, an old coaster of the name of Hornblower, who knew every creek, cove, inlet and headland, together with all the best points for smuggling, from the St. Croix River to Windsor Bay on the one side, and from Windsor Bay to Barrington on the other. Skipper Hornblower, as he was then called, had the go-ahead in him, and commanded the schooner Dash, owned by one Squire Burgle, who carried on a strictly *legitimate* trade with the Yankees over the *line*, though he always gave out that he hated them as a people, nor would ever sell a pennyworth of their notions which he denounced as worthless. Hornblower was a *brusque* old salt, but had a right good heart in him, and, not liking the way trade was restricted by imperial and colonial exactions, thought it no harm to work to windward of the collectors now and then, and accommodate his friends in a free-trade sort of way. Tea, 'in them times,' cost six colonial shillings and a day's journey per pound, and a gallon of molasses about the same. The good old women in more remote parts of the province, must have their tea, and molasses was an indispensable luxury, for they were indeed poor. But they were compelled to buy of the established merchant, who was a sort of prince in his way, and dictated his terms to the people, whom he always kept in poverty while he got rich. Molasses, tea, tobacco, and rum (New England white-eye, labelled Jamaica!) constituted his stock in trade. To length of credit he added corresponding prices, never forgetting to take good security. His medium price for tick was only forty per cent. addition, which he considered extremely liberal.



## Page 155

“And thus, through a pettifogging colonial policy, commerce was turned into the merest speculation by a class of persons who made it their object to restrict the agriculturist, and hold his interests at their mercy. The more the farmer raised, the more he found himself subject to the shopkeeper’s narrow restrictions; and thus the interests of a naturally energetic people were held in check. The Home Government (God bless it! as the very loyal Provincials used to say when the Imperial Parliament took their cause under consideration) thought little about the outside Nova Scotians, except to say, once in a while, that the territory they inhabited belonged to her Majesty, which fact the people of the province were forcibly reminded of by the presence of imported gentlemen, whom it had pleased her Majesty to place in all responsible offices. In fact, the Home Government, through its pewter-headed policy, was for ever making laws to suit the immediate demands of a favored few, who said good things of loyalty and toryism, and left the rest to chance.

“During this state of affairs, Skipper Hornblower’s fame sounded far and wide, and many were the stories told of his smuggling exploits, and how Squire Burgle always kept a large stock of British goods on hand, which he never sold cheaper than any body else, though he got richer. Hornblower’s account of how he and the Squire carried on business together in the good old times may not be uninteresting, ‘Squire Burgle,’ said Hornblower, ‘was a great man in them days, said a sight of good things in his prayers every night and morning, denounced smuggling, and hoped all those fearless men that followed it would see the error of their way, turn to her Majesty, and make their loyalty honor the State. Squire used to send me to Boston—the Dash was the only craft in the trade then—with little things to sell, and a return cargo of flour, gin, tobacco, and such like Yankee notions, which the Nova Scotians must have, and upon which her Majesty lavished most ungracious duties, to fetch home. Well, the Squire lived at the town of Annapolis, twenty miles up a river, where Digby, at its entrance, was the only port of entry within a hundred miles. Seeing that I liked to make quick trips, it was not always convenient to stop at this obdurate port of entry, and so I used to lay the Dash’s head for a piece of dark wood on a point of land outside the entrance (always being careful to have a clearance in *merchandise*) and run her close aboard of it. Squire had a cousin living near that bit of wood, who used to understand the thing, and could sight the Dash’s signal ten miles at sea. Lying off and on until sundown, the Squire’s cousin would hang out a light on a tree; if at the top it was the signal—‘All right;’ if half-mast, ‘Keep out!’ ‘There’s the light—all right to-night! the boys used to say, when it gleamed at the tree top.’ Then into the basin and up the river we used to dodge, passing on the opposite



## Page 156

side of the river, and as far from the port of entry as it was possible to get, and reaching a point on the banks where the cargo was to be discharged, while the folks on shore were all nicely sleeping. The Squire, of course, had said his prayers, or, as it sometimes would happen—though it was always accidental—had gone to Digby, for the purpose of giving her Majesty's Collector a ride into the country. The Collector was always an imported gentleman, who maintained a good deal of imported dignity, which the Nova Scotians had to 'tip' out of him, ere he became a clever fellow, according to their notion of such a being. In addition to taking the Collector a short pleasure trip into the country, the Squire had a nigger fellow, of the name of Tom, who, as cunning as a fox, could tell the Dash was coming, by something he always said he saw was in the clouds. Tom lived on Pin Point, where the Squire had his half-way warehouse, always full of foreign goods, on which no one could tell how much duty had been paid. This half-way warehouse, which Tom called his, used to atone for a monstrous quantity of sins. The Squire, however, declared he had established it there, in the fulness of his generosity, merely to accommodate his kind customers, whose means of travelling did not enable them to reach his trading marts at either extreme. But, when customers called at Pin-Point to do a little trading with the Squire, they generally found it closed, and Old Tom offering his very best apology, by saying it was where master only did his wholesale business. This was accepted on the ground that the Squire and Tom were very funny individuals. Well, we would run to the Point at night, and Tom having everything ready to move at the word, would shoot the Yankee goods into the warehouse, where, in six hours, they would be all transferred into real British growth and manufacture. During this time the Squire was nowhere; but Tom did things as if he knew how. Indeed no sooner were the goods out than we made the best of our way down the river again.

