

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 ACCOMAC; 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."

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He said this, with exceeding majesty, my boy, and I felt that I was indeed involved in complications with the Border States.

"I understand you, my warrior," says I, calmly; "but if this affair is to come off immediately, where are we to find our seconds?"

The Kentucky chap hastily called a small boy to him, and says he:

"Sonny, just run out into the street and ask any two gentlemen you meet to step in here for a moment."
"You see," says he, turning to me, "it's better to have two brigadier-generals for seconds, as a battle might take place while we are away, and there are no private soldiers to spare at present."

"Yes," says I, thoughtfully, "that's very true."

The brigadiers were obtained, my boy, and, with murder in our hearts, we started forth to seek a spot appropriate for carnage in private. It was just the hour of mid-day, and we were wending our sanguinary way in silence, when, upon turning a corner of one of the public buildings, the sound of sweet music fell upon our ears, and we came suddenly upon a brass band and a party of singers, who were discoursing witching strains under one of the windows.

I listened for a moment, and then, says I: "What may be the occasion for this noonday melody?"

The Conservative Kentucky chap motioned for us to pause, and says he, feelingly: "It's a serenade to Secretary Welles of the Navy. Let us heed the voice of the singer."

Here a young vocal chap, under the window, commenced singing the following words, in a fine tenor manner:

SERENADE.

"O lady, in thy waking glance
There lurked a wondrous spell,
To hold young Cupid in thine eye
As in a prison cell.

"And now, the god of Slumber finds
Thy drooping lids so fair,
He makes of them his chosen couch
And dwells forever there."

As the last note of the singer faded into the eternity of lost sounds, I looked at the Conservative Kentucky chap, my boy, and beheld that his eyes were suffused with the tears of an exquisite sensibility.

"Yes," says he, softly, "— 'and dwells forever there.'" Here the Kentucky chap shed another tear to wash out the stain of the last one, and says he, "Mr. Welles is indeed a lady who offers some attraction to slumber. May he rest in peace!"

We were all too deeply affected to speak, but proceeded silently to a vacant lot across the river, where accommodations for law-breaking were ample. Everything about us here seemed fraught with the spirit of peace; on each side, and as far as the eye could reach behind and before, were the tents of the Army of the Potomac, growing in the spots where they were planted years ago. We alone, of all the human beings within sound of our weapons, were about to be breakers of the established war — to shed human blood. It seemed like a sacrilege, and I trembled with the cold.

At first, my boy, we had some trouble to keep the brigadier-generals with us, as it suddenly struck them that they had not drawn their pay for two whole hours, and were frantic to return; but when I suggested, that if they should be missed from their posts, they would probably be nominated for major-generalship, they consented to remain.

When the Conservative Kentucky chap took his position, I noticed that his countenance was contorted into a horrible expression of severity, and asked him why it was?

"Hem!" says he, "this is a solemn moment, young man. We are both about to fly into the face of our Maker." Here he pointed his weapon at me; and says he: "I think you are frightened."

"No," says I, making ready.

The Kentucky chap's face then assumed the most terrific expression I ever saw, and says he:

"Are you not alarmed at your awful position?"

"No," says I.

The Conservative Kentucky chap lowered his pistol, and, motioning for the brigadiers to come from behind their trees, advanced to my side.

"Hem!" says he, frowning majestically, "I think I understood you to intimate that you were terrified."

"No," says I.

Here the Conservative Kentucky chap took me suddenly by the arm in a very confidential manner, and, having led me a few paces back, says he, in a horrible whisper:

"You find yourself frightened, as it were."

"Why, no," says I.

"Well," says the Conservative Kentucky chap, "I AM."

And we all went home together.

Since then, my boy, I have weighed and contrasted my own feelings and those of the Conservative Kentucky chap on that occasion, when I won an everlasting reputation for bravery; and I am satisfied that the bravery of a man in an affair of honor is a superior capacity for concealing terror.

