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BY DAVID OVER.

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LETTER FROM MAJOR DOWNING.

To Uncle Joshua Downing, Post Master at Downingville, down East, in the State of Maine.

Dear Uncle Joshua: I have just got back from Washington, where I have been for the last fortnight watching the old ship of State lay in a sort of three-cornered gale of wind. This gale struck her the 23d of December, and threw her all about and the gale holds on yet tight as ever, and there she has been layin now seven weeks, head to the wind, rolling and pitching, and hasn't gained ahead a pole. I've seen rough times in the Two Polities, and long gales of wind, hurly-burly, and whirlpools, and all sorts of weather, but this is the first time I've seen a craft lay in to again a three-cornered gale for two months upon a stretch, in a choppy sea worse than the Gulf Stream in a thunder-storm. But don't you be frightened, Uncle Joshua; she won't go down, but will live through it, and go on her voyage by-and-by all right. Our old ship of State is a staunch craft; she is built of the very best stuff and put together in the strongest manner; and there isn't a spar nor a plank nor a timber-head in her but what is as sound as a nut. She's the best ship in the world, and the Two Polities is next. So you needn't be afraid that any sea will ever swamp her, and if ever she should be in danger of running ashore or on the breakers by the squabbles and foibles of her officers, she's got a crew that will take care of her.

You know, Uncle, I've been sailin round Cuba and up the Gulf a good while, trying to carry out the plans of our Congress at Ostend and Ax-le-Shappel, to take Cuba because our country couldn't get along without it, and self-preservation, you know, is the first law of nature. We should get through that job long ago if our Cabinet hadn't backed out about it. I never exactly understood the home difficulty; but I'm sure there was some hard shuffling somewhere. Wasn't all right about it, but the backin and fillin in the Home Department was what bothered us, and pretty likely has upset the business. First, the Home Department told us to go ahead and fix up our Ostend matter the best way we could. But as soon as I and Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Soley, and the rest of us in the Foreign Government, had got things well under way, and was about ready to take Cuba, the Home Department turned right round and fit again us, tooth and nail. As I said afore, I couldn't account for this home difficulty and the sudden turn-about of the Home Department, unless they was afraid we should get the most of the credit of takin Cuba; and may be I, or Mr. Buchanan, or Mr. Soley, or Mr. Mason, or Mr. Sikes, or Mr. Sanders might get to be President by it. But such a thought never entered my head, and I can pledge myself the same for all the rest. We was to work entirely for the country's good, and not for our own. And for the Home Department to get jealous of us and turn again us in that way was cruel and unkind. It grieves me every time I think of it; for I think like the good Dr. Watts; where is my sin?

Now pleasant 'tis to see
Brother and friends agree,
I sent despatches to General Pierce about it more than three months ago, but never got any answer. And finally I got tired holdin on out there alone, and heartin all the time that the Home Department kept stoppin all the reinforcements from coming out to help me; so I up and headed the Two Polities for Downingville. When we got along in the latitude of New York that terrible 6th of January storm overtook us, and we just made out to weather the gale and got inside of Sandy Hook and come to anchor. The pilots come aboard and treated us very kind.

Then New York pilots are clever fellows; they brought us lots of newspapers, from which I learnt what had been goin on for two months past. When they see the Downingville militia was aboard, and Surgeon Joel at the head of 'em dressed up in his uniform, one of the pilots took us to one side and whispered to me that he would advise me as a friend not to go up to New York, for if we did the Two Polities was a gone goose.

"How so?" says I, "what do you mean?"

"I mean," says he, "that Mr. McKoon, the District Attorney, will nab her in less than no time, and condemn her for a filibuster vessel, and you'll all be put in prison and tried for violatin the neutrality laws."

"Let him do it," says I, "if he dares. We are at war with the government. Our cruise has all been under the direction and advice of Congress."

"I'll remember right," says he, "Congress wasn't in session when the Two Polities sailed for the West India station. How

then, could you be under the direction of Congress?"

"I mean the Ostend Congress," says I, "and it makes no difference which, one's as good as 'tother."