"Next morning, the sun about two hours up, you would see the Dash away down the bay, as calm as moonlight, just sighting Digby. Squire—totally ignorant of Hornblower's arrival—would be putting on the longest face in the town of Annapolis, going up and down the street quite disconsolate, and climbing into the church steeple to see if he could sight the Dash below. 'Hornblower's gone this time!' he would say, shaking his head, 'must be lost! must be lost! must be lost!' And the Squire would tell about his horrid dream, seeing Hornblower's ghost smuggling a chest of tea (real congou), and the Collector catching him on the spot. 'Hornblower's tricky—he larnt it of the Yankees—and I'm always afraid he'll get cotched smuggling little things for himself. What a blessing it is to have a clear conscience!' he would say: the last sentence referring to himself.

"But soon the knowing ones got an inkling of the Squire's secrets, and when he mentioned the Dash in his prayers at morning, and walked the wharf after breakfast, muttering his misgivings, she was sure to arrive in the afternoon. There was virtue in

the Squire, but the citizens got the hang of it so well, that whenever I arrived at town they would say: 'It's only Hornblower's ghost.'



## Page 157

“While the Squire would be doing what he called the straight-forward up in town, I’d be dropping kedge at Digby, where (the Colonial Parliament having withdrawn the appropriation for a boarding-boat, that smugglers might get through their little operations without trouble) we would send our own boat for the collector. Used to have everything as bright as a new sixpence, and colors flying, and my own face squared up to do the honest, when that imported dignitary came on board, affecting all the importance of a Port-Admiral.

“Had a good passage, eh, Hornblower?’ the prim collector used to ask, as he mounted the rail.

“Blowed like cannons, outside, last night! Seeing how we had just ballast in her, like to tipped her over,’ I’d say, bowing, keeping my hat in my hand, and doing the polite all up.

“Didn’t have a chance to smuggle, according to that, eh?’

“Yer honor knows Hornblower never does that sort of thing. The Squire, my owner, is pious, you know,’ I’d say, keeping the long face hard down.

“Yes, Hornblower, I know your owner to be conscientious and pious; that is why I always let you off so easy.’ And the collector would look so credulously good-natured that I couldn’t help drawing out a roll of cigars, telling him they were pure Havanas, when presenting them. It used to do me good to see how it—small as it was—softened things about his heart. I would immediately follow the cigars with the papers, taking good care to have merchandise enough in the hold to correspond with what was set forth on the clearance and manifest. ‘Ye see, sir,’ I’d remark, ‘I never smuggles, except it is a few cigars now and then, for my own smoking! Old Jacob Grimes says, when a government makes laws what people can’t live to, you must live round them; but them ain’t my principles.’

“Thank you, Mr. Hornblower, I am sure you have more regard for your honor than to smuggle,’ he would resume, keeping his eyes fixed upon me.

“I am obliged to you for the confidence—the confidence of superiors in spirit or body; and I hope I may never do anything but what will merit yours. It has been my motto through life to keep before me the words of my good old mother. Ah! she was a mother. Fond soul, she used to say, ‘Solomon, my boy, let your dealing with the world be marked by honesty, and remember that one small error in your life may stain forever your character. The eyes of an unforgiving world once excited to suspicion will ever wear the same glasses.’” Having said this, nothing more was wanted to make complete the Squire’s confidence. Without further detention, he would have the papers made out, and having received them, we would trim our sheets and sail away up the river, Old Tom boarding us off Pin Point, and laughing himself almost out of his black skin—welcoming us after the fashion of friends met after a long absence. All this time the Squire would

be impatiently waiting on the wharf at the little town of Annapolis—so glad to see Hornblower! ‘No contraband goods on board, eh, Hornblower?’ he would inquire, affecting such an amount of piety that it made me laugh in my shoes.



## Page 158

“Not so much as a plug of tobacco!’ I would reply, contemplatively, as the crew commenced putting out the few things we had entered at Her Majesty’s Custom House. We had great regard for Her Majesty; nor have I the least doubt of the Squire’s honesty, which would have been all right had it not been for the law and parliament. We have only to add that, having played his part after the manner of a good Christian, he would seek his way home, there to arrange an evening prayer-meeting.

