

"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?

Know, then, my boy, that the chant is to celebrate the conquest of the ancient City of Paris, which, for many years past, has actually waxed prosperous against Mackerel strategy, but now rests a prize beneath that glorious bunting which we all like to see our poor relations die for: beneath that ensign of freedom for which every man of us would willingly sacrifice his life, did he not feel that his first great duty was to his helpless family, who like to have him stay at home and take them to the opera.

O my country! — sublime in thy wounds, chivalrous in thy triumph, more than royal in the kingless magnificence of thine undaunted power; — forget not the patriots who have stayed at home on account of their families; for surely such a disinterested and general demonstration of domestic virtue seems to indicate that our police force is uselessly large.

Let me not, however, waste time in national boasting, while the crowning result of consummate Mackerel strategy demands of me that narrating exercise of the pen without which even brigadiers might fail to receive public credit for deeds after the manner of Napoleon.

Retrace, my boy, to the happy days of your youth, and you may remember that I once described the ancient city of Paris as a house founded upon a bar-room and surrounded by warlike settlements of Confederacies. Here were collected all the lemons, glassware, sugar, spoons, and cloves of the sunny South; and — though all else were lost — while these remained to them, the Confederacies were still unbroken in spirits and only spoke of Columbia to observe: “She may attack our chivalrous banner of Stars and Bars, and capture all the stars if she pleases;

but while our Bars remain, we shall still be able to liquor.” Therefore it is, that the aged and aristocratic city of Paris has stubbornly brought to grief so many of our admirable brass-buttoned generals, several of whom are now enjoying that unblemished obscurity which ungrateful republics are apt to bestow upon unappreciated greatness.

On the day succeeding the sanguinary affair of Fort Bledandide, my boy, while notes of busy preparation were rising from all parts of the Mackerel camp, one of our pickets was awakened by the sound of many equestrians riding over his body, and immediately put on his spectacles to discern whether they were friends or foes. The inspection lasted until one skeleton charger had stepped upon his canteen; whereupon the Mackerel picket discovered that the new-comers were the Anatomical cavalry, under Captain Samyule Sa-mith, just returned from operations in Confederate railway stock, which they had raised so far above par as to give it a very decided mar.

Proudly rode Samyule at the head of his triumphant bone-works, and the jingle of their spurs and sabres was like unto the collision of many tin pans. Gayly rode they to headquarters, and, says Samyule, “Sire, we have interrupted the railway travel of the Southern Confederacy for the season; and obliterated the tracks of treason, that it may no longer rail against us. Further depot-nent saith not.”

The General of the Mackerel Brigade laid aside his accordion, and says he:

“My sons, I would that every earthly foe to our distracted banner could at this moment be placed on board a

railway train in any part of this country. Because, says the General, thoughtfully, "a ride on an American railway train of cars is foreordained car-nage."

After this speech, my boy, it was generally allowed that the Mackerel commander was even with Samyule; and as the Anatomical Cavalry swept off to the left to flank the unseemly Confederacies defending Paris, the main body of the venerable brigade, under Captain William Brown and Captain Bob Shorty, commenced strategical designs on that city.

Thus early in the engagement a bloodthirsty Confederacy had succeeded in training a fowling-piece from behind a chimney on the roof of Paris, greatly worrying our troops with dried beans, and the Orange County Howitzers were already concentrated upon him with a view to cutting off his legs; when there suddenly appeared within our lines a maiden, stricken in years, with a white plush bonnet, a green silk umbrella, and the ninety-ninth number of the History of this War under one arm. She waved a hand toward the Mackerels nearest her, and says she:

"On, to Paris! On, to Paris! or a decimated and indignant country, acting on the predictions in the ninety-ninth number of the most accurate History of the War now sold to subscribers only, will indignantly demand that EVERYBODY be at once removed!"

Here the General of the Mackerel Brigade made his appearance from the rear, and says he:

"What do you desire, Miss P. Hen?"

"On, to Paris!" shrieked the maiden. "On, to the capital of the brutalized dealers in human flesh and blood,

and drag them to the scaffold!" Here Miss P. Hen drew a long breath, and says she, "Let's have no vacillating."

"All right, Mamsell," says the General.

"And the country'd have more confidence in *you*," says Miss P. Hen, vigorously, "if you'd stop chewing that nasty tobacco, which is only fit for brutes and dealers in human flesh and blood. On, to Paris! or" —

At this juncture, my boy, the aged Miriam caught sight of the Conservative Kentucky Chap, haranguing against her down the Accomac road, and toddled furiously away to chastise him with her umbrella.

Meanwhile, the Orange County Howitzers had sent some pounds of shrapnel in the direction of the hostile Confederacy on the roof; and as the bricks began to fly from the chimney, and the dried beans came at longer intervals, Regiment 5 of the Mackerel Brigade moved nearer to the beleaguered capital, and opened an effective fire of musketry upon the azure zenith. Captain William Brown was about to order an assault, when certain windows in the upper stories of Paris were thrown up, and there rained therefrom such a hurtling tempest of stew-pans, hearth-brushes, shaving-cups, and boxes of blacking, that hundreds of Mackerel spectacles were broken. Simultaneously the sanguinary Confederacy on the roof put a double charge of dried beans through the coat-tails of Captain Bob Shorty, and our troops — "the object of the reconnoissance being fully accomplished" — withdrew in good order to their former position.

