

Villiam, placidly, "is very obvious, — put not your trust in print, sirs."

If it be indeed true, that there is "more pleasure in anticipation than in reality," the war-news we find in our excellent morning journals should give us more pleasure than one poor pen can express.

Yours, credulously,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

LETTER XCI.

CONTAINING THE VENERABLE GAMMON'S REPORT OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE WAR HAS CONDUCTED ITSELF UP TO THIS TIME; AND THE MOST SURPRISING EPITAPH OF A VICTIM OF STRATEGY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 12th, 1863.

DEPRESSED, my boy, by that low-spirited sense of reverence for shirt-collared Old Age, which is a part of my credulous nature, I proceed to record that the Venerable Gammon has once more torn himself from idolatrous Mugville to beam venerably upon all the capital the nation has left; and as I mark how fatly he waves continual benediction to the attached populace, I am impressed anew with the conviction of the serious mental magnitude of large-sized Old Age. It was on Monday that a delegation of anxious civilian chaps grovelled around this aged idol of a mournful nation; and as soon as the awe-stricken spokesman of the party had crawled within speaking distance of the Venerable Gammon, he sniffed deferentially, and says he:

"Sire, we desire to know how soon we may expect an honorable peace to end the present war, which it is perpetual bloodshed."

The Venerable Gammon placidly placed his beneficent right hand between his patriarchal ruffles, and says he:

"My friends, this war is like a great struggle between

two hostile armies ; it will continue until it has ceased, and it will cease when it is no longer continued. Peace," says the Venerable Gammon, — waving indulgent permission for the sun to go on shining, — "peace is the end of the War, as war is the end of Peace ; therefore, if we had no war, peace would be without end, and if we had no peace, war would be endless."

Then all the fond civilian chaps grovelled ecstatically at the time-honored feet of the benignant parent of his country, and four-and-twenty reliable morning journals immediately published a report that Richmond had been taken — for another year.

But what has particularly endeared the Venerable Gammon to the hearts of his distracted fellow-countrymen is, his able report of the manner in which the war has conducted itself since the First of April, 1862. I cannot exactly understand my boy, how this benignant benefactor of his species comes to know anything at all about military matters ; nor am I prepared to state that he had any call whatever to report upon national strategy ; but he has issued a startling statement, and I give the whole

REPORT.

"On the first of April, 1862, on the day immediately succeeding the 31st of May in the same year, a solitary horseman might have been seen approaching the camp of the Mackerel Brigade from Washington. He was a youth in the prime of life, and carried a carpet-bag containing the daily morning journals of that date. Upon reaching the tent of the General of the Mackerel Brigade, he sought an immediate interview with the latter, and at

once revealed to him that it was reported in all the morning journals, that the celebrated Southern Confederacy had evacuated Manassas just two weeks previously, thereby rendering an advance upon that stronghold by our national troops a subject demanding immediate attention.

"Upon discovering that this news was indeed contained in the morning journals, the General of the Mackerel Brigade at once ordered a report of our national victory to be conveyed to the Mackerels who had gained it ; and having made several promotions for bravery, and telegraphed to the excellent Democratic Organization in New York that he had rather capture Manassas than be President of the United States in 1865, he ordered an immediate advance upon Manassas. The advance took place without confusion or dismay, and on the following morning Captain William Brown electrified the whole nation with the magical words :

"'We have met the enemy, and they are hours — ahead of us.'

"The backbone of the Rebellion being thus broken, the General of the Mackerel Brigade wrote to the Honest Abe at Washington, as follows :

"'DEAR SIR, — I have at length successfully surprised the stronghold of Manassas, and consider myself strong enough to continue the war, if you can send me a few more troops. If you can spare 60,000 under Sergeant O'Pake, and 50,000 under Colonel Wobert Wobinson, from the defence of Washington, I can wait for the other hundred thousand until I push forward again.

"'THE GENERAL OF THE MACKEREL BRIGADE.'

“This was on the fourth of April. Owing to the continual storms, and the difficulty encountered in procuring umbrellas for the troops, the Mackerel Brigade was enabled to advance but thirty-three and a half feet during the ensuing four months, during which time several State elections took place. On the Fourth of July, the Honest Abe addressed the following note to the General of the Mackerel Brigade :

“GENERAL, — By your plan of drawing troops away from Washington, the capital would be left with fewer soldiers than it now possesses; and if the capital is weakened, it follows very clearly, that it will not be strengthened. My plan is directly the reverse of your plan, so that your plan is immediately opposite to my plan. Allow me to ask you the following questions :

“I. If your plan is different from my plan, how can my plan be the same as your plan ?

“II. If my plan does not agree with your plan, wherein does your plan assimilate with my plan ?

“III. If your plan and my plan are not the same plan, how can my plan and your plan be one plan ?

“IV. If my plan, by opposing your plan, shows that my plan is not at all like your plan, how can your plan, by differing from my plan, save Washington according to my plan, which is not your plan ?