“But the beauty of the Squire’s nature, as illustrated in his pious hatred of smuggling, or otherwise defrauding Her Majesty, would shine out bright on the day the Dash left on her return voyage. I was sure of an invitation to breakfast with him on that morning, and he was equally sure to paint the purity of his conscience in such glowing colors that it was difficult for me to maintain a serious face. When we had eaten bread, and he had offered up his prayer (in which he always remembered Her Majesty), he would accompany me to the Dash, when, having got on board, and cast off, he would mount the most prominent place on the cap-sill, where the citizens assembled could hear him, and cry out at the top of his voice:—‘Hornblower! good-bye. One word more, Hornblower! Let me entreat you not to smuggle a pennyworth for anybody.’ My reply always was that I would follow his advice with christian strictness. Then he would modestly finger that cravat so white, and fix in his face such becoming dignity, that I thought his green glasses, which I never liked, covered his eyes to great advantage. ‘Remember what I have always endeavored to impress on your mind,’ he would continue; ‘honesty is the best policy—it is!’ Just then everybody would look at the Squire, while it was with great effort I kept from my face a smile. I knew honesty was the best policy; I knew it was the true policy to all praiseworthy ends; but how could I help contemplating the necessity of those preaching who never practised it, seeing that the Squire was not what he seemed, for he smuggled an hundred barrels of flour for every one he paid duty upon. I had also seen him pass sentence of imprisonment and fine on the wretch who smuggled a demijohn of bad spirits, when for him I had smuggled a thousand.

“Thanks to a more liberal commercial policy, that has precluded the necessity for such scenes as the Dash stealing her way into a river at night to land her cargo of contraband goods. Those violations of law, so prevalent a few years ago, have ceased; and in the improved condition of the people we see the result of a new and more liberal policy. But a few years ago, that small craft, the Dash, alone sought to establish what was considered a doubtful trade with the port of Boston; now, some forty pursue a profitable traffic with the State of Massachusetts, which has annually brought to her in British bottoms no less than 170,000 cords of Nova Scotia grown fire-wood.

## CHAPTER XXVI.



## Page 159

SMOOTH ENCOUNTERS A COLONIAL JUSTICE OF STRANGE CHARACTER.

“Nova Scotia being what a South Carolinian would call a hard country to live in (though the people were proverbially kind, and hospitable, and loyal, and simple-minded), Smooth, like many other special ministers, resolved to give up his mission in disgust, and, without further delay, seek the arms of General Pierce. However, before quitting the province, he visited the shores of Cape Breton (an island belonging to Her Most Gracious Majesty), and there met with a singularly eccentric character of the name of Belhash. This Belhash added to a figure of great rotundity a square, red face, small hazel eyes, a heavy, flat nose, a low, reclining forehead, and a head covered with red, crispy hair, which he took great pains to part in the centre. The only expression the Squire’s face could lay claim to was that of a pumpkin burned ripe in the sun. When in his favorite dress of blue-grey homespun, which he judiciously arranged (for Belhash was a Squire), no greater functionary lived on the island; that is, in his well-developed opinion of himself! His principal law business consisted in settling all disputes arising between the people on shore and the Yankee fishermen who, against the law, infested the coast, and for whom the Squire had a hatred he always made known in his decisions. To Belhash the Americans were all of a flock, they would steal, smuggle, take a Nova Scotiaman’s eyeteeth out, and, what he most hated, concoct some republican plot to overthrow his darling government. ‘Now,’ said the Squire to me, one day, ‘I have no bad opinion of you individually, Smooth; for, by the righteous, you’re a sort of clever feller—an exception to Yankees in general—nor do I think you’ll steal!’

“I said, ‘No, I didn’t think I would!’ And he continued: ‘You must see I am something of a man here on these shores; in fact, sir, some call me very distinguished; but I hardly think I have arrived at that yet, though the honorable attorney-general of the province, when this way lectioneerin about a year ago, in referring to my position in administering the law, said: ‘That distinguished gentleman, Squire Belhash, than whom none is loyaler, or more capable of administering the law;’ he did, sir, I assure you!’

“Of course I bowed to this, and declared the compliment as merited as handsomely bestowed. And then he continued: ‘You see now, sir—and it’s no small compliment to a man in this out of the way part of the world!—I holds her Majesty’s commission to alienate (some call it demonstrate) the laws of the land.’ Here the Squire’s face broadened and got redder, and the flashy handkerchief seemed too small for the organic conformation of his big blue-veined neck.



