

spurn with contempt the fortune not fraught with all honor, and gives him the graces of a gentleman through all the glooms and burdens of honest poverty. But in that grander Chivalry native to the soul, which raises the tenderness of our best humanity far above the highest point all enmity can reach, and lets it fall, like God's own dew, upon the other side, none, none more fairly ever won a knighthood, than that poor Mackerel picket-guard on last Thanksgiving Day.

Yours, gently,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

LETTER CII.

SHOWING THE INGENIOUS FINANCIAL ENERGY OF A GREATLY-REDUCED POLITICIAN; AND DESCRIBING A COMBAT, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTENTMENT OF THE WELL-KNOWN SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY UNDER ALL REVERSES.

WASHINGTON D. C., Dec. 17th, 1864.

It is a sublime thing, my boy, — a high moral and exciting thing, — to note a wealthy nation's outburst of gratitude to Providence and our national military organization, for a succession of Mackerel triumphs without parallel either in history or her story. As I look abroad upon the exulting hosts of our distracted fellow-countrymen from an upper front window of Willard's, — having first wafted a fascinating salute to the pleasing young woman of much back hair at a window across the avenue, — as I look abroad, my boy, upon this whole remarkable people, I am deeply impressed with a sense of that beautiful, national characteristic which makes us all buoyant over Mackerel victories only as they bring us nearer to virtuous peace and universal brotherhood, and am convinced that our otherwise inexpressible thankfulness to Heaven may be divided into two equal parts:

- I. An ardent desire to destroy combined Europe.
- II. A disposition to set fire to combined Europe, bringing off the women and children in small boats.

Hah, hah! does combined Europe tremble? Does C. E. offer a certain sum to be let off?

"Shall I ever forget, my boy, the recent terrible remark of that grim old sea-dog, Rear Admiral Head, just after that late tremendous capture of Fort Piano, on Duck Lake, by the Mackerel Chalybeate squadron, — shall I ever forget it?"

"Chip my turret!" says that venerable salt, in his iron-plated manner, — "Chip my turret if I couldn't take my flag-ship, the '*Aitch*,' and crush Europe like a perishing insect, — unrivet my plates if I couldn't!"

But why should I dwell upon the dreadful suggestions of a theme like this? Europe — crowded Europe — millions of people — bright summer morning — everybody in the streets — Bang! whiz! — Great combinations of the Lieutenant General — Victoria and Louis N., do you surrender? — We do!

Solemnly do I say to you, my boy, let us mix plenty of this sort of thing in our devout gratitude to Providence for His mercies to us as a people, and henceforth we may confidently count upon the support of Providence — Rhode Island.

Fairly and benignantly shone the blessed sun over valley and hill on the morning of that recent memorable day when I scaled the architectural heights of my Gothic Pegasus, and turned his front-elevation toward the Mackerel camp before the much-banged City of Paris. Brightly gleamed the fluted roof of my ancient pile of a steed as he went blithely forward on three legs, keeping one in reserve in case of accident: joyous was the alacrity with which he waltzed an imitative earthquake and tossed his child's-coffin of a head. The exhilaration of the motion, the proud sense of being borne again, might ultimately

have plunged me into a delicious dream of being divided into two parts, my boy, had I not suddenly discovered, on the road-side, some twenty yards ahead of me, the figure of a being seated upon a camp-stool. Hastily dismounting from my architectural animal, and tying him to an oak in such a manner that he presented somewhat the perspective of a modest country church with a tree before the door, I stole carefully upon the being in my front, and found it to be the Conservative Kentucky chap, engaged in the muscular game of "Bluff" with himself.

His venerable hat, my boy, sat far down over his ears, like some shabby bird of night just stooping to carry off two oysters; a curious antiquity in the shape of a black stock loomed gloomily under his chin, as a memorial sepulchre in which some departed collar was supposed to be sacredly entombed; his face was toward Kentucky, and in his hands he was vivaciously shuffling a number of cards.

"Hum, hem!" soliloquized the Conservative Kentucky chap, complacently — "ten of spades — king of diamonds — king of hearts — ace of clubs — ace of hearts — ace of" —

Here the Conservative Kentucky chap uttered an absolutely startling cough and, at the same instant, passed three of the aces up his left sleeve!

