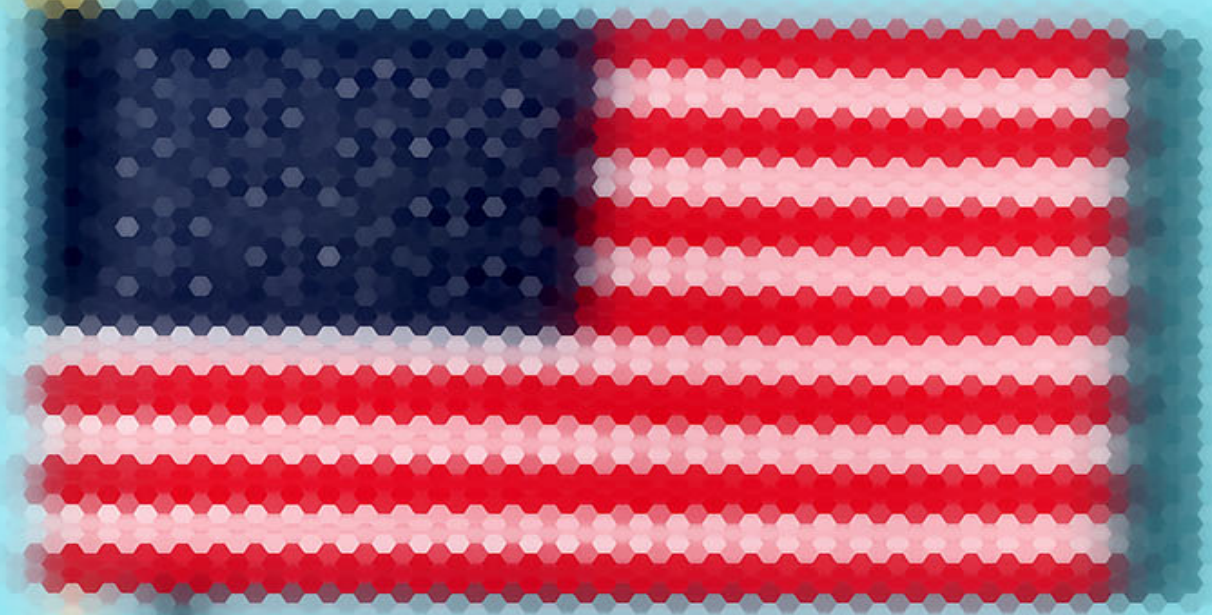


VARIOUS AUTHORS



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Various Authors

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I. **MY FIRST AND LAST SPEECH IN THE GENERAL COURT.**

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If I live a thousand years, I shall never forget the day I was chosen representative. Isaac Longlegs ran himself out of a year's growth to bring me the news; for I staid away from town-meeting out of dignity, as the way is, being a candidate. At first I could not believe it; though when I spied Isaac coming round Slouch's corner, with his coat-tails flapping in the wind, and pulling straight ahead for our house, I felt certain that something was the matter, and my heart began to bump, bump so, under my jacket, that it was a wonder it didn't knock a button off. However, I put on a bold face, and when Isaac came bolting into the house, I pretended not to be thinking about it.

"Lieutenant Turniptop!" says Isaac, "huh, huh, you've got the election!"

"Got what?" says I, pretending to be surprised, in a coolish sort of a way.

"Got the election," says he, "all hollow. You've got a majority of thirteen—a clear majority—clean, smack smooth, and no two words about it!"

"Pooh!" says I, trying to keep cool; though at the same time I felt all over—I can't tell how—my skin didn't seem to fit me. "Pooh!" says I again; but the idea of going into public life, and being called Squire Turniptop, was almost too much for me. I seemed to feel as if I was standing on the tip top of

the north pole, with my head above the clouds, the sun on one side, and the moon on the other. "Got the election?" says I; "a hem! hem! hem!" And so I tried to put on a proper dignity; but it was hard work. "Got a majority?" says I, once more.

"As sure as a gun," says Isaac. "I heard it with my own ears." Squire Dobbs read it off to the whole meeting. "Tobias Turniptop has fifty-nine, and—is—chosen!"

I thought I should have choked! six millions of glorious ideas seemed to be swelling up all at one time within me. I had just been reading Doctor Growler's sermon on the end of the world; but now I thought the world was only beginning.