Quickly, thereupon, appeared a canvas banner from the

garret windows of Paris, inscribed: "Chalk up the First Round for the Southern Confederacy!" and the first day's fight was over.

All that night, my boy, did the venerable Mackerel Brigade lay upon their arms, finding all their hands asleep, in consequence, when morning broke; and as often as a venturesome Confederacy skulked near Fort Bled-andide to steal a cannon, just so often did one Mackerel picket nudge another Mackerel picket and ask him if he didn't think he heard something.

At last there came a gradual hush over everything, as though the whole world were an antechamber to a room in which rested some dear sick child. Then the sharp edges of this terrestrial bowl in which we hang over the sun at night began to define themselves all around, as though an early candle had just been brought underneath to light the fire. And at last a slowly-deepening lurid glow appeared around the sides of the bowl, as though the fire was just getting a start. It was morning.

Fearful that if I go on in that strain any longer, some sentimental Philadelphian may carry me off by main force to write for the "Lady's Book," let me call your notice to the extreme left of the Mackerel line, where Captain Samyule Sa-mith and the Anatomical Cavalry, supported by Sergeant O'Pake and Regiment 3, were formed in line of battle, facing certain rickety Confederacies under Captain Munchausen.

"Comrades," says Samyule, vainly attempting to keep the hind-legs of his anatomical steed from trying to surround the two fore-legs — "comrades, one blow, and Syracuse is free! For-r-ward!"

But what is this, starting up, as from the ground, right in the path of what else had been the most exorbitant cavalry charge on record? It is the aged Miss P. Hen, with her white plush bonnet much mashed from a recent severe single combat with the Conservative Kentucky Chap, and the ninety-ninth number of the History of the War still unsold. She ate a Graham biscuit, and says she:

"Just once — I only want to say just once, that everybody is a-howling at me like wolves, and abusing me, because I said 'On to Paris.' So I want to say, just once, that I never, never will say one word about the war again, no matter how much you want me to. Now there's no use of your asking me, because I never, never will!"

And she hoisted her green silk umbrella and stalked grimly from the field, like the horrid apparition of a nervous widower's dream.

"Really," says Samyule, irritably, "I don't think there's any other country where old women would be allowed on the field of battle without epaulets on their shoulders. But let us proceed with the war," says Samyule, earnestly, "or we shall not get through in time for our coming conflict with combined Europe."

Load ring the bugles, my boy, on either side, as when two chivalrous cocks crow defiance to each other from neighboring roosts; and presently two rival circus-companies met in tremendous collision with two-up and two-down, two over and two under: guard — parry — feint — thrust! Twick, thwack, slam, bang; click-click, click-

click, click-click; chip, chop, higgledy-piggledy, crush, crowd, and helter-skelter.

"Let me get at you, foul Hessian!" roared the hairy Munchausen, with his horse hopping sideways in every direction.

"Die in thy sins!" shouted the excited Samyule, taking a slide toward his charger's ears, as that spirited animal ecstatically waved his hinder feet in the air.

"Coward, thou would'st fly me!" ejaculated Munchausen, just as his Arabian got a-straddle of a caisson.

"You are my prisoner!" thundered Samyule, endeavoring to restrain his blooded courser from climbing a tree near by.

"Beg for your life!" howled Munchausen, frantically clasping his arms about the neck of his Hambletonian colt as they went skipping against an ambulance together.

"Say thy last prayer!" yelled Samyule, backing frenziedly into the middle of the Christian Commission.

"This to thy heart!" screamed Munchausen, disappearing in a ditch.

"Victory!" ejaculated Samyule, rolling down a hill.

And the second day's fighting was ended.

Night again upon the battle-field. The wearied soldier, as he seeks a few hours of repose upon the damp and dreary ground, wonders what the people of the great patriotic cities will think of the battle of the day; whether they are indeed unspeakably proud and fond of the men perilling and losing their lives that the nation may live? Oh, believe it, thou most innocent of heroes; for is it not so written in all our excellent morning journals? Put no trust in the Satyrs who

tell thee that thy countrymen at home, in the exultation of victory, hold thee only as an unconsidered part of the dumb and blind machine which hoists thy captain to eminence. Yet would I have thee turn thy fairest hope, thy perfect faith, to that one spot of all the world where kneels to-night some fond, familiar form; where loving hands are humbly uplifted for an absent one, and quivering lips implore, Almighty Father, guard him still!

Now tremble, earth, and shake, ye friendly spheres, for the Mackerel Brigade, glittering with spectacles and gorgeous with red neck-ties and gold watches, advances for a third round with the unblushing Confederacies of Paris, several of whom are on the roof with duck-guns in their hands and slaughter in their hearts. As I gaze upon the wonderful scene through my bit of smoked glass, the Orange County Howitzers burst into a roar, not unlike a Dutch chorus, and the sun is in momentary danger of being hit.