## Page 160

“Now and then, though, I gets a law case so confoundedly cross-grained, that I’se forced to call in Lawyer Songster (he’s a cute un, ye know), afore I can get the point o’nt halucinated. Then, Smooth, you see, I isn’t one a them kind a folk what run after bigified gentry; and that’s how I’se got where I has! A squire in this part of the world is somebody, I assure ye, sir. Then, what’s more, I’ve always bin as loyal as a body could be; but, remember ye, I warn’t on the Tory side, and for the very reason that they never appreciated native talent and native larnin. Them were the days,’ said the Squire, accompanying the words with a sort of political flourish, what tried the souls of us county-folk. Tory Johnson, and Radical Joe Howe, used to come this way lectioneerin, and set the whole country by the ears; what folk neither of ’em winned over to his party they were sure to get drunk; and poor folks were so fascinated with politics there was no getting a stroke of work done for a month after. Joe Howe, see ye I was a perfect Jones on politics—was what them that know most about politics called a champion of free suffrage; and, what was more nor all, worked himself up from the use of a printer’s stick to holding a stick of stronger cast over the whole province, not even excepting our own country. In fact, he kicked Sir Rupert George out of the Colonial Office only for himself to be kicked in. Well, Joe said if I’d put in the strong talk, and lectioneer for him and the radicals, he’d make me Squire when he got in the *place*—and he kept his word, you see. Joe once see’d me try a case, and he was so taken with it, there was no describin’ his feelins. I take it you’d think natur had done her part for me in knowin’ so much ’bout law, if ye’d see me put a case through.’

“The Squire had it all his own way, Smooth not having a chance to put in a word edgewise. ‘But, seem’ how you cussed Yankees has upset everything in trade along the coast, I isn’t so rich as I used to be. There wor a time when my little store was as good a gold mine as you could turn up in Californey; I could get any kind of a price for goods; and New England rum, what I liquidated with a sprinklin of Jamaica, sold as quick as gold-dust at fifteen shillins a gallon.’

“Here, by the way of diversifying the conversation, I inquired if he remembered the Queen, in the way of *duties paid!*

“The Squire opened his spacious mouth, showed his great shark-like teeth, threw away his worn quid, gave his eyes a significant roll sideways, laughed out heartily, and with his left fist added a warning pinch under my left ribs. ‘Don’t ask that unanswerable question! The custom-house was so far off that nobody thought it any harm to smuggle, just a little! Bless ye! Mr. Smooth, why (here Belhash wiped his face with a flashy Spitalfields) the Rector used to get all his tea smuggled; nor a bit of harm did he think it. But, times ain’t as they wos then, nor did folks deal so much in politics



## Page 161

and Yankee notions.' Here the Squire gave his head a significant twist, as his face glowed as expressive as a fatherly pumpkin of venerable age. After another dissertation on the mode of administering the laws of the land, he invited me into his law establishment, which was the kitchen of a somewhat dilapidated farm-house, of very small dimensions, clapboarded and shingled after the old style. I (Smooth) said there could be no objections to this proceeding, and so, following him very cheerfully into the kitchen, he fussed about for some time among what seemed the cookery arrangements, and at length drew from a chest that stood firmly fixed under an old deal table near a spacious fire-place, in which was a monster back-log, from behind which the ferret eyes of three mischievous urchins peered curious and comical, his judicial suit. Again from the chest the Squire drew forth a large steel chain, and a very mysterious-looking book, and began decorating himself in the most shocking manner. This done, he repaired to the door, in all his profuseness, and seated himself on a block of wood just outside, where as if suddenly becoming conscious of the absence of something very necessary to his personal appearance, he doffed his coat, rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and what, readers, do you suppose he commenced doing?—Getting up the dignity! With nothing less than a pound of chalk before him, he commenced polishing up a steel chain that might on an emergency have served to chain up a very large bull-dog; but the Squire adapted it to the more fashionable use of adorning himself, and making safe his ponderous pinchbeck watch. Belhash now puffed, and blowed, and swore, and sweated, and piled on the chalk, and rubbed and tugged criss-crass his knee, until, with the motion and fritting, he had well nigh covered his cloth with the white substance, from the knee downward. Getting it to the dignity point of brightness he invited me back into his forum, which served the double purpose of kitchen and law-shop. Here he again smothered himself in an extra coat of judicial homespun, and solicited my assistance in securing the bandanna tight about his neck. 'I looks somethin' of a judge, I take it, now?' he said, waiting my approval of his personal appearance, as he fingered the broad turn of his shirt-collar, which seriously threatened his ears and chin. I said I never saw a judicial gentleman look more upish. In fact, nobody could deny that in clothes the Squire was all consequence; and when he loomed into 'Court,' all over the steel chain, believe it, there were bows and servilities without stint. Taking his seat on a high birch block, the plank table being set before him, on which to spread his inseparable law-book, the plaintiffs and defendants assembled, and took seats on a wooded bench in front. 'All persons whatsoever havin' any business whatever with this 'ere court—Squire Belhash sitting—must come for'ard now or never,' cries out at the top of a deep



## Page 162

sonorous voice a little scraggy-looking Scotchman, who, without coat or vest (his shirt-sleeves rolled up, and the right leg of his nether garment tucked away beneath a coarse deck-boot), acted the double part of usher and constable. Again directing a few legal phrases to the Squire, who bowed acknowledgingly, he turned to those present—hoped gentlemen would take their hats off, and spit in the fire-place, seeing how the Court had been newly sanded.

