

## LETTER LXXXII.

NOTING THE UTTER DESTRUCTION, BY AN INEBRIATED JOURNALIST, OF THE VENERABLE GAMMON'S BENIGNANT SPEECH; INTRODUCING THE NEW GENERAL OF THE MACKEREL BRIGADE; AND DESCRIBING A CURIOUS PHENOMENON ON DUCK LAKE.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 15th, 1863.

THE venerable Gammon, has melted sadly home to Mugville since the removal of the late idolized General of the Mackerel Brigade, and a worshipping peasantry are exasperated at his unnatural wrongs.

I cannot exactly, see, my boy, how this venerable man is so deeply injured by the said removal; in fact, it does not appear to me that he can have any interest in the change whatever; but his appearance of deep affliction has called scalding tears to all beholding eyes, and the attached populace crawl in the dust at the subduing aspect of his inexpressible woe.

It was on the Tuesday evening of this revered and aged patriot's arrival in adoring Mugville, that he was tumultuously serenaded by the brass-band of the Young Men's Democratic Christian Association, which is composed exclusively of constitutional chaps. He was frantically besought to respond; and then it was that he fell a hapless and venerable victim to the great, heart-rending mistake of an inebriated reporter for a reliable morning journal. The beloved old being meant to make only a few pithy,

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telling remarks to the enthusiastic band, and this was, in fact, his veritable

## SPEECH.

"Thank you for your compliment. (A voice: '*How are you, old boots?*' '*We're the boys to give the Rebels comfort!*' and cheers.) We are here to-night to stand by the Constitution. (A voice: '*What's old Abe about?*' '*Locking up good Democrats in Fort Lafayette!*' '*Well, it's our own fault, you know.*' '*We deserve worse treatment!*' and hisses.) We abhor these Rebels as much as the Black Republicans (a voice: '*We can give the Rebels what they want!*' and applause), but we also hate home-tyranny. Why was the idolized General of the Mackerel Brigade removed? (A voice: '*To please the Rebels!*' '*We have licked the Black Republicans in New York!*' '*We've done the Rebels!*' '*Good!*') To spite us! That's so, boys! (A voice: '*And we'll make them love us yet?*' '*The New York election tickles them!*' and cheers.) Whose good was he removed for? (A voice: '*For Jeff Davis!*' '*Three cheers, boys!*' and great enthusiasm.) Let History show! (A voice: '*We'll make him President in 1864!*') Good night."

Here you have the true speech of the Venerable Gammon, my boy, with all those patriotic interruptions which lend such a chaste rhetorical charm to the extemporized oratory of our distracted country; but how shall I express the pangs which tore the breasts of the fond populace, when the reliable morning journal of Mugville came

out next morning with six pounds of heavy editorial to show that the Venerable Gammon had ruthlessly betrayed the excellent national Democratic organization! How shall I depict the public misery that ensued in Mugville when that reliable morning journal, upon the authority of its inebriated reporter, gave *this* as a correct report of the revered patriarch's

## SPEECH.

The speaker said: "How are you, old boots? (A voice: '*Thank you for your compliment.*') We're the boys to give the Rebels comfort and cheers. (A voice: '*We are here to-night to stand by the Constitution!*') What's old Abe about? Locking up good Democrats in Fort Lafayette! Well; it's our own fault, you know; we deserve worse treatment and hisses. (A voice: '*We abhor these Rebels as much as the Black Republicans!*') We can give the Rebels what they want and applause. (A voice: '*But we also hate home tyranny!*') '*Why was the idolized General of the Mackerel Brigade removed?*') To please the Rebels we have licked the Black Republicans in New York; we've done the Rebels good. (A voice: '*To spite us, that's so, boys!*') And we'll make them love us yet! The New York election tickles them, and cheers. (A voice: '*Whose good was he removed for?*') For Jeff Davis three cheers, boys, and great enthusiasm. (A voice: '*Let history show!*') We'll make him President in 1864! (A voice: '*Good night!*')"

You see, my boy, this horrible twistification was the result of the reporter's getting confused about who was

the speaker — him on the hotel balcony or the talkative chaps in the street. If our excellent national Democratic Organization would have less talking during their public speeches, my boy, there need be no such inhuman mistakes as that which has calumniated and utterly prostrated the Venerable Gammon.