"You're representative to the Ginerel Court," said Isaac, striking his forefinger into the palm of his left hand, with as much emphasis as if a new world had been created.

I felt more magnanimous than ever.

"I shan't accept," says I. (The Lord pardon me for lying).

"Shan't accept!" screamed out Isaac in the greatest amazement, his great goggle eyes starting out of his head. "Shall I go back and tell them so?"

"I mean I'll take it into consideration," said I, trying to look as important as I could. "It's an office of great responsibility, Isaac," I said; "but I'll think of it, and after mature deliberation, if my constituents insist upon my going—Isaac, what'll you take to drink?"

I could not shut my eyes to sleep all that night; and did nothing but think of the General Court, and how I should look in the great hall of the State House, marching up to my seat to take possession. I determined right off to have a

bran new blue coat with brass buttons; but on second thoughts, I remembered hearing Colonel Crabtree say that the Members wore their wrappers. So I concluded that my pepper and salt coat, with the blue satinet pantaloons, would do very well. I decided though, to have my drab hat new ironed, and countermanded the orders for the cow-hide boots, because kip skin would be more genteel. In addition to this, because public men should be liberal, and make a more respectable appearance than common folks, I didn't hesitate long in making up my mind about having a watch-chain, and an imitation breast-pin. "The check handkerchief," thinks I to myself, "is as good as new; and my pigtail queue will look splendidly if the old ribbon is a little scoured!"

It can't be described how much the affairs of the nation occupied my attention all the next day, and three weeks afterwards. Ensign Shute came to me about the Byfield pigs, but I couldn't talk of anything but my legislative responsibilities.

"The critters beat all natur for squealing," says he, "but they cut capitally to pork."

"Ah!" says I, "there must be a quorum, before we can do business."

"The old grunter," says he, "will soon be fat enough to kill."

"Yes," says I, "the Speaker has the casting vote."

"Your new pig-pen," says he, "will hold 'em all."

"I shall take my seat," said I, "and be sworn in according to the Constitution."

"What's your opinion of corn-cobs?" says he.

“The Governor and Council will settle that,” says I.

The concerns of the whole commonwealth seemed to be resting all on my shoulders, as heavy as a fifty-six; and everything I heard or saw made me think of the dignity of my office. When I met a flock of geese on the school-house green, with Deacon Dogskin’s old gander at the head, “There,” says I, “goes the Speaker, and all the honourable members.”

This was talked of up and down the town, as a proof that I felt a proper responsibility; and Simon Sly said the comparison was capital. I thought so too. Everybody wished me joy of my election, and seemed to expect great things; which I did not fail to lay to heart. So having the eyes of the whole community upon me, I saw that nothing would satisfy them, if I didn’t do something for the credit of the town. Squire Dobbs, the chairman of our select men, preached me a long lecture on responsibility:

“Lieutenant Turniptop,” says he, “I hope you’ll keep up the reputation of Squashborough.”

“I hope I shall, Squire,” says I, for I felt my dignity rising.

“It’s a highly responsible office, this going to the Ginerall Court,” says he.

“I’m altogether aware of that,” says I, looking serious. “I’m aware of the totally and officially.”

“I’m glad you feel responsible,” says he.

“I’m bold to say, that I do feel the responsibility,” says I; “and I feel more and more responsible, the more I think of it.”

“Squashborough,” says the Squire, “has always been a credit to the commonwealth.”

“Who doubts it?” says I.

“And a credit to the Ginerall Court,” says he.

“Ahem!” says I.

“I hope you’ll let ’em know what’s what,” says he.

“I guess I know a thing or two,” says I.

“But,” says the Squire, “a representative can’t do his duty to his constituents, without knowing the Constitution. It’s my opinion that you ought not to vote for the dog-tax.”

“That’s a matter that calls for due deliberation,” says I. So I went home and began to prepare for my legislative duties.

I studied the statute on cart-wheels, and the act in addition to an act entitled an act.