“Having examined a paper, somewhat judicially, the Squire, with an air of dignified endurance, turning to his usher, said:—‘Well, I reckon, it’s best to try the case of Hornblower versus the herrins!’ Down he laid Justice’s Guide. It seemed that on the previous night sundry fishing nets had by some mysterious process been relieved of their burden. This, one of the Squire’s sons charged to the ingenuity, and, as he set forth without fear or trembling, stealing propensities of one skipper Hornblower, who at this time sailed a saucy-looking craft called the ‘Virtue of Cape Cod.’ This Hornblower was one of the independent school, cared not seven coppers for anybody, nor had the most virtuous respect for the nets of his neighbours; he looked the pink-perfection of a Cape Cod fisherman. The skipper rose before his accusers; his hard, weather-bleached face looking as if his intention to throw a harpoon into somebody was the very best in the world. Then his dark eyes flashed lightning at the Squire, who commanded the little Scotchman to read the indictment. This suspicious looking document set forth that one skipper Hornblower, of the schooner Virtue, had feloniously, and with malice aforethought, extracted from the nets of one James Belhash, son by lawful wedlock of the presiding justice, sundry herring, mackerel, and other fish—such as usually come into such nets, and are found on these Her Majesty’s shores. Here the Squire interrupted by commencing an essay on the enormity of the crime; and concluded with the following pungent remark:—‘Now, Hornblower, I knows, without ginning a look in the law-book, you’re guilty; there’s always stealin done when you’re about the shore. Anyhow! what say ye for yourself? Remember, you’re in a Magistrate’s Court—in the presence of a justice of the peace!’

“‘So far as that is concerned, I’ll knock under, Squire; but I just wants to see yer prove a thing or two afore ye come possum over this salt-water citizen!’ returns Hornblower, spunkily, pulling from the pocket of his pea-coat a fascinating wedge of tobacco, which so tempted the Squire that he could not resist reaching out his hand and supplying his spacious mouth. As nature, ever erring, should be generous to nature, so also did I interrupt here by offering to plead Hornblower’s case; to which meritorious object I commenced taking off my coat.

“‘Don’t want nobody to soft-soap the case—especially a Yankee—for there’s the law in that ar’ book (here the high functionary turned down the corner of the very page on which it stood forcible to his mind), and I knows all about it—d——d if I don’t!’



## Page 163

“Swearin’ ain’t judiciary, Squire!’ says I.

“Tain’t none a’ your business,’ he rejoined, letting his anger get above his caution. ‘Call Jacob—he’ll swar t’ what he see’d the skipper do!’ Here Jacob, a younger son of the Squire, was called. Jacob had seen some seventeen summers; and in addition to what larnin’ the Squire had ‘gin him,’ was well up in the swearing business, for the furtherance of which his abilities were frequently invoked.

“There is not a man long shore what don’t know and respect Jacob,’ continued the Squire, shutting up his law book, angrily. ‘Jacob’s a son a’ mine—Jacob ’s got larnin, too—Jacob ’s bin more nor two years to Master Jacques’s school at the corner; and he has taken Master Jacques’s place many a time when that larned gentleman had taken a drop too much. Now, Jacob, tell all you know; and let it be just as straight!’

“Well, Dad,’ ejaculated Jacob, who, one might seriously have inferred, had been raised on a guano bag, and slipped very unexpectedly into a suit of linsey-woolsey grey mixed; ‘I see’d the Virtue at anchor right broad off the nets, which the skipper kept a facksinatin eye on, as he paced up and down the quarter-deck.’

“The devil you did!’ Hornblower cried out, at the top of his deep, coarse voice, letting fly a stream of juice that e’en most skinned the Squire’s nasal organ.

“Dan’l!—d——mn it! bring a bucket here for the skipper!’ interrupted the Squire. He hoped Jacob would continue with the remainder of his evidence. ‘And the skipper looked so all-fired strong at the nets that I couldn’t help tellin Uncle Enoch how they’d be stripped afore morning. Sure enough, just as I said, there warn’t a herrin left in the mornin. Seeing how the game war’ going, I went aboard to take breakfast with the skipper; and there, if his table warn’t spread with the fattest fried fresh herrin—’

“That’s all ye knows, ain’t it, Jacob? That’s more en enough; my own mind was made up afore I read the law, and heard the testimony,’ rejoined the Squire, looking suddenly wise. ‘Yes, dad!’ emphatically returned Jacob, ‘but I know’d they were the very same herrin, by the taste on ’em: they tasted as if they wor stolen!’ And Jacob having delivered himself of this tart and somewhat strange rejoinder, gave his shoulder a significant shrug, as he watched dad’s eyes, without faltering.

