

“‘Well,’ murmured the matron, ‘it’s the gold they intend to take, I reckon.’

“That was enough. Frantically tore Mr. Faro into the street; desperately raced he to the city limits; madly flew he past the pickets and sentinels; swiftly scoured he down the Boynton Plank Road. A Yankee bayonet was at his bosom.

“‘Reconstruction!’ shouted he.

“They took him before the nearest post-commandant, and he only said,—

“‘Let me be Reconstructed.’”

Need the reader be informed that he is now in New York, looking for a house, and in great need of some financial aid to help him pay the rent of such a residence as he has always been accustomed to and cannot live without? Yes, far from home, family, and friends, he is now one of those long-suffering, self-sacrificing Union refugees from the South, whom it is a pleasure to assist, and whose manly opposition to the military despotism of the Confederacy commends them to our utmost liberality. He will accept donations in money, and this fact should be sufficient to make all loyal men eager to extend such pecuniary encouragement as may suffice to keep him above any necessity for exertion until the presidency of some Bank can be procured for him by the Christian Commission.

I may add, my boy, that any monetary contribution intended for this excellent man, may be directed to

Yours, patronizingly,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

LETTER CVII.

RECORDING THE LATEST DELPHIC UTTERANCES OF ONE WHOM WE ALL HONOR WITHOUT KNOWING WHY; AND RECOUNTING THE TRULY MARVELLOUS AFFAIR OF THE FORT BUILT ACCORDING TO TACITUS.

WASHINGTON, D C., March 29th, 1865.

It is a beautiful trait of our common American nature, my boy, that we should be stood-upon by fleshy Old Age, and find ourselves reduced to the mental condition of mangled infants thereby. It is an airy characteristic of our gentle national temperament, to let shirt-collared Old Age, of much alpaca pants, sit down on us and cough into our ears. It is a part of our social organization as a reverential people to be forever weighed-down in our spirits by the awful respectability of double-chinned Old Age, and the solemn satisfaction it displays at its elephantine meals.

Hence, my boy, when I tell you that the Venerable Gammon beamed hither from his residential Mugville last Saturday, with a view to benefiting that wayward infant, his country, you will be prepared to learn that the populace fell upon their unworthy stomachs before him, and respectfully begged him to walk over their necks.

“My children,” said the Venerable Gammon, with a fleshy smile, signifying that he had made them all, and yet didn’t wish to seem proud,—“My children, this war

is progressing just as I originally planned it, and will end successfully as soon as it terminates triumphantly. Behold my old friend, Phœbus," says the Venerable Gammon, pointing an adipose forefinger at the sun, with a patriarchal air of having benignantly invented that luminary, though benevolently permitting Providence to have all the credit, "it is not more certain that my warm-hearted friend Phœbus will rise in the yeast to-morrow morning than that the Southern Confederacy will not be capable of fighting a single additional battle after it shall have lost the ability to take part in another engagement."

Then the entire populace requested immediate leave to black the boots of their aged benefactor and idol, and seven-and-thirty indefatigable reporters, with pencils behind their ears, telegraphed to seven-and-thirty powerful morning journals, that the end of the rebellion might be looked for in about a couple of hours.

I don't mind revealing to you, as a curious fact, my boy, that no mortal man is able to understand how the Venerable Gammon has done anything at all in this war. In fact, I can't exactly perceive what earthly deed he has actually performed to make him preferable to George Washington; but it is generally inferred, from the size of his watch-seals and the lambency of his spectacles, that he has in some way been more than a parent to the country; and the thousands now buying some beneficent Petroleum stock, which he has to sell, are firmly convinced that its sale is positively calculated to forever benefit the human race.

Oh! that I were Ovid, or Anacreon, to describe fittingly the recent little wedding entertainment, at which

this excellently-aged teacher and preserver of his species was fatly present, diffusing permission for all mankind to be happy and not mind him. After beaming parentally upon the officiating Mackerel chaplain, with a benignity inseparable from the idea that all clergymen were the work of his hands, he took the dimpled chin of the bride between his thumb and forefinger, and says he:

"My children, I am an old, old man; but may ye be happy." Here he kissed the bride. "Yes, my children," says the venerable Gammon, with a blessing on the world in every tone of his buttery voice, "I am far down in the vale of years; but may ye be very happy." And he kissed the bride. "Still, my children," says the Venerable Gammon, with steaming spectacles, "I would be willing to be even older, if my country desired it; but may ye be forever happy." So he kissed the bride. "Oh!" says the Venerable Gammon, abstractedly placing a benefactor's arm around her waist, and looking benevolently about the room as though consenting to its possession of four walls, — "Oh!" says he, "it is a privilege to be old for such a cause as this; but may ye be supremely happy." At this juncture he kissed the bride. "I am old enough," says the venerable Gammon, "to be your brother." And he kissed every young woman there.

Whereupon it was the general impression that an apostle was present; and when the bridegroom subsequently hinted, in a disagreeable whisper, that two bottles of port were enough to confuse the mind of a Methuselah himself, there was a wonderful unanimity among the ladies as to the probable misery of the bride's future life.