People may sit at home in their chimney-corners, and imagine it is an easy thing to be a representative; but this is a very great mistake. For three weeks I felt like a toad under a harrow, such a weight of responsibility as I felt on thinking of my duty to my constituents. But when I came to think how much I was expected to do for the credit of the town, it was overwhelming. All the representatives of our part of the country had done great things for their constituents, and I was determined not to do less. I resolved, therefore, on the very first consideration, to stick to the following scheme:

To make a speech.

To make a motion for a bank in Squashborough.

To move that all salaries be cut down one half, except the pay of the representatives.

To second every motion for adjournment.

And—always to vote against the Boston members.

As to the speech, though I had not exactly made up my mind about the subject of it, yet I took care to have it all written beforehand. This was not so difficult as some folks may think; for as it was all about my constituents and responsibility, and Bunker Hill and heroes of Seventy-six, and dying for liberty; it would do for any purpose—with a word tucked in here and there. After I had got it well by heart, I went down in Cranberry Swamp, out of hearing and sight of anybody, and delivered it off, to see how it would go. It went off in capital style till I got nearly through, when just as I was saying: “Mr. Speaker, here I stand for the Constitution,” Tom Thumper’s old he-goat popped out of the bushes behind, and gave me such a butt in the rear, that I was forced to make an adjournment to the other side of the fence to finish it. After full trial, I thought best to write it over again and put in more responsibility, with something more about “fought, bled and died.”

When the time came for me to set off to Boston, you may depend on it, I was all of a twitter. In fact, I did not altogether know whether I was on my head or my heels. All Squashborough was alive; the whole town came to see me set out. They all gave me strict charge to stand up for my constituents and vote down the Boston members. I promised them I would, for “I’m sensible of my responsibility,” says I. I promised besides, to move heaven and earth to do something for Squashborough. In short, I promised everything, because a representative could not do less.

At last I got to Boston, and being in good season, I had three whole days to myself, before the Session opened. By

way of doing business, I went round to all the shops, pretending I wanted to buy a silk-handkerchief. I managed it so as not to spend anything, though the shopkeepers were mighty sharp, trying to hook me for a bargain; but I had my eye-teeth cut, and took care never to offer within ninepence of the first cost. Sometimes they talked saucy, in a joking kind of a way, if I happened to go more than three times to the same shop; but when I told them I belonged to the General Court, it struck them all up of a heap, and they did not dare do anything but make faces to one another. I think I was down upon them there.

The day I took my seat, was a day of all the days in the year! I shall never forget it. I thought I had never lived till then. Giles Elderberry's exaltation, when he was made hog-reeve, was nothing to it. As for the procession, that beat cock-fighting. I treated myself to half a sheet of gingerbread, for I felt as if my purse would hold out for ever. However, I can't describe everything. We were sworn in, and I took my seat, though I say it myself. I took my seat: all Boston was there to see me do it. What a weight of responsibility I felt!

It beats all natur to see what a difficulty there is in getting a chance to make a speech. Forty things were put to the vote, and passed, without my being able to say a word, though I felt certain I could have said something upon every one of them. I had my speech ready, and was waiting for nothing but a chance to say, "Mr. Speaker," but something always put me out.

This was losing time dreadfully, however I made it up seconding motions, for I was determined to have my share

in the business, out of regard to my constituents.

It's true I seconded the motions on both sides of the question, which always set the other members a laughing, but says I to them:

"That's my affair. How do you know what my principles are?"

At last two great questions were brought forward, which seemed to be too good to lose. These were the Dog-town turnpike, and the Cart-wheel question.

The moment I heard the last one mentioned, I felt convinced it was just the thing for me. The other members thought just so, for when it came up for discussion, a Berkshire member gave me a jog with the elbow.

"Turniptop," says he, "now's your time, Squashborough for ever!"

No sooner said than done. I twitched off my hat, and called out:

"Mr. Speaker!"

As sure as you live I had caught him at last. There was nobody else had spoken quick enough, and it was as clear as preachen I had the floor.

"Gentleman from Squashborough," says he, I heard him say it.

Now, thinks I to myself, I must begin, whether or no. "Mr. Speaker!" says I, again, but I only said it to gain time, for I could hardly believe I actually had the floor, and all the congregated wisdom of the commonwealth was listening and looking on: the thought of it made me crawl all over. "Mr. Speaker!" says I, once more. Everybody looked round

at me. Thinks I to myself, "there's no clawing off this hitch. I must begin, and so here goes!"