"Yes," said the Conservative Kentucky chap, still to himself, "the pasteboards are all right — hem! — it's your deal. Ah! ten is it? — I'll go twenty better — forty — sixty! Hem! Ace and two Kings is it? Look here — three aces! Good-night, gents." — and the Conservative Kentucky chap at once sang, with triumphant and great effect:

"Four years the war have looked upon,
But haven't brought the end meant;
Nor anything except the Con-
stitutional Amendment;
Oh, Kentucky! an't this a go, Kentucky?
Oh, Kentucky! an awful blow, Kentucky!"

As the last note of exquisite melody died away upon the air, I slapped him on the shoulder, and says I:

"Well done, my son of Hoyle!"

The Conservative Kentucky chap sprang wildly to his feet, my boy, simultaneously "making a pass" of the cards into his pocket, and commenced dancing insantly before me with a view of hiding from my notice the four of clubs, which he had dropped to the ground and was anxious to conceal in the mud.

"Ha! ha!" observed the Conservative Kentucky chap, somewhat hysterically, in the midst of his dance; "of course you didn't see what I was doing?"

Then it was, my boy, that I folded my arms after the manner of Hamlet, threw forward my right knee, shook my head profoundly thrice, and murmured, with the poet:

"Were his old mother near him now, how would that mother grieve,
To see two aces in his hand,—another up his sleeve."

"My mother!" exclaimed the Conservative Kentucky chap, suddenly descending into Cimmerian gloom; "Kentucky is my mother, and from her maternal fount I drew the old rye of my existence. But now, Kentucky becomes a indigent pauper under the Constitutional Amendment and the failure of the Bankrupt Bill, and I find myself compelled to take to bluff and poker in the prime

of life." Here the poor chap made a move toward tearing his hair, but thought better of it and only scratched a pimple on his chin.

Arm in arm we walked slowly forward together, each busied with his own thoughts, until, from a clump of trees by the road-side, there unexpectedly emerged before us that ornament of our national service known as Captain Bob Shorty, with his cap at a fierce cock, his hands in his pockets, and a supernaturally knowing air clothing him as with a garment.

"By all that's Federal!" said Captain Bob Shorty, starting at sight of me, "if I didn't take you at first for that ere Confederacy of the name of Munchausen, which has privately appointed to meet me here in single combat."

"Why then, really, you know," observed the Conservative Kentucky chap, suddenly coming forward and pleasantly rubbing his hands, "really it would be a good plan for me to go forward and meet him with a view to peace negotiations. Being a Confederacy, he is Kentucky's brother," warbled the Conservative chap, with soft enthusiasm, "and I might tell him that you would pay all his debts, black his boots, run errands for him, and send the President to tell him a little story, if he would give up this conflict. Should he refuse, and even proceed to the extremity of kicking me," said the Conservative Kentucky chap, with awful sternness, "why, then, I should be in favor of letting the matter proceed to the bitter end,—as it had already in my own case."

"I am not aweer," observed Captain Bob Shorty, "that you have any business in the matter at all, my old Trojan; but there's the road open to you."

It was beautiful, my boy, — touchingly beautiful, and withal unctuous, to observe with what a benignant smile the peaceful Conservative Kentucky Chap departed up the road. We saw him reach a turn in the path, around which the sound of stately approaching footsteps was already becoming audible. We saw him turn it; heard all the footsteps cease; heard a confused murmur, — a sharp scratching as of heels upon gravel; and Kentucky's favorite son was observed to be coming again to his place, with a slight limp in his walk.

Right behind him came a remarkable being attired in fragments of gray cloth and a prodigious thicket of whiskers, through the latter of which his eyes glared yellowly, like the bottles in an apothecary's shop down the street. As he approached nearer, he hastily put on a pair of partially-dissected white cotton gloves, and casually rearranged the strip of carpet-binding which served him as a full-dress cravat.

"Yours, truly," said Captain Bob Shorty.

"Vandal!" hissed Captain Munchausen, removing from his brow an unexampled conglomeration of rags in the last stages of cap, and handing it to a faithful contraband who attended him.