But wherefore, O, Eros, dost thou detain me in such

scenes as these, while the hoarse trumpet of bully Mars calls me to the field of strategic glory? Hire an imaginary horse, my boy, at a fabulous livery-stable, and, in fancy, trot beside me as I urge my architectural steed, the Gothic Pegasus, toward the Mackerel lines in front of Paris.

Believing that you are entirely familiar with the very fat works of C. Tacitus, and minutely remember Book II. of his Annals, let me draw your attention to that fort Aliso which he describes as being built upon the River Luppia by Drusus, father of Germanicus, and constituting the commencement of a chain of posts to the Rhine. Just such a work has been erected on the shores of Duck Lake by Mackerel genius, as the key to a long line of remarkable mud-works. It is modelled after Aliso, chiefly because that work was notorious for being near the Canal of Drusus; and the whole world knows that canal-digging is inseparable from all our national strategy.

Fort Bledandide is the name of the Mackerel institution destined to receive immortality in Mr. Tacitus Greeley's exciting History of this distracting war; but to me belongs the earlier privilege of enabling a moral weekly journal to confuse its readers with the first reliable report of the marvellous battle of Fort Bledandide.

It was at quite an early hour, my boy, on the morning of my arrival before Paris, that a faint sound, as of gentlemen firing guns, was heard to proceed from a point some six feet outside Fort Bledandide. Nobody was up at the time, save a few venerable Mackerels, who, in daily expectation of some carnage, had selected that hour at which to write their wills; and it was left for these

antique beings to be the first of our troops disturbed by a shameless Confederacy who lifted his head slowly above our works, and deliberately aimed a deadly horse-pistol at Jacob Barker, the regimental dog. Hideous was the explosion ensuing, as the night-key with which the dread weapon was loaded went hurtling through the air some ten yards above its mark; and an aged Mackerel looked up from his penmanship.

"What!" says he, with some animation, "are my spectacles guilty of a falsehood, or have I indeed the pleasure of seeing Mr. Davis?"

The Confederacy reloaded his horse-pistol with a handful of carpet-tacks, and says he:

"I am that individdle."

Raising a bell that stood by his side, the venerable Mackerel rang a hasty peal, which had the effect to arouse two or three of the other scribes from their writing, and cause them to apply ear-trumpets to their ears. Simultaneously the first warrior roared, through a fire-trumpet:

"Comrades! We are surprised."

At the same instant the Confederacy burst into a tempest of unseemly chuckles, and fired his carpet-tacks into the soft hat of the nearest Mackerel, causing that hoary veteran to drop his will and scratch his head with an air of hopeless bewilderment.

"Have you any tea that you could give me?" says the Confederacy, scrambling into the Fort, — "any Hyson senior or junior? Have you any coffee? Oh, *do* give me some coffee." Here the Confederacy winked profoundly, to indicate that his request was intended merely as a bit of surprising humor. Meantime, six other Con-

federacies with horse-pistols had walked in to look for breakfast, and the facetious business of relieving the slowly-awakened garrison of their loud-ticking and rather cheap gold watches was performed with neatness and dispatch. After which the aged Mackerels were dismissed to join the main body of the ancient Brigade some ten yards to the rear of the work, with the remark, that their vandal rulers would find it somewhat difficult to reconstruct the sunny South.

Thus, my boy, was accomplished another of those surprises which not unfrequently give the most villainous cause an appearance of temporary success; though at times they prove real blessings to the good cause by including the capture of three or four brass-buttoned brigadiers.

But, pause, my feeble pen, ere thou ventur'est upon the hopeless task of putting into language the holy rage of the General of the Mackerel Brigade, when he learned the capture of Fort Bledandide. Pause, miserable quill, ere thou plungest into an insane effort to picture the awful state of vengeance exciting Captain Villiam Brown on the same occasion. As is his invariable custom at such junctures, the General at once retired to his tent to practise on the accordion, leaving Villiam to form a few regiments of the Mackerel reserve in line of battle for the recapture of the position.

"Ah!" says Villiam, spiritedly, "here's a chance for a baynit charge after the manner of Napoleon's Old Guard; and I hereby notify Regiment 5, that the eyes of the whole world are upon them."

Captain Bob Shorty and I had got ready our bits of

smoked glass, to preserve our eyes from the too-great glitter of the dazzling achievement about to come off, when we noticed that Villiam motioned with his famous sword, Escalibar, for the spectacled warriors to pause a moment.

"If any of you martial beings happen to have any small change about you at this exciting moment," says Villiam, paternally, "I will take charge of it, for safety."

This noble proposition, my boy, might have been accepted unanimously, had not the discharge, at that instant, of a horse-pistol from the ramparts of Fort Bledandide caused the entire regiment to partially disappear! That is to say, every man went down upon his stomach, according to the latest principles of regimental strategy.

"Ah!" says Villiam, "how are the mighty fallen!"

Loudly rang a tremendous horse-laugh from the Confederacies in the Fort, several of whom were seen making off toward Paris with Orange County howitzers under each arm. I could see, by the aid of my smoked glass, that the Chivalry on the ramparts was sitting on a chest, with his discharged horse-pistol across his knee, and a series of feeble winks chasing each other around his Confederate eyelids.