It was toward the middle of the week that I went down to Accomac to attend a great Union meeting there, and it's my private opinion, my boy, my private opinion, that the human tongue is not without its province in this war. But before the meeting commenced, and whilst I was reflecting upon the fact that it was the day on which the Prince of Wales was to be married, a redeemed contraband saluted me, and says he:

"Mars'r, I hab been made a free man by Mars'r Lincoln, and hab opened a Refreshment Saloon on de European plan. If you want to dine, sar, here's my card. My name is Mister Negg."

I looked at the card as he left me, and found it to read thus:—

HAMAN NEGG'S
RESTAURANT.
ICH DIEN OYSTERS IN EVERY STYLE.

There was one thing about this inscription that I did not understand, and says I to a chap near me:

"See here, my patriotic friend, what does this mean? What kind of things are Ich Dien Oysters?"

"Oh," says he, obligingly, "you do not understand the Hanoverian tongue. '*Ich Dien*' is the Prince of Wales' motto, and means '*I serve*.' The phrase '*Ich Dien Oysters in Every Style*' means, '*I serve oysters in every style*.'"

Then it was, my boy, that I saw in Mr. Negg's device the despised African's testimonial of gratitude to Great Britain for the recent reaction of anti-slavery sentiment there. A more delicate compliment, my boy, was never offered to the mother country, who has given us all at least 290 * reasons for loving her.

And speaking of redeemed contrabands, reminds me of the new African hymn, which the more pious colored Americans of South Carolina might denominate

DE GREAT HALLELUGERUM.

"My mars'r's gwine away to fight
With Mars'r Linkum's horde,
An' now dis chile's at libaty
To dance an' bress de Lord.
Dar's no more swearin' round de house
When missus cut up bad;
Dar's no more kickin' niggers' shins,
And, darfor', I is glad.

* Persons who despise Europe may remember, that, "The 290," (supposed to mean, from 290 British Merchants) was the original name of the rebel pirate "Alabama."

"When mars'r take his horse to go,
He kindly say to me:
'I hab such confidence in you,
I leab you all, you see;
Of all de niggers round de place,
I trust to you alone.'
By golly! dat's what mars'r say
To eb'ry nig he own!

"'Now if dem Bobumlitionists
Should kill me dead,' says he,
'I hab instruct your missus kind
To set you niggers free.'
But mars'r say dat bery same
Wheneber he get sick,
And bresséd Jesus wrastle him
To make him holy quick.

"'Dem Yankees, dam um all,' says he,
'Am comin' down to steal
You niggers, and to sell you then
For Cuba cochineal.
De Suvern chiverly,' says he,
'Am fightin' jist fo' you.'
Now mars'r swearum when he lie,
And, darfor', dat wont do!

"Den mars'r trot away to war
With 'Dolphus by his side, —
A poor cream-colored, common dark
Dat isn't worf his hide.
He leab me and de other nigs
To clar the place alone,
With nuffin' but to play and shake
De fiddle and de bone.

"I hab a talk with Uncle Pete,
De old plantation hand,
And though he am intelligums
Dis chile can understand.
He say de Hallelugerum
For cullud folks hab cum,
And dat he bresséd Lord hab heard
And beat his thunder-drum.

"He say dat Northern buckra man
Hab sent his gun an' ship
To make de rebel chiverly
Give up his nigger whip,
He say dat now's de darkey's time
To break de bonds of sin,
And take his chil'en an' his wife
To whar de tide comes in.

"He say dat in de Norf, up dar,
Whar Mars'r Greeley dwell,
De white folks make de brack folks **work**,
But treat them bery well;
He says dey pay them for de work
Dey's smart enuff to do,
And nebber sells them funder Souf
When sheriff put um screw.

"I hab a wife an chil'en dear,
And mars'r say to me
He nebber sell them while he live, —
He'd rather set them free;
But dar's de mortgage on de house,
If dat should hab to fall,
Ole Uncle Pete hab told me dat
He'd hab to sell us all.