On Wednesday I took a trot on the war-path upon the architectural street, Pegasus, and found the veteran Mackerel Brigade back at Paris again. They had made a great march from the Blue Ridge, my boy, and when I reached the front I found a scientific chap from Cincinnati taking observations. He stuck a tall stick into the ground, and scratched a long line on the damp sod, from the foot of this stick to the extreme right of the spectated Brigade, letting the toes of the front rank of the Mackerels just touch it. Then he attached a powerful magnifying-glass to about the centre of the upright stick, and commenced looking through it very intently all along the line he had drawn.

I observed him attentively, and says I: "What is the nature of your contract with the Government, my serious friend?"

He rubbed the glass with his blue silk pocket-handkerchief, and says he: "I have invented this useful arrangement to ascertain whether or not the Army of Accomac is really advancing. I closely watch the line to which the toes of the front rank of the army are already very near, and could almost swear that the forward movement is still going on. The average speed of this army," says the scientific chap, calculatingly, "has hitherto been six miles in six weeks; but now that the war is about to com-

mence in earnest, I think that the troops are making better time."

And so they were, my boy, so they were; for the heel of the first rank's boots were almost on the line in less than an hour, — no Confederacies being in sight.

Noticing a circle of Mackerel Officers a short distance in my rear, I dismounted from Pegasus and walked thither for greater speed, discovering that the brilliant staff were admiring the great equestrian gambols of the new General of the Mackerel Brigade.

The new General is a dignified, middle-aged chap, my boy, with a face which expresses many whiskers, and an eye to look you through and through when your meaning is transparent. He is not quite two yards high, has a head which looks like a lustrous apple-dumpling, dropped into the middle of a window-brush, and graduates downward into his boots without seeming to be either growing out of them, or running through them.

And he is none of your military popinjays, my boy, all plastered with buttons and gold lace, but an earnest, hard-working soldier. His dress for the field is characterized by genuine republican simplicity, and consists of hard-working corduroy breeches, sternly patched; an earnest pea-jacket, resolutely out at the elbows; a pair of straightforward slippers, unflinchingly ragged around the toes, and an untrifling silk hat, determinedly mashed-in at various points. You feel as you look at him, my boy, that he means hard work, and is indifferent to good clothes as long as he can save his distracted country.

On the majestic brow of a true hero, a shocking bad hat is a far nobler, more glittering crown, than the circle

of filthy lucre which surmounts the head of Europe's bloated despot. Grandeur, far grander is the nightcap of a Washington, than any style of army cap I have yet seen.

The new General was mounted upon a long-tailed cob, and his horsemanship thrilled this manly bosom with rapture. Did he wish to deliver an order to his aid, he but slightly tightened the reins of his horse, and at once the noble animal arose to his hind legs and fired off a pistol held for him by an orderly. Did he wish to go the rounds, he but touched the left flank of his horse, and straightway the sagacious charger struck into a graceful waltz, leaping over five-barred gates as he went along, and dashing through hoops held aloft by the troops. Did he desire to approach one of his Generals for consultation, he had but to give a low whistle, and forthwith the intelligent animal limped about on three feet, as though lame, and drank a bottle of wine presented to him by an orderly. Did he have an inclination to review his troops, he was compelled only to gently pinch his horse's neck, and at once the graceful beast laid down upon his side and pretended to die as naturally as any human being.

In short, my boy, it is argued from the earnest new General's bad clothes, that he will speedily bring the war to a good close; and from his being such a particular horseman, that he will never become any party's footman.

But let me change my subject for a time, and relate the great triumph of our new naval artillery on Duck Lake, which majestic sheet of water has returned to earth with the late rains.