Accordingly I gave a loud hem! said, "Mr. Speaker!" for the fourth time. "Mr. Speaker, I rise to the question——" though it did not strike me I had been standing up ever since I came into the house. "I rise to the question, Mr. Speaker," says I. But to see how terribly strange some things work. No sooner had I fairly rose to the question, and got a chance to make my speech, than I began to wish myself a hundred miles off.

Five minutes before I was as bold as a lion, but now I should have been glad to crawl into a knot-hole. "Mr. Speaker, I rise to the question," says I again, but I am bound to say, the more I rose to the question, the more the question seemed to fall away from me. And just at that minute, a little fat round-faced man, with a bald head, that was sitting right before me, speaks to another member, and says:

"What squeaking fellow is that?"

It dashed me a good deal, and I don't know but I should have sat right down without another word, but Colonel Crabapple, the member for Turkeytown, gave me a twitch by the tail of my wrapper:

"That's right, Turniptop," says he, "give them the grand touch."

This had a mighty encouraging effect, and so I hemmed and hawed three or four times, and at last made a beginning.

"Mr. Speaker," says I, "this is a subject of vital importance. The question is, Mr. Speaker, on the

amendment. I have a decided opinion on that subject, Mr. Speaker. I'm altogether opposed to the last gentleman, and I feel bound in duty to my constituents, Mr. Speaker, and the responsibility of my office, to express my mind on this subject. Mr. Speaker, our glorious forefathers fought, bled, and died for glorious liberty. I'm opposed to this question, Mr. Speaker—my constituents have a vital interest in the subject of cart-wheels.

“Let us take a retrospective view, Mr. Speaker, of the present condition of all the kingdoms and tribes of the earth.

“Look abroad, Mr. Speaker, over the wide expansion of nature's universe—beyond the blazing billows of the Atlantic.

“Behold Buonaparte going about like a roaring thunderbolt! All the world is turned topsy-turvy, and there is a terrible rousing among the sons of men.

“But to return to this subject, Mr. Speaker. I'm decidedly opposed to the amendment: it is contrary to the principles of freemen and the principles of responsibility. Tell it to your children, Mr. Speaker, and to your children's children, that freedom is not to be bartered, like Esau, for a mess of potash. Liberty is the everlasting birthright of the grand community of nature's freemen. Sir, the member from Boston talks of horse-shoes, but I hope we shall stand up for our rights. If we only stand up for our rights, Mr. Speaker, our rights will stand up for us, and we shall all stand uprightly without shivering or shaking. Mr. Speaker, these are awful times; money is hard to get, whatever the gentleman from Rowley may say about pumpkins.

“A true patriot will die for his country. May we all imitate the glorious example and die for our country. Give up keeping cows! Mr. Speaker, what does the honourable gentleman mean? Is not agriculture to be cultivated? He that sells his liberty, Mr. Speaker, is worse than a cannibal, a hottentot, or a hippopotamus. The member from Charlestown has brought his pigs to a wrong market. I stand up for cart-wheels, and so do my constituents. When our country calls us, Mr. Speaker, may we never be backward in coming forward; and all honest men ought to endeavour to keep the rising generation from falling. Not to dwell upon this point, Mr. Speaker, let us now enter into the subject.”

Now it happened, that just at this moment the little fat, bald-headed, round-faced man wriggled himself round just in front of me, so that I could not help seeing him; and just as I was saying, “rising generation,” he twisted the corners of his mouth into a queer sort of pucker on one side, and rolled the whites of his little, grey, twinkling eyes, right up in my face. The members all stared right at us, and made a kind of snickering cluck, cluck, cluck, that seemed to run whistling over the whole house.

I felt awfully bothered, I can’t tell how, but it gave me such a jerk off the hooks, that I could not remember the next words, so that I felt in my pocket for the speech, it was not there; then in my hat, it wasn’t there; then behind me, then both sides of me, but lo! and behold, it was not to be found. The next instant I remembered that I had taken it out of my hat in a shop in Dock Square that morning, while I was comparing the four corners of my check handkerchief with a bandanna. That was enough—I knew as quick as

lightning that I was a gone goose. I pretended to go on with my speech, and kept saying "rising generation," "my constituents," "enter into the subject, Mr. Speaker." But I made hawk's-meat of it you may depend; finally, nobody could stand it any longer. The little fat man with the round face, put his thumb to the side of his nose, and made a sort of twinkling with his fingers; the Speaker began to giggle, and the next minute the whole house exploded like a bomb-shell. I snatched up my hat under cover of the smoke, made one jump to the door and was down stairs before you could say, "second the motion!"