"I lub de ole plantation well,
And missus she is kind;
But den dis chile's inclined to try
Another home to find.
Now mars'r gwine away to war,
And give me such a chance,
I'll bress de Lord for libaty.
And hab a Juba dance.

"De Hallelugerum am cum
With glory in his eye,
And all de niggers in de Souf
Am fit to mount de sky.
My wife an' chil'en hab de spoons
Dat's owned by — (here a cough) —
I hab de sugar-tongs myself,
And, darfor, I is off."

Among the distinguished speakers invited to be present at the great meeting in Accomac, were: the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of France, the Sultan of Turkey, Queen Victoria, the King of Sweden, the President of the United States, and Theodore Tilton; but, as the walking was very bad, they did not all come. The celebrated American patriot, Mr. Phelim O'Shaughnessy, took the chair in the absence of the President, and said, that as the Emperor of France was unavoidably absent, he would beg leave to introduce Mr. Terence Mulligan, whose ancestors were once Irishmen themselves.

Mr. Mulligan was received with prolonged applause, and said, that although he bore an Irish name, he had never been ashamed to associate with Americans. His father, while yet on his way from Ireland, had been

elected a Justice of the Peace in New York, and his son should be the last one to neglect the Union in its hour of need. What we wanted now, was, that the example of our Irish citizens should be imitated by the others, and that the war should be prosecuted with vigor. (Continued cheering.) Irishmen need never despair of this glorious Union, which had often been a House of Refuge for them, and could not fall without carrying Ireland with it, — so closely were the two great nations knit together. The Irish would never despair:

“For Freedom’s struggle once begun,
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

When the enthusiasm had subsided, the chairman expressed his regret that the Emperor of Russia had not arrived yet; but felt confident that his place could not be better supplied than by Mr. Mickey Flanigan, whose forefathers were themselves the fellow-countrymen of Daniel O’Connell. (Great applause.)

Mr. Flanigan arose amidst great cheering, and said that it was a time when every Irishman should feel as though the eyes of the whole world were upon him. He had found the natives of this country intelligent, kind, and hospitable; and though they had not taken his advice as to the management of this war, he firmly believed that no Irishman would disagree with him when he said, that Irish arms and Irish hearts would finally conquer:

“For Freedom’s battle once begun,
Bequeathed by loyal sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.”

As soon as the demonstrations of approval had sufficiently subsided, the chairman stated, that, for some unknown reason, Queen Victoria was behind time; yet he could not, for his part, feel sorry for an event which gave him an opportunity to introduce Mr. Figsey Korigan, who represented that element of the world’s hidden, free spirit which had thundered in an Emmett and an O’Brien. (Great enthusiasm.)

Mr. Korigan acknowledged the glorious welcome he had received, and declared that this was a proud day for Ireland. Her sons were ever foremost in the ranks of human freedom, shedding their votes for the oppressed of all lands, and fighting all the time. He would say to that Irishman who despaired of this Union, that he was unworthy of any office, and should blush to call himself an American. The speaker’s own family had always been Irish, though he himself was born in Cork, and he would be ashamed to stand on that platform if he did not believe that the free-born Irish soul would eventually triumph:

“For Freedom’s contest once begun,
By bleeding sire bequeathed to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.”

The chairman now arose, amid frantic applause, and said that the meeting was now at an end; but proposed that all the persons present should enroll themselves as members of a Union League for the Prevention of Distress among our Irish Soldiers in the Field. This was responded to with a thundering “Ay.” He also proposed that each person present should contribute one dollar as a basis of a fund for the purpose. A gentleman here moved

that the chairman's last suggestion should be amended by omitting the words "dollar" and "fund." Carried unanimously.