Rear Admiral Head has so improved the deadly swivel-gun of the Mackerel iron-plated squadron, that it will

send a ball some distance without kicking the gunner overboard. The secret of this improvement is known only to the Government, my boy, and will be used to advantage when our gory conflict with combined Europe comes off.

It was on Thursday morning, my boy, when an enthusiastic military mob, consisting of Captain Villiam Brown, Captain Bob Shorty, and myself, stood once more upon the familiar shore of Duck Lake. The squadron, which has been named the "Secretary Welles," having been launched upon the treacherous element by Rear Admiral Head and one Mackerel, we took out our pieces of smoked glass and prepared for the naval pageant.

We could plainly see the stern old Rear Admiral bustling about on the gallant Grandmother of the Seas, as I may term the noble craft, and hear him swearing in his iron-plated manner.

"Fracture my turret," says the old sea-dog, "if I don't think this gun will surpass the Armstrong; blockade me, if I don't."

When it became the duty of the solitary Mackerel crew to load the awful instrument of destruction, it was discovered that the ramrod had been left behind at the Navy Yard Foundry. This nautical disaster might have marred the experiments, had not the Rear Admiral chanced to have his brown gingham umbrella along with him. This was used as a rammer, and the experiment proceeded.

The first charge was twenty pounds of powder, not more than nineteen of them running out of the touch-hole. The ball slightly touched the water and went

down, the recoil of the squadron being only the width of Duck Lake.

The second shot was made with only one pound of powder, as it was feared that the rudder might be strained by too much concussion, and we saw the ball drop into the ocean wave. At this shot, the "Secretary Welles" only hopped out of the water a few inches. The third shot was made with half a pound of powder, as it was not deemed advisable to do too much damage to the surrounding country by the gunnery.

We were gazing intently at the merciless implement of death, through our smoked glass, when this shot was fired, and suddenly beheld a phenomenon which made us catch our breath.

Mixed up with the fire and smoke, there emerged from the mouth of the swivel-gun, what appeared to be an immense brown bird of some kind, spreading its huge wings as it came out, and skimming wearily to the shore!

Captain Bob Shorty commenced to quake, and says he: "It's a Confederate insect!"

"No," says Villiam, lowering his smoked glass, and speaking in a solemn whisper, "It's the distracted bird of our country, floating spectrally on the battle-smoke. Ah!" says Villiam, abstractedly uncorking my canteen, "our distracted bird is no insect."

Was it indeed a majestic Eagle, my boy, stooping from his clouded heights to sanctify the terrible naval scene? I guess not, my boy, — I guess not; for we presently ascertained that, when the careless Mackerel crew rammed home that last charge, he heedlessly left Rear-Admiral

Head's brown gingham umbrella sticking in the gun, and it was the flight of the umbrella we had witnessed.

An umbrella, my boy, and a horse, may be said to have some relations. We put one up when it rains, and we rein the other up when we "put."

Yours, good-naturedly,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

### LETTER LXXXIII.

REFERRING TO WASHINGTON CITY AND THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE,  
AND GIVING THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY'S VERY REASONABLE PEACE  
PROPOSITION.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 28th, 1863.

THE city of Washington, my boy, without her Congress, is like a maiden without her plighted young man. She surveys herself in the mirror of the Potomac, and says she: "Where's my Congress, without whom I am like a gas bracket deserted by its old flame?" Alas! all flesh is gas, my boy, and some of our congressmen are very fleshy. Their presence it is that makes Washington a light for the world, and many of them who once rode high horses have alighted. At the present moment our distracted country is enveloped in darkest night, and the day seems so far off that many Mackerels despair of ever seeing payday, even. At such a time what a blessing is that Congress which burns to illumine us after the manner of an elaborate chandelier! It passes away to leave everything dark; it returns, and behold all is darkey.

I was in my room at my hotel, when Congress commenced to arrive, conversing with Captain Bob Shorty; and, as a seedy-looking, middle-aged chap passed by on the opposite side of the street, the captain looked out of the window, and says he:

"That's one of the new legislators, my Pythias."