II. HOSS ALLEN, OF MISSOURI.

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This celebrated gentleman is a recognised “hoss” certainly; and, we are told, rejoices as much at his cognomination as he did at his nomination for the chair gubernatorial, last election. He did not run well enough to reach the chair, though it appears, from his own account, that his hoss qualities, “any how,” fall considerable below those of the sure-enough animal. This is his story, which he is very fond of relating up by Palmyry.

“You see, boys, I came to old river, and found I had to swim. Had best clothes on, and didn’t know what to do. ‘What river?’ Why, Salt river. Our Salt, here in Missouri, darned thing; always full when don’t want it. Well, boys, you knows Hoss Allen—no back out in him, any how! Stripped to the skin, just tied clothes up in a bundle, strapped it on the critter’s head, and ‘cross we swum together. Well, don’t you think, while I was gittin’ up the bank, the wicked thing got away, and started off with my clothes on his head; and the more I ran, and hollered, and ‘whoa’d,’ the more I couldn’t catch the cussed varmint. ‘Way he’d go, and I arter—hot as tophit, too, all the way, and yaller flies about; and when I did get tol’ble near, he’d stop and look, cock his ears, and give a snuff, as if he never smelt a man afore; and then streak it off agin, as if I had been an Ingin.

“Well, boys, all I had to do was to keep a follerin’ on, and keep flies off; and I did, till we came to a slough, and says I,

‘Now, old feller, I got you;’ and I driv him in. Well, arter all, do you know, fellers, the aful critter wouldn’t stick! He went in and in, and bimby came to a deep place, and swum right across. A fact—true as thunder! Well, you see, when I cum to the deep place, I swum too; and, do you know, that the darned beast just nat’rally waited till I got out, and looked at me all over, and I could act’ily see him laffin’; and I was nasty enough to make a hoss laugh, any how!

“Well, thinks I, old feller, recon you’ve had fun enough with me now; so I gits some sticks, and scrapes myself all over, and got tol’ble white again, and then begins to coax the varmint. Well, I ‘whoa’d’ and ‘old boy’d,’ and cum up right civil to him, I tell ye—and he took it mighty condescendin’ too; and jist when I had him sure, cussed if he didn’t go right back into the slough agin, swum the deep place, walked out, and stood on t’other side, waitin’ for me.

“Well, by this time, the yaller flies cum at me agin, and I jist nat’rally went in arter the blasted beast, and stood afore him, on t’other side, just as nasty as before—did, by thunder, boys! Well, he laffed agin, till he nearly shook the bundle off; and ‘way he went, back agin, three miles, to the river; and then he jest stopped dead, and waited till I cum up to him, and jest kind a axed me to cum and take hold of the bridle, and then guv a kick and a ‘ruction, and went in agin, laffin’ all the time; and, right in the middle, hang me! if he didn’t shake my clothes off; and ‘way they went, down stream, while he swum ashore; and I, jest nat’rally, lay down on the bank, and cussed all creation.

“Well, you see, boys, there I lays ‘bove a hour, when I sees a feller pullin’ up stream in a skift, a-tryin’ on a coat,

and says I: 'Stranger, see here, when you're done gittin' my coat on, I'll thank you for my shirt!' And the feller sees how it was, and pulls ashore, and helps me.

"I tell you what, boys, you may talk of hoss lafs; but when you want a good one, just think of Hoss Allen!"

III.

THE WIDOW RUGBY'S HUSBAND.

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Some ten or twelve years ago, one Summeval Dennis kept the "Union Hotel," at the seat of Justice of the county of Tallapoosa. The house took its name from the complexion of the politics of its proprietor, he being a true-hearted Union man, and opposed, as I hope all my readers are, at all points, to the damnable heresy of nullification. In consequence of the candid exposition of his political sentiments upon his sign-board, mine host of the "Union" was liberally patronized by those who coincided with him in his views.

