

LETTER LXXXVI.

TOUCHING UPON A LATE OVATION TO A PARENT OF HIS COUNTRY;
GIVING THE CONSERVATIVE KENTUCKY MAP OF ALL AMERICA; AND
INTRODUCING A SECOND NEW GENERAL OF THE MACKEREL ORGAN-
IZATION.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 8th, 1863.

I HAVE been very ill, my boy — I have been very ill; and even now, the hand which grasps the pen trembles with weakness, like the hand of the wind upon a slender rush. I have been reminded of my latter end, and of our Excellent National Democratic Organization, by an outrage upon my Constitution and the Arbitrary Arrest of my health, — proceedings which seem to prove that the well-known Southern Confederacy is entirely right in this war, and that the North is chiefly composed of Honest Old despots. (See proceedings of Democratic Organization, Resolution 290.)

As I lay sick in Strategy Hall the other day, so desolately lonely that I almost wished to die, and without energy enough to finish reading the greenback I had commenced that morning, there came to see me an affable Democratic chap who had just recovered from a severe bilious attack brought on by the Conscription Bill, and wished to consult me as to the propriety of nominating Dr. Brandreth for President of the United States in 1865.

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“Why, my future Jefferson,” says I, feebly, “what are you going to do with McClellan, then?”

“Really,” says he, just stepping across the ward to spit on a copy of the Tribune, which served as a window-curtain, “really, I forgot all about that manly form. Oh!” says the pleasant Democratic chap, replacing the Constitution in his hat, from which it had just fallen, — “Oh! what heroism do we find embodied in that youthful shape! The voice of a assembled universe asks: ‘Shall G. B. McClellan go unrewarded?’ There is no echo at the time. It asks again: ‘Who, then, shall be President of the United States in 1865?’ And echo triumphantly answers, General George Barnum McClellan!”

Here the affable Democratic chap took off his spectacles, my boy, and beamed undisguisedly at a small black bottle on the table.

“But,” says I, softly, “his name is not George *Barnum* McClellan at all. His middle name is not Barnum.”

“Hem!” says the Democratic chap, with a severe aspect, “I don’t know that it is. Really,” says the Democratic chap, hastily picking up his umbrella and moving away, “really, I don’t know that it is.”

Mistakes, my boy, will happen in the best-regulated organizations; and, if we construe them maliciously, we deserve, like a parcel of scandal-mongering old Bohea-mians, to be confined all our lives to small *coups* of Phineas T.

It was during my illness that the adoring citizens of Mugville discovered that the Venerable Gammon had been defeated ten times in the election for County Clerk in his youth, and frantically instigated an overflowing ovation therefore to that venerable man. I know not, my

boy, what this aged and shirt-collared picture of perpetual beneficence had done to be such an idol. I cannot conceive why repeated defeats in his youth should entitle him to the adoration of a fond populace at the present exciting period; but the leading citizens presented him with a silver butter-knife and a serenade, my boy; and he made a benignant speech to show that he and Providence desired only the applause of their own consciences.

"My children," says the Venerable Gammon, waving benefactions in his fat and heartfelt manner, "I accept this butter-knife, — not for my own merits, but because it symbolizes the only true means of restoring that Union of which I am a part. This knife," says the Venerable Gammon, eying the costly gift with oily and benignant satisfaction, — "this knife teaches us that only fiendish Abolitionism would think of using the Sword of Radicalism to conquer the erring Confederacy which is still our sister, when the Butter-knife of Conservatism was to be had."

Then all the leading citizens of Mugville observed joyfully to each other that the country was redeemed at last, and four-and-twenty reliable morning journals published six columns each about the triumphant progress of the Venerable Gammon in the affections of the people.

Among those present at this sublime ovation was an aged chap selling apples, who immediately burst into tears when the voice of the venerable man fell upon his ears. On being asked to explain his emotions, he cast his dim eyes upward toward an American flag which was being used by a merchant near by to advertise some patent pills, and says he, brokenly:

"When I hear that voice, and see that flag, all my manhood crumbles into scalding tears."

He was an apple-seller of fine feelings, and had once served as a deserter in the Army of the Potomac.

Pathetic little incidents like these, my boy, humble though they may be, are pregnant with a deep and touching meaning, of which I have not the remotest conception.

There is a new Mackerel Hotel recently erected on the borders of Duck Lake, near Strategy Hall, for the benefit of Brigadiers who have not been accustomed to doing without a bar; and it was in one of the rooms thereof that the Conservative Kentucky Chap recently fell a victim to the most remarkable optical illusion of this distracted century. He was sitting with his back to a window, my boy, his head drooped upon his breast beneath the weight of the Emancipation Proclamation, and, with arms folded and legs screwed awry on his chair, he was contemplating the opposite wall from under his Conservative hat.