H. ABE.’

“Both plans were adopted, and in the course of the succeeding two months the Mackerel Brigade shot a couple of Confederacies. Shortly after this, it was decided that an advance should be made upon the city of Paris by

way of Duck Lake, the iron-plated squadron of Rear Admirable Head being detailed from the blockade to take the Mackerels across, as soon as a heavy rain should make the lake too deep for navigation by personal wading. The troops were at the landing at the appointed time, and were about to embark in good order, when it was discovered by the negro servant of one of the officers, that they had forgotten to bring any ammunition with them, and that the iron-plated squadron had not arrived. This unfortunate discovery made it necessary for the Mackerel Brigade to fall back thirty-three and a half feet, and the General thus wrote to the Honest Abe at Washington :

“DEAR SIR, — The safety of this Army depends entirely upon its immediate reënforcement by all the troops at Washington, as my plan is entirely different from your plan, and your plan differs somewhat from my plan. The importance of saving Washington by your plan, is as nothing when compared with the opposite tenor of my plan; which might, after all, be the saving of Washington by my plan, though my plan does not agree with your plan. I will stay with this army, and die with it, if need be, by my plan.

“THE GENERAL OF THE MACKEREL BRIGADE.’

“Both plans were put in force, and during the period elapsing between this date and the middle of November, the troops were busily occupied in fortifying themselves — against the inclemency of the weather. Arrangements being made and completed for the decent interment of such troops as should die of old age before the next great

movement took place, the General of the Mackerel Brigade had just opened a correspondence with his family on the subject of the Presidency of the United States in 1865, when he received the appended note:

“GENERAL, — You will feel immediately relieved upon receiving this, and will report immediately to your wife at Hoboken. Colonel Wobert Wobinson is hereby ordered to take command of the Mackerel Brigade.

“ADJUTANT.’

“Upon the assumption of command by General Wobinson, it was immediately observed that he possessed a great deal of Shape. He crossed Duck Lake on his Shape, and in pursuance of the plan of his predecessor, opened an instant attack upon Paris. Shortly after the attack, the whole Brigade was back across Duck Lake again, and the new General sent his resignation to Washington. It was refused, as unnecessary; and the General then devised a plan for startling the whole country, by organizing the Anatomical Cavalry upon an equestrian basis, and making a raid upon some Confederate oats known to be somewhere in the daily journals. The secret of this movement was confided to but three parties, — the Honest Abe, the Southern Confederacy, and the public; but before the move could take place it was divulged and frustrated. The General then sent in his resignation, which was refused as unnecessary. It was subsequent to this that a third great movement was arranged, when a shower came up suddenly, and it had to be abandoned. It was upon this occasion that the General sent in his resignation, when it was refused as un-

necessary. Simultaneously, as it were, the officer popularly known as the Grim Old Fighting Cox, was appointed to the command, and here our exciting tale ends for the present.

“If the above record of a year of the war presents some discouraging features, it also offers many seeds of hope for the future, inasmuch as it would appear utterly impossible for the future to be less fruitful of national triumphs than the past has been. The greatness of our nation is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that we are spending two millions of dollars per day; and as soon as the present rebellion shall have been crushed, the final defeat of the celebrated Southern Confederacy will become a mere question of time, and we shall be prepared to commit immediate assault upon combined Europe.

“V. GAMMON.”

Alas! my boy, what can we say to such a revelation of national strategy? I was thinking over its developments as I wandered listlessly amongst the deserted Mackerel fortifications this side of Manassas on Thursday, — I was thinking about it, I say, when my attention was attracted by a soldier's grave located in the very midst of the dismantled earthworks. It bore a rude monument of pine-board, on which the companions of the strategic deceased had written the following inscription with chalk.

As I read this simple inscription, I could not help thinking how many Mackerels, like this poor fifer, had rushed from their homes to the war, panting for victory or honorable death, only to be slowly consumed by national

strategy, and die of inglorious fortification and indigestion.

MUGGY JIM,

A MACKEREL FIFER,

LATE OF THE NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT;
TAKEN SICK
OF INDIGESTION,
HE COMMENCED TO
THROW UP FORTIFICATIONS,
AND DIED OF STRATEGY.

Hic Jacet.

1..5-4.

0...4...1...2...8,
0...4...1...2...0;
0...2...80...8,
0...2...45...4.

It needs no Champollion's hieroglyphical skill to read the beautiful little verse of the fifer's epitaph, though that verse had to be inscribed figuratively, in order to get it all upon the narrow monument. In all its praise of that quiet sleep in which there are no anticipations to be disappointed, no gluttony to make sick, and no Confederacies to guard against, — the verse will be plain to all as reading:

"HERE LIES

ONE FIFER:

Nought for one to wait,
Nought for one to sigh-for;
Nought too weighty ate,
Nought to fortify-for."

The Mackerel poet who wrote those lines, my boy,

may have been no rhetorician; but his theme was an inspiration giving him more than ordinary mastery of the figures of speech.

Yours, gravely,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.