In those days, party spirit was, in that particular locality, exceedingly bitter and proscriptive; and had Summeval's chickens been less tender, his eggs less impeachable, his coffee more sloppy, the "Union Hotel" would still have lost no guest, its keeper no dinners. But, as Dennis was wont to remark, "The Party relied on his honour, as an honest man, but more especially as an honest Union man, he was bound to give them the value of their money."

Glorious fellow was Summeval! Capital landlady was his good wife, in all the plenitude of her embonpoint! Well-behaved children, too, were Summeval's, from the shaggy and red-headed representative of paternal peculiarities, down to little Solomon of the sable locks, whose "favour" puzzled the neighbours, and set at defiance all known

physiological principles. Good people, all, were the Dennises. May a hungry man never fall among worse!

Among the political friends who had for some years bestowed their patronage, semi-annually, during Court-week, upon the proprietor of the "Union," was Captain Simon Suggs, whose deeds of valour and strategy are not known to the public. The Captain had "put up" with our friend Summeval, time and again; had puffed the "Union," both "before the face and behind the back" of its owner, until it seemed a miniature of the microcosm that bears the name of Astor; and, in short, was so generally useful, accommodating, and polite, that nothing short of long-continued and oft-repeated failures to settle his bills, could have induced Summeval to consider Suggs in other light than as the best friend the "Union," or any other house, ever had. But, alas! Captain Suggs had, from one occasion to another, upon excuses the most plausible, and with protestations the most profound, invariably left the fat larder and warm beds of the "Union," without leaving behind the slightest pecuniary remuneration with Summeval.

For a long time, the patient inn-keeper bore the imposition with a patience that indicated some hope of eventual payment; but year in and year out, and the money did not come. Mrs. Dennis at length spoke out, and argued the necessity of a tavern-keeper's collecting his dues, if he was disposed to do justice to himself and family.

"Suggs is a nice man in his talk," she said; "nobody can fault him, as far as that is concerned; but smooth talk never paid for flour and bacon;" and so she recommended to her

leaner half, that the next time, summary measures should be adopted to secure the amount in which the Captain was indebted to the "Union Hotel."

Summeval determined that his wife's advice should be strictly followed; for he had seen, time and again, that her suggestions had been the salvation of the establishment.

"Hadn't she kept him from pitchin' John Seagroves, neck and heels, out of the window for sayin' that nullification warn't treason, and John C. Calhoun warn't as bad as Benedict Arnold. And hadn't John been a good payin' customer ever since? That was what he wanted to know."

The next session of the Circuit Court after this prudent conclusion had been arrived at in Dennis's mind—the Circuit Court with all its attractions of criminal trials, poker-playing lawyers, political caucuses and possible monkey shows, found Captain Suggs snugly housed at the "Union."

Time passed on swiftly for a week. The judge was a hearty liquor-loving fellow; and lent the Captain ten dollars "on sight." The Wetumpka and Montgomery lawyers bled freely. In short, everything went bravely on for the Captain, until a man with small-pox pits and a faro-box came along. The Captain yielded to the temptation, yielded with a presentiment on his mind that he should be "slain." The "tiger" was triumphant, and Suggs was left without a dollar!

As if to give intensity to his distress, on the morning after his losses at the faro-bank, the friendly Clerk of the Court hinted to Suggs, that the grand jury had found an indictment against him for gaming. Here was a dilemma! Not only out of funds, but obliged to decamp before the adjournment of the Court—obliged to lose all opportunity of

redeeming his "fallen fortunes," by further plucking the greenhorns in attendance.

"This here," said Simon, "is an everlastin' fix! a mile and a quarter square and fenced in all round. What's a reasonable man to do? Ain't I bin workin' and strivin' all for the best? Ain't I done my duty? Cuss that mahogany box. I wish the man that invented it had had his head sawed off with a cross-cut, just afore he thought on't. Now thar's the sence in short cards. All's fair, and cheat and cheat alike is the order; and the longest pole knocks down persimmon. But whar's the reason in one of your darned boxes, full of springs and the like, and the better no advantages, except now and then when he kin kick up a squabble, and the dealer's afeard of him.