“That’s plump testimony—there’s no coming yer Yankee twist over that! Ye see, Hornblower, I knows the hang of the law, slap up. The public should know these outrages; the Parliament should be apprised of such breaches of law and moral honesty; the Home Government should know what cussed pests the Yankees are! We don’t want you here at all, Hornblower; you’ve turned pedler, and upset all our trade—there now!’ Here the Squire worked himself up into a perfect fever of excitement, pressing his law-book firmly on the table while addressing his legal observations to his auditory. ‘I shall pronounce you guilty, Hornblower, and judge you to pay a fine of

twenty pounds currency, according to the sovereign law of this Her Most Gracious Britannic Majesty's province.'



## Page 164

"I interrupted by telling him to go-ahead. 'Squire, if you warn't so fast, I'd try to get a word in edgewise for Hornblower,' said I. But, before the Squire had time to retort, Hornblower himself took up the weapon. 'Great Jehu——e! Squire,' he ejaculated, 'you know no more about the law than Dobbin Dobson's donkey—ye hain't worth two cents!' Hornblower's face blazed with red rage, and the Squire got himself all on his pins.

"'Keep your clapper shut, Hornblower,' returned the Squire, telling Hornblower, how, if he doubted his capacity for the law business, he would read him Haliburton's opinions, and convince him that they precisely conformed with his. 'Remember you're in the presence of a Justice of the Peace!' he added, as Hornblower replied by informing him that so long as he was before him nothing more was necessary to remind him of the fact. Then he begged the Squire to keep cool, and not get into a fuzzle: and after he had bestowed some sharp retorts, in not very fashionable language, which he hoped the Squire would not take as personal, he made an explanation of the whole thing. 'Go on,' rejoined the Squire, getting warmer and warmer.

"'Well,' returned Hornblower; 'first I motion to adjourn the Court and go drink all round, at your store; after which I further motion that Jacob and me go down into the cellar of your house—'

"'Into my cellar!' interrupted the Squire, suddenly: 'not a step!—I'se settled the case, and there's no moving judgment.'

"'Here Hornblower charged the Squire with having a suspicious quantity of fresh herring in his own cellar. 'I don't say how they got there this morning afore daylight, Squire,' said he, 'but there's a citizen not far off what will.'

"'It's the ram—d——d'st false ever told against a gentleman of my high standing!'

"'What is Squire?' interpolated Hornblower, keeping as cool as the face of a March morning. Why!' returns the Squire, 'to say I stole 'em myself!'

"'There can be no mistaking it Squire,' chimes in Hornblower; 'and the stronger evidence is the fact of your being the only son of a man who has yet preferred the charge of stealing them. Now, Squire, I'll stake the schooner Virtue, that on proceeding into your cellar the herring will be recovered and injured justice satisfied: just grant us a warrant to search your cellar, Squire.' Here Hornblower looked thunder and lightning at the Squire whose wrath and misgiving seemed carrying out a sad conflict in his heart. The result was a strange clatter of tongues. Notwithstanding the Squire's estimate of his own popularity, the good people on the coast well understood his singular process of doing up the law business. 'You'll get your straight ups to jail, or pay the coin right down, Hornblower!' demanded the Squire, making a flourish with his law-book, and preparing to adjourn for the purpose of doing a small quantity of drinking.



## Page 165

“The Squire’s a humbug!—he is!—I’ll blow the Court to thunder. Just clar the kitchen,’ cried out the skipper, stripping off his coat, as if to have a tug and hug with the Squire, who at that moment wanted to get a word in edgewise. The next Smooth saw, the Squire was letting fly at Hornblower’s head the law-book; which rather summary demonstration was replied to by a stream of tobacco juice, with which Hornblower blinded the Squire, setting him nearly frantic. By the way, the law-book missed its intended object, and stormed the end of Uncle Seth Sprague’s nose, nearly knocking off an inch or two.

“Now, if that is Colonial law, Squire, I think how a little home-made Yankee justice won’t be a bad application,’ said Hornblower, making ready to administer the medicine; then he squared off, and sent his mauler right into the Squire’s dumplin depot, so sharp and strong, as to produce a decided conviction. At length the Squire was floored, and found working the rule of three on the boards. Here the diplomacy became so warm, that Smooth having the very highest regard for Mr. Pierce and his fighting diplomatists who deemed getting up duels, and writing down editors very necessary preliminaries to their mission, thought he would withdraw, leaving the intricacy to Hornblower’s settlement, seeing that he was producing the strongest kind of notes and protocols.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### SMOOTH SETTLES ALL INTERNATIONAL DIFFICULTIES.