"Hum," says he, with subdued ecstasy, "How sweet it is to look upon the map of my native land, of which Kentucky is the guiding star! As I look upon that simple map," says the conservative Chap, thoughtfully, "and reflect upon the recent improvements in Kentucky, it becomes a question in my mind whether Kentucky is the United States, or the United States is Kentucky."

Following the direction of his eyes as he said this, I beheld upon the wall opposite where he was sitting:



A CONSERVATIVE KENTUCKY MAP OF ALL AMERICA.

“Look here, my absorbed Talleyrand,” says I, in astonishment, “that’s not a map! It’s only your own shadow on the wall.”

He moved as I spoke, and then, for the first time, discovered his illusion.

“Hum!” says he, “it is a map of the Union in the sense that the Union is but a shadow of its former self.”

The Conservative Kentucky Chap is actually so insufferably egotistical, my boy, and so imbued with the idea that Kentucky is the whole country, that it is almost impossible for him to sit on a chair without throwing his body into almost the exact shape of the American Continent.

Having induced a small Mackerel drummer to bring me my chaste architectual steed, the Gothic Pegasus, I

mounted the roof of that walking country church, and moved off in an organ-waltz to inspect the national troops.

The Mackerel Brigade grows hoary with antiquity, and the capture of the Southern Confederacy is still delayed for the want of pontoons. And this reminds me that the Abolitionists of New England, who are entirely responsible for this war, with its taxes upon members of the Democratic Organization, have not yet sent any pontoons to the field. Whilst they would abridge the rights of white men, they even ignore white men’s rights to a bridge. But let us not linger over such depravity, or we shall be delayed in our preparations for the Presidential canvass in 1865.

The last new General of the Mackerel Brigade is an officer of great age, named Cox, — known to the soldiery as the Grim Old Fighting Cox, — and I am happy to say, my boy, that he is an officer of great ability. Spurning all that vain pomp which too often makes our generals as clean in appearance as the military minions of the despotic powers of Europe, he makes it a practice to attire himself like the unostentatious dustman of a true Republic; and when he rides abroad to inspect the regiments, it is universally admitted that he is like a father visiting his children, whose great numbers make such demands upon his means that he can’t afford to dress himself respectably.

Having assumed command of the Mackerel Brigade, the Grim Old Fighting Cox immediately summoned all his officers to his presence, and, having engaged each in single combat and defeated him, he proceeded to show his great ability. He beckoned to Captain Villiam Brown, who was at that moment taking the sun’s altitude with his can-

teen, and, says he: "Tell me how many men are in the guard-house for beastly intoxication?"

Villiam smiled affably, and says he: "I don't remember just how many that Republican institution will hold."

"Release them ALL!" thundered the Grim Old Fighting Cox, violently rattling his sword, and firing a pistol in the air.

"Ah!" says Villiam, "here's Ability."

The next officer called was Captain Bob Shorty, and says the General to him: "How many slow-matches did my predecessor order for the Orange County Howitzers?"

Captain Bob Shorty took three steps in a break-down, and says he: "We have always ordered seventy-five."

"Make it seventy-six!" roared the Grim Old Fighting Cox, kicking over the writing-table and discharging a revolver over his shoulder.

Captain Bob Shorty gave a leap into the air, and says he:

"By all that's Federal! did I ever hear of so much Ability?"

As the Grim Old Fighting Cox was leaving his quarters, he came upon a Mackerel chap who was stooping down to tie his shoe, and gave him a kick that kindled conflagration in his vision. The poor chap rubbingly picked himself up, and, says he:

"It appears to me I never see so much Ability."

Ability, my boy, in its modern acceptation as applied to military men, appears to mean a peculiar capacity for surprising and startling everybody — except the enemy.

Yours, suspiciously.

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

LETTER LXXXVII.

IN WHICH OUR CORRESPONDENT HAS A DEADLY AFFAIR OF HONOR WITH A GENTLEMAN FROM KENTUCKY; EXPERIENCES "CONTRABAND" HOSPITALITY AND MELODY; ATTENDS A GREAT MEETING IN ACCOMAG; AND WITNESSES A PRODIGIOUS NAVAL ACHIEVEMENT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 15th, 1868.

KENTUCKY, my boy, has considered herself a general boon to mankind ever since she was discovered by Colonel Boone; but there are different kinds of boons known to mankind, and if I should chance to mention the baboon as amongst the noisiest and least respectable of the species, my remark may not be regarded as entirely destitute of a personal bearing. It was in the honeyed accents of admiring friendship that I conveyed this chaste zoölogical idea to the Conservative Kentucky chap on Monday last, as we took Richmond together at Willard's bar, and I regret to say that he made it *casus belli*. Accidentally dropping his bowie-knife on the floor, and hastily replacing his ruffles over the handle of his pocket revolver, he polished the blade of his dirk with a blood-colored silk handkerchief, and says he:

"Kentucky fought for Washington in the Revolution; she has, thus far, prosecuted the present war without fear; nor will she shrink from even shedding personal gore where the provocation is the offspring of Yankee lowness."