To speak once more in a past tense:—Forward rolled the Mackerel tide of battle the whole length of the line, with skirmishers thrown out to catch Confederate chickens, and the deadly peal of treason's duck-gun mingled hoarsely with the angry bang of loyalty's random musket. Heading Regiment 5, and mounted on his geometrical steed, Euclid, Captain Villiam Brown essayed a daring charge at the front door of Paris; while Captain Bob Shorty, with a portion of the Conic Section just arrived from Accomac, thundered toward the window of the first floor; but here a female Confederacy opened a heavy fire of pokers and gridirons

from the basement, and there was too much danger to the spectacles of the ancient Brigade to warrant persistence in the bold attempt.

Far to the left, with his eyes blazing like the ends of two cigars, and his nose glowing like a transparent strawberry, Captain Samyule Sa-mith got himself and his celebrated horse-marines so ingeniously entangled and mixed up with Captain Munchausen's and everybody else's command, that the Schleswig-Holstein question was a very ordinary conundrum in comparison, and the fight in that part of the field bade fair to last for a few years without much definite carnage.

Then, again, on the calm waters of Duck Lake (now too deep for wading in consequence of recent rains), that hoary old salt, Rear Admiral Head, unhooked his famous flagship, the "Shockingbadhat," and set out with his improved swivel-gun and agile Mackerel crew to take a hand in the carnival of conquest.

"Loosen my plates!" swore the aged son of Neptune in his iron-clad manner, as he adjusted his spectacles and extracted a slow-match from one corner of his snuff-box, — "Loosen my plates! but the navy must kill a few Confederate insects, — bark my turret, if it mustn't."

It was really beautiful, my boy, to see an iron-clad tar of such great age light the slow-match with his own meerschaum, and aim the improved artillery directly at the rear-elevation of a Confederacy tying his shoe in one of the side windows of Paris.

Ker-bang! went the triumph of naval ingenuity, causing the flag-ship to hop only a few inches into the air; and a Confederacy with amputated coat-tails was instantly

seen to spin wildly around and rub himself like one in a bath.

Not to sicken you, my boy, with too much of such heart-rending slaughter, let me say that a dense cloud of sulphurous smoke soon entirely veiled the doomed City of Paris, into which the strategical Mackerels continued for hours to pour such torrents of lead as no number of windows could stand. Finally, as night approached, a person of black extraction, with wool on the brain, emerged from the cloud quite close to Villiam, and says he:

"De place hab surrender, sah."

"Ah!" says Villiam, pulling out his ruffles, "is the conflick too much for the scorpions?"

The faithful black arranged a silver cake-basket more firmly under his coat, and says he:

"Dey's all gone over Jordan."

Wild were the cheers that rent the air at this intelligence, and right quickly were our national troops marching into the bar-room of captured Paris, to the inspiring strains of "Drops of Brandy," from the night-key bugle of the Mackerel band. Our distracted banner, too, was just being raised triumphantly upon the roof, when there suddenly emerged, from the shadow of the rear-guard, Miss P. Hen, leaning trustfully upon the arm of the Conservative Kentucky Chap!

"Now," says she, vivaciously, "is the very moment for the President to save our bleeding and bankrupt people, by paying four hundred millions of dollars to the sunny South for her losses in this war, and offering her such terms as may induce her to make that peace which is ab-

solutely necessary to close the most accurate History of the War now sold to subscribers only."

Pause, my boy, ere you execrate the venerable Miss P. Hen; for there is more than one fidgety old lady tendering advice to the Government at this crisis; and the sisterhood is not without members who wear your own style of costume.

Yours, carefully,

ORPHEUS C. KERR.

#### LETTER CIX.

WHICH ENDETH THE THIRD VOLUME OF THIS INEXPRESSIBLY VERA-  
CIOUS HISTORY OF THE WAR; AND SHOWETH HOW A GREAT RE-  
PUBLIC FINALLY OVERCAME ITS SURPASSINGLY MENDACIOUS FOES,  
AND HOW IT EVINCES ITS UNSPEAKABLE GRATITUDE TO PROVI-  
DENCE FOR SUCH A VICTORY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 11th, 1865.

LOOK, my boy, upon the east wall of my luxurious presence-chamber, and mark how I have maliciously pasted thereon a map of besotted Europe; with all its capitals, rivers, mountains, and inland puddles laid down with an accuracy and multitudinosity to forever enlighten and utterly confound every sniffing little schoolboy-geographer in the land. What a shapeless chunk of inferior dirt is Europe! How like a minute and feeble skiptail does it appear, when compared with our own gigantic straddlebug of a country! Yet has the skiptail ventured to interfere offensively in the private affairs of the straddlebug; and the interference, and the private affairs, and the possible upshot of the whole matter, remind me forcibly of a spirited little event which once occurred in the Sixth Ward.

The male and female Michael O'Korrigan, my boy, occupied a spacious apartment on the fine, airy, eighth floor of the sumptuous Maison Mulligan in that celebrated Ward, and for several years the course of their true love