"I'm for doin' things on the square. What's a man without his honour? Ef natur give me a gift to beat a feller at 'old sledge,' and the like, it's all right! But whar's the justice in a thing like farrer, that ain't got but one side! It's strange what a horrir I have for the cussed thing. No matter how I make an honest rise, I'm sure to 'back it off' at farrer. As my wife says, 'farrer's my besettin' sin.' It's a weakness—a soft spot, it's a—a—let me see!—it's a way I've got of a runnin' agin Providence. But hello! here's Dennis."

When the inn-keeper walked up, Captain Suggs remarked to him, that there was a "little paper out," signed by Tom Garrett, in his official capacity, that was calculated to hurt feelins', if he remained in town, and so he desired that his horse might be saddled and brought out.

Summeval replied to this by presenting to the Captain a slip of paper containing entries of many charges against

Suggs, and in favour of the "Union Hotel."

"All right," said Suggs; "I'll be over in a couple of weeks and settle."

"Can't wait; want money to buy provisions; account been standing two years, thirty-one dollars and fifty cents is money these days," said Dennis, with unusual firmness.

"Confound your ugly face," vociferated Suggs, "I'll give you my note! that's enough among gentlemen, I suppose?"

"Hardly," returned the inn-keeper, "hardly; we want the cash; your note ain't worth the trouble of writin' it."

"Dam you!" roared Suggs, "dam you for a biscuit-headed nullifier! I'll give you a mortgage on the best half section of land in the county; south half of 13, 21, 29!"

"Captain Suggs," said Dennis, drawing off his coat, "you've called me a nullifier, and that's what I won't stand from no man. Strip! and I'll whip as much dog out of you as'll make a full pack of hounds. You swindlin' robber!"

This hostile demonstration alarmed the Captain, and he set in to soothe his angry landlord.

"Sum, old fel," he said, in his most honeyed tones, "Sum, old fel! be easy. I'm not a fightin' man—" and here Suggs drew himself up with dignity, "I'm not a fightin' man except in the cause of my country! Thar I'm allers found! Come, old fellow—do you reckon ef you'd been a nullifier, I'd ever been ketched at your house? No, no! you ain't no part of a nullifier, but you are rather hard down on your Union friends that allers puts up with you. Say, won't you take the mortgage?—the land's richly worth a thousand dollars, and let me have Old Bill."

The heart of Dennis was melted at the appeal thus made. It was to his good-fellowship and his party feelings. So, putting on his coat, he remarked that he “rather thought he would take the mortgage. However,” he added, seeing Mrs. Dennis standing at the door of the tavern watching his proceedings, “he would see his wife about it.”

The Captain and Dennis approached the landlady and made known the state of the case.

“You see, Cousin Betsey,”—Suggs always cousined any lady whom he wished to cozen—“you see, Cousin Betsey, the fact is, I’m down just now, in the way of money, and you and Summeval bein’ afraid I’ll run away and never come back—”

“T’aint that I’m afraid of,” said Mrs. Dennis.

“What then?” asked Suggs.

“Of your comin’ back, eatin’ us out of house and home, and never payin’ nothin’!”

“Well,” said the Captain, slightly confused at the lady’s directness; “well, seein’ that’s the way the mule kicks, as I was sayin’, I proposed to Sum here, as long as him and you distrusts an old Union friend that’s stuck by your house like a tick even when the red-mouthed nullifiers swore you was feedin’ us soap-tails on bull-beef and blue collards—I say, as long as that’s the case, I propose to give you a mortgage on the south half of 21, 13, 29. It’s the best half section in county, and it’s worth forty times the amount of your bill.”

“It looks like that ought to do,” said Summeval, who was grateful to the Captain for defending his house against the slanders of the nullifiers; “and seein’ that Suggs has always patronized the Union and voted the whole ticket—”

“Never split in my life,” dropped in Suggs, with emphasis.

“I,” continued Dennis, “am for takin’ the mortgage, and lettin’ him take Old Bill and go; for I know it would be a satisfaction to the nullifiers to have him put in jail.”

“Yes,” quoth the Captain, sighing, “I’m about to be tuk up and made a martyr of on account of the Union; but I’ll die true to my prinsipples, see if I don’t.”

