

Captain Bob Shorty cleaned his glasses to make sure that it was no illusion, and says he: "By all that's Federal, it appears to me that I never saw so much Shape!"

A Confederacy, who had just appeared on the roof of Paris with a horse-pistol in his hand and slaughter in his thoughts, caught sight of the equestrian vision, and instantly dropped his merciless weapon of destruction as though paralyzed.

"Oh!" says he, panting, "what Shape!"

Rear Admiral Head heard the sound in the midst of his single combat, and paused to ascertain what it was. His spectacles scanned the horizon round and round, until they finally rested upon the figure of the new General of the Mackerel Brigade.

"Fracture my armor!" says he, ecstatically, "did I ever survey so much Shape!"

The battle was over for that day.

Shape, my boy, is a great thing in a General; for when Heaven's Great Printer commenced to set human type in the "galley" of earth, He must have needed considerable General matter to fully make up His "forms;" and when a General has a form fully up to His make, we may consider him well set up.

Yours, typographically,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

LETTER LXXXV.

HOLDING THE GOVERNMENT STRICTLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF A RECENT "MILITARY NECESSITY;" RECOUNTING THE AFFECTING EPISODE OF THE MACKEREL DRUMMER-BOY; AND DEPICTING THE NEW MACKEREL GENERAL'S FIRST GREAT BATTLE.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 9th, 1863.

I AM no longer on speaking terms, my boy, with the Government of our distracted country, and beg leave most respectfully to inform it that the imbecile cold weather of the past few days may disgust, but can never discourage me. Being of respectable though Democratic parentage, I scorn to associate with an Executive and Cabinet so lost to all sense of national comfort, that it permits the weather to become a constant outrage on our Constitutions, frequently freezing loyal Democrats for no other offence than that of protecting defenceless lamp-posts after nightfall. I am very cold, my boy,—I am very cold, and my hatred of the present Cabinet is intense.

But what shall I say about the agency of this same Government in producing a Military Necessity at the late great battle of Paris? Let me put on my overcoat and express my cold in a passionate cough, as I remark that its agency in this matter forcibly reminds me of a chap I once knew in the sixth ward.

He was an aged chap of much red nose, my boy, and

lived with his youngest broadcloth son in the same house with his Wayward Sister. The Wayward Sister being an old maid of severe countenance, occupied such portions of the residence as seemed most safe from the intrusion of that sex which seeks to make Woman its broken-hearted slave; and as long as the patient old chap answered the door-bell and didn't smoke in the house, she got along with him after the manner of a Methodist angel. Things went on pleasantly through the winter, the high-minded maiden using the coal of her aged kindred, and employing all his black tea without complaining; but in the spring she joined a Woman's Rights Convention, and commenced to hold indignation-meetings of virtuously-indignant females in the best room in the house. These meetings having decided, that,

"Whereas, Man is a ojus creature which is constantly preying upon that sex which it is his mother's, and denying to it those inalienable Rights without which Woman's sphere cannot exist. Therefore be it

"Resolved, That Woman is the Superior Sex.

"Resolved, That union with man is incompatible with the good of a sex which it is ourselves; and that we will immediately take that household furniture of which Woman is the only rightful owner, and only ask to be let alone."

The aged chap received a copy of these resolutions, my boy, and says the Wayward Sister: "I can no longer consent to live in the same house with an inferior being." The chap heard her in silence, and might have let her have her own way, under ordinary circumstances, but when he came home next night he found that she had

packed up all the furniture in the house to carry off with her, and expected him to give her his watch and night-key. He scratched his head, and says he: "I cannot permit this sort of thing, because I really want some furniture for my own use." The Wayward Sister threw her thimble at him, and says she: "Our male parient bought this furniture only because he got married to one of the Superior Sex; and as it was Woman which solely occasioned its purchase, it clearly belongs to Woman."

But the chap could not see it in this light, my boy; and as soon as his son came home he told him all about it. The manly youth took a look up the stairs to where the maiden and four or five other spring bonnets were entrenched behind the furniture, and says he:

"It's an unnatural thing to have trouble with relations; but I'm just going up there to capture that big chair."