Then all the Accomackians went pleasantly home, my boy, except one seedy chap who had stood patiently before the platform during all the proceedings; and there he still stood, with his arms folded, when all the rest had gone. He was a somewhat loaferish chap, with some appearance of the philosopher.

The chairman looked at him, and says he:

"What are you waiting for, my friend?"

The chap gave an extra chew to his tobacco, and says he:

"I'm waiting for that ere Great Union meeting to come off."

"Why," says the chairman, "the meeting is all over."

"Yes, I know — *that* meeting," says the chap, explainingly; "but I mean the Great *Union* meeting."

It is astonishing, my boy, how much ignorance there is in this world. Here was a sane human being who had attentively stood all through a meeting in aid of our sacred national cause, and yet did not know that it was a Union meeting.

Thursday was the day when I reached the headquarters of the Mackerel Brigade, at the ancient city of Paris, arriving just in time to witness one of those strategic naval exploits which will yet cause the American name to be respected wherever there is nothing particular against it.

It appears, that after his last successful experiment with his patent swivel gun, that stanch old sea-dog, Rear Admiral Head, devoted much of his time on Duck Lake fish-

ing for bass, believing that noble expanse of waters to be free from all obstructions and open to the commerce of the world. The commerce did not come, my boy; but several insidious Confederacies did; and as our glorious old son of Neptune always sat with his back to their side of the lake when fishing; they constructed a pier which extended from the shore to the main deck of the iron-plated Mackerel Squadron, the "Secretary Welles," and had planted seven villanous horse-pistols to command the Admiral's fish-basket and umbrella before our hoary old salt discovered that the war was still going on.

"Riddle my turret!" says the grim old Triton, in his iron-plated manner, "I believe a blockade is established; dent my plates if I don't."

Heartily did that pride of our Navy call up the culpably inattentive Mackerel crew, who were eating clams in the stern-sheets, and quickly was the gallant "Secretary Welles" withdrawn out of the range of the Confederacies' murderous fire; her swivel gun raking the atmosphere fore and aft, whilst the fearless old sea-dog sat down upon a reversed pail amidships, and addressed a letter breathing future vengeance to the unseemly Copperheads of the North. "Sink my Monitor!" says he hotly; "let them beware of the time when the Navy returns to its peaceful home!"

But it was on Thursday, my boy, that the Rear Admiral was to run the blockade of the Confederacies' pier, and Captain Villiam Brown, Captain Bob Shorty, and myself, stood upon the edge of Duck Lake, with our pieces of smoked glass in our hands, to behold this triumph of consummate naval strategy

At the hour appointed, we beheld Rear Admiral Head and his Mackerel crew slipping over the stern of the Mackerel squadron into the water, and immediately the "Secretary Welles" commenced to float past the Confederacies' batteries with the tide. Onward she went, despite the plunging fire from the horse-pistols, and, presently, we could see her go safely ashore. Never shall I forget the beautiful glow of triumph that overspread the noble countenance of Rear Admiral Head, as he and his crew waded through the water to the place where we stood.

"Unrivet my armor!" says he, in his stern, iron-plated manner; "I call that running a blockade in good style."

"Yes," says I, sceptically; "but how are you going to get the squadron back again?"

"Eh?" says he, "what was that question, young man?"

"Why," says I, anxiously, "now that the squadron has run the blockade, how are you going to get her back again?"

"By all that's iron-clad," says the grim old sea-dog, violently, "I forgot all about that."

"Ah!" says Captain Villiam Brown, pleasantly, "can't you dig a canal?"

At this moment there was a tremendous explosion; something was seen flying through the air, and then the swivel gun of the "Secretary Welles," with the Admiral's fish-basket and umbrella attached, fell beside us on the sand. In their haste to take possession of our squadron, the Confederacies had dropped some sparks from their pipes into the powder-magazine, blowing our entire armament back to us!

Providence, my boy, is evidently on our side in this war; which accounts for the fact that human naval genius has not yet entirely ruined us.

Yours, devoutly,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.