"Why, then," said Captain Bob Shorty, doffing his own cap, and tucking up his sleeves, "in the name of the United States of America, I propose to move upon your works immediately."

And now, my boy, do I particularly lament my lack of those unspeakable intellectual gifts, which enable the more refined reporters of all our excellent moral daily journals to describe the fistic achievements of the noted Arkansas

Mule and celebrated Jersey Bantum in a manner that delights every well-conducted breakfast-table in the land, and furnishes exquisite reading for private families.

Forward hopped Captain Bob Shorty, as though on springs, — his elbows neatly squared, his fists held up like a couple of apples on sticks, and his head poised as though it had just started to look round a corner. With fists to match, and eyes shining like the bottoms of glass bottles, the wary Munchausen scuffles cautiously back from him in a half circle. Now they make skips toward each other; and now they skip back. Anon an arm is raised, and is parried; and then they balance to partners; and then they hop back.

I was gazing at all this, my boy, in speechless admiration, when suddenly I saw the dexter hand of Captain Bob Shorty pierce the enemy's lines, and explode with tremendous force on Munchausen's nose. For a moment there was a sound as of Confederate blasphemy, but in a moment the chivalric Munchausen was himself again.

"Ah!" said Captain Bob Shorty, agreeably, "did you see the star-spangled banner that time?"

"Sir," said Munchausen, with tears in his eyes, "I am thankful that my nose *is* broken. It is a blessing; for I had nothing to smell with it, and only wasted my strength in its special defence."

Here Captain Bob Shorty looked jovially at me, my boy, and says he, "By all that's Federal! an't he jolly?"

"Come on to thy ruin," roared Munchausen from behind his rapidly increasing nose; and again the battle raged.

Now did Captain Bob Shorty sidle to the left, with a view to flanking; but two columns of the enemy met him there. Next the agile Munchausen attempts, by a quick turn, to take him in the rear of his position, but finds a strong body of five divisions hurled upon his headquarters with an impetuosity that knocks out half his teeth.

"Art satisfied, Horatio?" said Captain Bob Shorty, with more or less Bowery Theatre in his manner.

An awful smile appeared upon what were left of the features of Captain Munchausen. It was so full of scorn, you know.

"Sir," said he, with much chivalry of bearing, and some difficulty of utterance, "my jaw may be broken, but I thank fate for it. It's a long time since I had anything to eat with my mouth, and to defend it at all was useless."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Captain Bob Shorty; "I really never did see anything so jolly."

"Madman!" yelled Munchausen, "your destruction is decided!"

Then were all the skips and hops repeated, my boy; with such ornamental bits of occasional fine art as the refined reporters of our excellent moral daily journals love to dwell fondly upon. Were I but such a reporter, I would describe the scene in a way to make you take it home to your children. But let me not waste time in lamentation; for, just then, a something heavy fell upon the right eye of Captain Munchausen, and effectually closed it for a week.

"Ah!" said Captain Bob Shorty, pleasantly, "did you count the stars upon our Flag that time, my grayback?"

"Sir," retorted Munchausen, staggering about, and wildly pulling handfuls of imperceptible hair out of invisible heads in the air, — "I consider the loss of that eye a blessing in disguise; for I can now concentrate my **WHOLE** strength on the other."

"Well, now, really," said Captain Bob Shorty, — "really, you know, I never see anything half so jolly."

"Extermination is now your doom," howled the Confederacy, reeling deliberately forward upon the first fist he met, and falling heavily to the ground with his other eye emphatically darkened.

Instantly was Captain Bob Shorty at his side, exclaiming, "I'm sorry for this, old chap. I wish you'd only consented to stop before — EH?" ejaculated Captain Bob Shorty, — "what's that you say?"

As true as I live and breathe, my boy, — as true as I live and breathe, — when Captain Bob Shorty put his ear to the mouth of the fallen Confederacy, he heard, slowly spoken, these remarkable words:

"I'm — glad — this — has — happened — because — I — can — now — develop — my — **REAL** — resources — of — strength!!!"

Yours, speechlessly,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.