“Smooth, on returning to the arms of Mr. Pierce, concluded it would not be bad policy to touch at Halifax, meet Uncle John Bull’s Commissioner, and with him make a final settlement of all international questions. And now, being alongside of George’s Island, which rises abruptly in the centre of Halifax harbor, and nearly opposite the old tower on Point Pleasant—and from which a splendid view of the surrounding country may be obtained, I feel a desire to relate some scenes of singular import which have been enacted in this place. My respect for the feelings of great men and governors, however, causes me to withhold some few of them. Indeed, my character for modesty being pretty well established, I am more than cautions how I bring it in contact with the nervous system of such gentry. Nevertheless, seeing that not uncommonly the greatest and most powerful nations turn the smallest beings into very great men, and spend no end of money to do nobody any good, a short, and I may say, a very modest account from the catalogue of my experience, may not be out of place. Well, I, Smooth, *Minister-in-General to General Pierce*, received, in addition to my own previous conclusion, an incentive to the object in view, conveyed in a dispatch from my Grandpapa Marcy, in which he advised the repairing immediately to Halifax, there to witness the grand battle that was to for ever settle the fish question, and give peace to fishermen and fish in general.



## Page 166

It was sincerely hoped that in the settlement of this long unsettled question, Mr. Pierce would keep his black-pig at home. The result proved the mistake: war was declared. And the day on which the great struggle would be decided ushered in upon a scene at once gloomy and ominous. Mysterious and fleecing clouds now obscured the heavens, and again shadowed with their silvery mists the surface of the sullen stream. A contest of mighty import was to be decided. The hazard was great, but the point to be gained small indeed; and men moved along the busy streets whispering their strong misgivings. Monster war-ships, with ponderous engines supplied, rode like sleeping demons upon the water's leaden surface. An hour of anxiety passed, a signal of war echoed forth, and murmured over the landscape like distant thunder coursing along the heavens. Then the murmuring sound re-echoed, as if the battlements above had opened upon the earth and sea. Soon Britannia's wooden walls were seen veering into line and preparing for action; America's ranged in the same order, waiting the dread moment. Anxious eyes and thoughts strained in expectation of the bloody struggle; then the boatswain's shrill whistle sounded forth, the leaden clouds overhead chased away, and bolder outlined became the figures of venerable Admirals, who, immersed in glittering uniforms, paced their quarter-decks. Again the ominous mouths of fierce cannon suddenly protruded more savagely from the sides of the huge hulks, and the shrill whistle sounded; all was bustle and confusion—eager thousands of both sexes crowded wharves lining the shore, and many struggled for space to stand upon while witnessing the terrible conflict. Again all was hushed into stillness; in breathless suspense did excitement sit on every countenance, as if waiting for the signal flash soon to break forth and turn everything into a chaos. A quarter-master was seen passing a speaking trumpet to the burly old British admiral, who, judging from his deportment, might have supplied the place of a rare curiosity in any cabinet of ancient relics. With it in his hand the ancient veteran mounted a gun on the starboard quarter, and shouted forth the ominous sound: 'I accept your challenge—all ready?' A terrible movement was now perceptible among the spectators on shore.

"You ill-treated myself and officers while on shore a few days ago; and you shall pay the penalty of your insult. I'll lick you; I'll be damned if I don't," answered the American, saucily.

"You're spunk; but we'll take a little of it out, by the way of reducing your pretensions—that's all. Now, my good cousin, just look out for the shivering of your timbers. I'm going to load with grape, a jolly mixture I shall slap right into you.'

"That's e'en jist the medicine!' rejoined the Yankee: that's jist what I'm going to load with; and if it won't kill, we'll take cogniac canister! But old fellow, we'll larn ye how the Britishers can't take the spunk out of us Yankees: s'pose ye come on board my craft, lay off yer old notions, and play the good fellow in the jolly free-and-easy way. We'll

then consider the horrors of war; and see if the matter can't be discussed in a different way atween decks.'



## Page 167

“Well, seeing it's you—not a bad sort of a chap, by the way, I don't much care if I do; but don't let go any grape until I gets under yer lee—perhaps we'd better fight it out on your gun-deck. Captain, my dear fellow (here the captain looked as good-natured as a turtle studying law) any way to suit your own canister!’ returned the rear-admiral of Uncle John's best blue.