“They shan’t take you,” said Dennis, his long, lank form stiffening with energy as he spoke; “as long as they put it on that hook, hanged ef they shall. Give us the mortgage and slope!”

“You ain’t got no rights to that land; I jist know it, or you wouldn’t want to mortgage it for a tavern bill,” shouted Mrs. Dennis; “and I tell you and Summeval both, that Old Bill don’t go out of that stable till the money’s paid—mind, I say money—into my hand,” and here the good lady turned off and called Bob, the stable-boy, to bring her the stable key.

The Captain and Summeval looked at each other like two children school-boys. It was clear that no terms short of payment in money would satisfy Mrs. Dennis. Suggs saw that Dennis had become interested in his behalf; so acting upon the idea, he suggested:

“Dennis, suppose you loan me the money?”

“Egad, Suggs, I’ve been thinkin’ of that; but as I have only a fifty dollar bill, and my wife’s key bein’ turned on that, there’s no chance. Drott it, I’m sorry for you.”

“Well the Lord’ll purvide,” said Suggs.

As Captain Suggs could not get away that day, evidently, he arranged, through his friend Summeval, with the Clerk, not to issue a capias until the next afternoon. Having done

this, he cast around for some way of raising the wind; but the fates were against him, and at eleven o'clock that night, he went to bed in a fit of the blues, that three pints of whiskey had failed to dissipate. An hour or two after the Captain had got between the sheets, and after every one else was asleep, he heard some one walk unsteadily, but still softly, up stairs. An occasional hiccup told that it was some fellow drunk; and this was confirmed by a heavy fall, which the unfortunate took as soon as, leaving the railing, he attempted to travel *suis pedibus*.

"Oh! good Lord!" groaned the fallen man; "who'd a thought it. Me, John P. Pullum, drunk and fallen down! I never was so before. This world's a turnin' over and over. Oh, Lord! Charley Stone got me into it. What will Sally say if she hears it? Oh, Lord!"

"That thar feller," said the Captain to himself, "is the victim of vice. I wonder ef he's got any money?" and the Captain continued his soliloquy inaudibly.

Poor Mr. Pullum, after much tumbling about, and sundry repetitions of his fall, at length contrived to get into bed, in a room adjoining that occupied by the Captain, and only separated from it by a thin partition.

"I'm very—very—oh, Lord!—drunk! Oh! me, is this John P. Pullum that—good Heavens! I'll faint—married Sally Rugby, oh! oh!"

"Ah! I'm so weak!—wouldn't have Sally—aw—owh—wha—oh, Lord!—to hear of it for a hundred dollars! She said when she agreed for me to sell the cotton, I'd be certain—oh, Lord! I believe I'll die!"

The inebriate fell back on his bed, almost fainting, and Captain Suggs thought he'd try an experiment. Disguising his voice, with his mouth close to the partition, he said:

"You're a liar! you didn't marry Widow Rugby; your some thief tryin' to pass off for something."

"Who am I then, if I ain't John P. Pullum, that married the widdow Sally Rugby, Tom Rugby's widow, old Bill Stearns's only daughter? Oh, Lord! ef it ain't me, who is it? Where's Charley Stone—can't he tell if it's John P. Pullum?"

"No, it ain't you, you lyin' swindler; you ain't got a dollar in the world, and never married no sich widow," said Suggs, still disguising his voice.

"I did—I'll be hanged if I didn't. I know it now; Sally Rugby with the red head, all of the boys said I married her for her money, but it's a—oh, Lord I'm very ill."

Mr. Pullum continued his maudlin talk, half asleep, half awake, for some time; and all the while Captain Suggs was analysing the man—conjecturing his precise circumstances, his family relations, the probable state of his purse, and the like.

"It's a plain case," he mused, "that the feller married a red-headed widow for her money—no man ever married sich for anything else. It's plain agin, she's got the property settled upon her, or fixed some way, for he talked about her 'agreein' for him to sell the cotton. I'll bet he's the new feller that's dropped in down thar by Tallasse, that Charley Stone used to know. And I'll bet he's been down to Wetumpka to sell the cotton—got on a bust thar—and now's on another here. He's afeard of his wife too; leastways, his voice trembled like it, when he called her red-headed, Pullum!