"By all that's Federal!" says Captain Bob Shorty, "the scorpion surrenders!"

At the word, up sprang Regiment 5, like the men of Roderick Dhu, and straightforward they swept into Fort Bledandide, as a wave of the angry sea will sometimes sweep into a doomed barrel on the beach. Such was the shock of this dare-devil charge, that the winking Confederacy on the ramparts incontinently rolled off his chest and was captured without much carnage.

"Do you surrender to the United States of America?" says Villiam, with much star-spangled banner in his manner.

The Confederacy raised himself up on an elbow and hiccup'd gloomily.

"By all that's Federal!" says Captain Bob Shorty, "he's been drinking some of that air Commissary whiskey of ours."

Then, my boy, did Captain Villiam Brown evidence that exquisite quality of our humanity, which bids us forget all wrongs and enmities at the eloquent appeal of death. No sooner had Captain Bob Shorty made the above remark, than his whole aspect changed to pity, and he feelingly knelt beside the miserable captive.

"Have you any last request to make, poor insecck?" asked Villiam, much affected.

The misguided Confederacy was speechless; but made an attempt to scratch his breast.

"Ah!" says Villiam, with deep emotion, "you mean that your conscience is a still small voice."

Here the Confederacy scratched his left leg feebly; and says Captain Bob Shorty:

"According to your rule, Villiam, his conscience must be quite large, extending to his legs."

Nervously arose Captain Villiam Brown to his feet, with such a shudder running through his manly frame as caused every brass button to jingle.

"I think," says Villiam, with a ghastly smile, "that some of his conscience is a-walking softly down my backbone, with a hop now and then."

Alas! my boy, we all have consciences, save green

grocers and fashionable bootmakers; and who among us but has felt his conscience to be at times almost totally disregarded, until it has finally brought him to the scratch by turning to flee?

Scarcely was Fort Bledandide recovered by the valor of our arms when the General of the Mackerel Brigade let fly the following

"GENERAL ORDER.

"The General Commanding announces to the Mackerels that the Southern Confederacy has taken place. Also, that the unconquerable Mackerel Brigade has taken place back again.

"Yesterday morning the Confederacy massed himself and succeeded, through the unabated slumbers of the persons hired to sit up with him, in obtaining Fort Bledandide.

"Prompt measures were taken by Captain Villiam Brown, Eskevire; and, although an entire regiment fell in the assault, the work was retaken.

"Two lessons can be learned from these operations: First, that the notorious Southern Confederacy is now reduced to a mere shell; and, secondly, that said shell has a very short fuse.

"THE GENERAL OF THE MACKEREL BRIGADE.
("GREEN SEAL.")

I was still reading this pointed document, when there arrived, from Paris, a Confederate being, in carpet slippers and white cotton gloves, whose name was Lamb, and who bore peace-propositions.

"I have come," says he, affably, "to say, that the army of the North can now be admitted into the army of the Confederacy for a conjoint attack on combined Europe, after which the sunny South will forgive all her creditors, and see what can be done for the Northern masses."

Let this frank speech prove, my boy, what all our excellent democratic* morning journals of limited circulation have so long maintained,—that it rests entirely with the President to secure an immediate cessation of hostilities with the Southerners, by forgetting all the wrongs of the past, while they are for getting all the rights of the future.

Yours, pacifically,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

* This letter was originally addressed to the editor of an excellent little democratic weekly journal, who went carefully over it and substituted the word "patriotic" for "democratic," whenever the latter occurred:—thereby achieving the most perfect and astounding perversion of meaning on record!

CVIII.

NARRATING THE UTTERLY UNPARALLELED CONQUEST OF PARIS BY THE VENERABLE MACKEREL BRIGADE, AFTER THREE DAYS' INCONCEIVABLE STRATEGY; IN FACT, A BATTLE-REPORT AFTER THE MANNER OF ALL OUR EXCITED MORNING JOURNALS; UPON PERUSING WHICH, EACH READER IS EXPECTED TO WRAP HIMSELF UP IN THE AMERICAN FLAG AND SHAKE HIS FIST AT COMBINED EUROPE.

WASHINGTON D. C., April 4th, 1865.

To loud huzzas our flag ascends, as climbs a flame the dizzy mast, while all its burning glory bends from where the planets seal it fast; and, pliant to the chainless winds, a blazing sheet, a lurid scroll, the Compact of the Stars it binds in fire that warms a nation's soul!

All of which, my boy, is the poetry of that banner whose union of a starry section of evening with the hues of dawn and sunset makes it a very good marriage-certificate of the wedding of old Mr. Day and the Widow Night. (Let us hope that Mr. Day will never be without a sun.)

And do you ask me wherefore I thus burst into red-hot song?—wherefore I inflict further verses upon a flag already washed almost to pieces in a freset of poet's tears?—wherefore I jingle rhymes of Bostonian severity at the commencement of an epistle whose readers may not all be Emersons?