“I say, while you are about it, Admiral,’ rejoined the Yankee, with a sort of half flirtish, half earnest air—while you are about to come broad on, just bring all the good folks with you—and don't forget the ladies; bring them, too. There's nothing like plenty of fair faces when a strong battle is to be fought!’ This was a right good say on the part of Commodore Shubrick (such was the Yankee skipper's name), who smiled all over his wrinkled face. It was quite enough. The gallant Britisher's face, too, brightened up with good-nature, the boatswain sounded his whistle, the savage guns disappeared in their ports; the yards were manned with jolly tars, and away streaked the admiral in his barge, skimming the sullen water, towards the Yankee, under a heavy cannonade of grape. The ladies, loving and affectionate souls! couldn't stand it another minute, and, with a Joan of Arc heroism, volunteered to follow the gallant admiral, for the purpose of seeing that their sweethearts and husbands were not seriously wounded by the Commander's grape and other missiles most dangerous. Again loud reports were heard—pop! pop! pop!—ziz! ziz! ziz! went the shots of ordinary mixture: then whole broadsides began to be poured into the belligerents in grand style. After a few hours' cannonading, all was again bustle and confusion; wounded men were seen tumbling over the sides of the ship, fair ladies became unfairly terrified, and then, disgusted with the cowardice of their husbands and sweethearts, might be seen nearly fainting in the arms of gallant officers. After the whole affair was over, a great many wounded husbands, whose cases were extremely doubtful, were conveyed to their homes; others dreaded the application of Caudle lecture medicine from wives who had long preceded them to their domestic hearths. A facetious contemporary has described this great affair in the following graphic manner:

“On attempting to mount the stairs hung at the side, Commodore Shubrick, standing on the quarter-deck, let drive a fish-ball, which he held in his hand, and struck the Admiral a little below the left eye. The Admiral, nothing daunted, ran up the steps, his officers following close behind, and seized the Commodore by the hand, and gave him such a shaking as made him tremble again. General Gore, on reaching the 'poop,' was grossly insulted by the first lieutenant of the Princeton, who, in the most cool and deliberate manner, told him, if he would come below, he would give him 'something to eat.’



## Page 168

“The General, in reply, said he would like to catch him at it. And to show his courage he went below, when one of the middies at the foot of the companion-way took aim at the General with a champagne bottle, and let drive the contents into the General’s glass. The Mayor of Halifax, and members of the Corporation, got into a skirmish with the marines. It seems that Alderman Nugent asked the boatswain, in a sneering sort of way, if they had any turtle on board. The answer was, ‘No—but we’ve got turtle soup, if that will do for you.’ The Mayor stepped up, and said he would rather have turtle soup than *fish* any day. The boatswain answered that he was tired of hearing so much said about fish. For his own part, he didn’t see anything in fish to fight about. If it was mutton, he was on hand for anybody. One word led on to another—by this time the steamer was crowded from stem to stern—until at length there was a general row; every man became a body corporate, and pitched into himself with right good will.

“The ladies got snappish on account of their husbands, and in turn pitched into the officers of the Princeton with their—eyes. The sailors were piped to quarters. Pistols were freely used. The ‘big guns’ were charged and fired, doing much damage to the feelings of the company, in the way of compliments. In short, it was the greatest battle ever fought in Halifax harbor, real or *sham*. After quarrelling in this way, until eight o’clock in the evening, and destroying all the eatables that could be found on board the Princeton, the invaders retired, and left the Commodore and officers to their reflections. The retreat was effected in *gallant* style—so say the ladies. It is said that the Commodore has sent a despatch to Washington, informing the authorities of the insult received. We earnestly entreat that our American contemporaries will fully discuss this serious matter, on account of the honor of the ‘stars and stripes,’ to say nothing of the ‘fish story.’

“Now, Mr. Pierce, in this manner was a very grave question—the fish question, in which many millions had been spent for the purpose of pleasing diplomacy—put through a course of settlement. When will the wisdom of the two most free and enlightened nations of the earth devise some plan of mutual compromise, by which the interests of their subjects may be settled without giving to pedantic diplomatists the means to for ever keep alive an international agitation, which can only give out food for the very smallest of demagogues? We cannot and must not quarrel with Uncle John; no, our birthright, our freedom-loving spirit, our indomitable energy, our kindred institutions, and the interests of our commerce, should make stronger the bonds of peace. We must, in defiance of that pitiable ambition of political tools, who so interrupt the harmony that should exist between nations kindred in spirit and interests, continue our friendly relations. Let



## Page 169

England lay aside her restrictions on commerce; let her apply to a better purpose those millions spent in useless attempts to enforce the observance of laws which only serve to cripple her energies; and let a policy mutually liberal serve to elevate that international forbearance which is the father of the greatest good,' thought I. At this juncture, Mr. Pierce's black pig, always found where he was not wanted, was discovered in the after cabin, which he disputed with every one who attempted to enter, until at length it was voted that I should capture him, and convey him safely home to Mr. Pierce at Washington:—which, be it understood, was done, though not without a struggle.”

**THE END.**