By this time some of the neighbors had come in, and commenced to urge the old chap to take vigorous measures. He looked at his son, and says he:

"Can you do it Tommy?"

The child of his bosom winked twice, and immediately prepared to perform the feat, only pausing long enough to look in the glass and see if his necktie sat well. Then, gaining the head of the stairs, he leaned across a bureau barring the way, and was about to grasp the big chair, when the Wayward Sister hit him over the head with a broom, and presently he found himself prostrate at the foot of the stairs, with a violent pain in his nose.

On witnessing this disaster, all the neighbors shrank with indignation from the aged father, and said it was all his doings. The poor old chap scratched his head, and says he:

"I don't see how it's my fault."

"Why," says a neighbor of much fatness, "you're always interfering, — that's what you are. Now, you'll never get back any of your furniture."

"Interfering?" says the paternal chap, innocently. "Why, how *could* I interfere with Tommy, when I only let him do, in his own way, what he gave me to understand he was able to?"

Here all the neighbors sighed grievously, and says one:

"Miserable old man, we believe you mean well enough; but the fact is, you are a species of old idiot. It was your business to have had *another son*, who would have been this one's brother; so that if one met with a heart-rending failure on the stairs, the other could simultaneously have entered that back window by a ladder, and taken the chair by the rear. But you are always interfering. Take our advice now, and either give up drinking altogether, or arrange it so that those who drink with you may be persons not distinguishable from ourselves."

And they all departed, shaking their heads, my boy — they all departed shaking their heads; leaving the unfortunate old chap to bind up his offspring's nose, and to reflect upon the great iniquity of interfering with one son's success, by not having another.

The Government of our distracted country, my boy, is so very much like this well-meaning but imbecile old chap, that the failure of any one of its generals is entirely due to its interference in not having another general; who, in case that general did not succeed, could take his place before he failed to do so.

The Military Necessity produced by this interference

took place at Paris, very recently, and shortly after the new General of the Mackerel Brigade had so nearly won the battle by that revelation of manly Shape to which I referred in my last letter.

Finding that the terrible bombardment of Paris, my boy, had routed the straggling Confederacies from that ancient city, the whole Mackerel Brigade marched safely across Duck Lake, leaving only the Orange County Howitzers on this side. Scarcely had the spectacled host occupied the city, when there appeared upon the main street the overwhelming Shape of the new General of the Mackerel Brigade, mounted upon a steed which was almost as sagacious as a human being; and holding his hat in one hand, after the manner of Washington entering Trenton. It was as though Frank Leslie's illustrated artist had just been commanded to draw a warlike picture, my boy, representing one of those equestrian heroes who all appear in precisely the same attitude, and seem to have lifted their hats for the particular purpose of showing with what mathematical precision their hair is parted.

Instantly there arose cheers so loud that they must have been heard by the cowardly Confederacies on the hills behind Paris, and several Mackerels became so enthusiastic to be led against the enemy, that they actually started on the war-path by themselves, and only turned back when they discovered that they happened to be going in the wrong direction.

Having received all the cheers, and immediately dispatched them to the reliable morning journals around the country, the General of the Mackerel Brigade ordered the Conic Section, under Captain Bob Shorty, and Company

3, Regiment 5, under Captain Villiam Brown, to march out of Paris, and form in line under the guns of the Southern Confederacy; at the same time directing Captain Samyule Sa-mith, to take Company 2, Regiment 1, and strike through a defile in the hills.

Samyule formed his veterans in the shape of a horse-shoe, and says he:

"Comrades, now is the time to repent of your sins, for you haven't got much time left. As for myself," says Samyule, seriously, "my sins are all those of commission, and those who gave me my commission are responsible for them. If any of you younger Mackerels have in your possession the last things your mothers gave you, now is your chance to look upon them for the last time."

As Samyule spoke thus, a small blue object, carrying a drum, toddled forth from the ranks, and saluted. It was a small Mackerel drummer, my boy, who had enlisted only ten days before, and his small eyes were wet with tears. The heroic child wiped his little nose on his sleeve, and says he:

"My mother gave me something."

Samyule was greatly affected, and says he:

"Was it the Family Bible, sweet cherub?"

"No-o-o," sobbed the innocent, as though his little heart would break.

Samyule wiped his tear-dimmed spectacles, and says he:

"Perhaps it was her daguerreotype?"

The infant wept afresh, and says he:

"No-o-o."

"Then," says Samyule, in a broken voice, "it must have been her blessing."

"No! no-o-o," cried the small Mackerel drummer, with quivering lips.

"Then what in thunder was it that your mother gave you?" says Samyule, greatly bewildered.

"It was a spanking!" screamed the affectionate little creature, cramming both his little fists into his little eyes, and blubbering unrestrainedly.

Samyule gazed a moment at the child, and says he:

"Well may affection bid thee weep, thou tender little one! When a sweetheart blushing places a rose upon her lover's breast, the scene is affecting; but my own memory of childhood tells me that a far deeper feeling is excited when the tender mother selects a different flower, and places upon the back of her child the modest lady's slipper."

Immediately after this affecting little incident, my boy, Samyule led his men to their duty, and they marched into one end of the defile as soldiers, to pass out of the other as spirits.

Along the front, "Forward!" was the word, and the Conic Section swept to the assault, like a sea of bayonets dashed against a shore of adamantine rock from the hollow of an Almighty hand. Were it possible, my boy, for bullets to ascend perpendicularly until they just reached the top of mountain breastworks, and then slant down at an acute angle to where the foe lay hidden, it is possible that the frequent volleys from the Conic Section might have produced some carnage; but as the face of the hill before our troops was straight up and down, with the noisy Confederacies on the extreme summit, the Mackerel musketry simply occasioned a rise in Federal lead, without a fall in Confederate leaders.

Some Confederacies in their lofty intrenchments just tipped over a few cannon, so that the balls might roll out upon the mackerels, and, says one of them :

"If you mudsills will stay there a little longer, we'll manage it so as to drop the shells on you from our hands, without using the guns at all."

Captain Bob Shorty heard this jeer, and as he tied his handkerchief over a wound on his forehead, a sickly smile illustrated his ghastly face, and says he :

"We might as well all die here together. The grave, after all, is a softer bed than many of these Mackerel beings have been accustomed to."

Sergeant O'Pake who always takes things literally, turned to Bob, and, says he :

"What makes it soft?"

"Because," says Captain Bob Shorty, looking vacantly at the sergeant, "it is a bed of down. Did you never hear the old song of 'Down among the Dead Men?'" But let me not linger over the scene, my boy.

That night, the remaining Mackerels silently recrossed Duck Lake, and the General penned the following

DESPATCH.

"I have withdrawn the Brigade across Duck Lake. The position of the Confederacies is impregnable. It was a Military Necessity to attack the enemy or retire. I have done both.

WOBERT WOBINSON."

Just as the spectacled veterans gained this side of Duck Lake again, my boy, the Mackerel Chaplain was accosted by a Republican chap from Boston, and says he: "This

really looks like action at last my friend. Our troops are evidently all enthusiasm to be led once more against the foe."

The Chaplain shaded his eyes with his hand, to look at the speaker, and says he :

"They are indeed enthusiastic, my friend. So enthusiastic, in fact, that at least half of them would not come back to this side at all."

"Ah!" says the Republican chap; "the noble fellows."

"Yes," says the Chaplain, as softly as though he were speaking in a sick-room; "they remain there sleeping upon their arms. And, oh, my friend, they will never come back again."

He spoke truly, my boy: and may a kind Heaven see naught in the blood welling from their loyal hearts but the blush of a soldier's honor; the glow of a patriot fire in which all their human errors went up to God as the smoke of a glorious sacrifice. They sleep their last sleep upon the arms of their Country; and whether those arms, with which she folds them into her heart, be white with the ermine of winter, or green with the drapery of summer, the clasp shall be none the less strong with all a Mother's immortality of love.

Yours, gravely,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.