"Well," says he, "you'll find it makes no difference which when you get to New York. The District Attorney is death on everybody that has the least smell of gunpowder, or has any thing aboard that bears any likeness to a musket. He has a monster boat sent for gunpowder; he often smells it aboard vessels where there isn't a bit of no grain, and 'nd it all turns to be only big water."

"If that's the case," says I, "I'll leave the Two Polities at anchor here, and I'll be off to Washington and see how the land lays."

So I called up Capt. Jumper, the sailing-master, and told him to keep things all snug and tight while I was gone, and I told Sargent Jost to take good care of the men, and I'd try if possible to be back in a fortnight.

When I got to Washington I thought I would just run in a few minutes and see how Congress was getting along first. I had let my beard grow pretty long, and was dressed so different from what I used to that I didn't feel afraid of any body's knowing me; so I went right into the Representatives' chamber took a seat in the gallery. Business seemed to be going on brisk and lively. A man was standing up in front and reading off, in a good loud voice, Banks 105, Richardson 73, Fuller 31, Pennington 5, scattering 4. Then I went out and went into the Senate. But there business seemed to be very dull. I couldn't find out any thing was doing. Some was reading the newspapers, and some was talking a little and some was setting as water and quiet as so many bears in their winter den with nothing to do but suck their paws. I soon got tired of this, and went back into the House again. I had but just got seated in the gallery when the man in front got up and read off again, Banks 105, Richardson 73, Fuller 31, Pennington 5, scattering 4.

I turned round and whispered to the man who sat next to me, and say I "That's just the same time they had when I was in here half an hour ago."

"Exactly," says he, "they don't play but one tune, and that hasn't no variations."

"Well, what upon air are they doing?" says I.

"Oh, they are choosing a Speaker," says he.

"Choosing a Speaker?" says I. "For gracious sake, how long does it take 'em to do that?"

"I can't have the slightest idea how long," says he. "They've been at it now about six weeks, and if they continue to gain as fast as they have since they began, I guess it might take 'em pretty near from July to eternity."

"If that's the case," says I, "I'll clear out, for I can't wait so long as that." So I hurried out and made tracks straight for the White House. I rung to the door and servant let me in. I told him I wanted to see the President. He said, very well, the President was in his private room, and he would take my card to him. I told him he might go and tell General Pierce that an old friend of his and a fellow-soldier in the Mexican war wanted to see him. Presently he come back and asked me to walk up. I found the President alone, walking back and forth across the room, and looking kind of riled and very resolute. I made me think of Old Hickory when he used to get his dander up about Bidell's bank, and walk the floor all day and lay awake all night, planning how he could upset it. The General knew me as soon as I went into the room, in spite of my beard, and shook hands with me and said he was very glad to see me.

"Well, now, General," says I, "I want to come right to the pint the first thing. I've left the Two Polities at anchor down to Sandy Hook, and I want to know right up and down if she's to be nabbed or not. You know how 'tis, General; you know we went out in good faith under the orders of the Ostend Congress; and you know the Home Government backed us up in the beginning of it; but now you've turned against us, and I understand you've been seizin and overhauling every vessel all along shore that had its bowsprit piked towards Cuba or Central America; and I was told if the Two Polities went up to York she'd be served the same way. Now, I want to know how we stand that all. If you don't want the help of the Two Polities there's enough that does; and if you don't give her a clear passport out and in, she'll be off pretty quick where she can find better friends."

"Why, my dear Major," said the President, and the tears almost come into his eyes; "My dear Major," says he, "you misunderstood me entirely. You and the Two

Polities haven't got a better friend in the world than I am. The fact is, I've been very much tried ever since that Ostend Congress Business. It made a good deal of hard feeling in my Cabinet, and as things work we was obliged to come out again it. And then we had to make a show of sticking up very strong for the neutrality laws; and that's why we seized so many vessels. But you needn't give yourself the least uneasiness about the Two Polities. I pledge you the honor of the Executive that she shall not be touched. And besides I'm in a good deal of trouble now all round, and I want you and the Two Polities to stick by me; for, if you don't I don't know who will."

"Agreed," says I, "that's talkin right up to the mark. Give us your hand, General; I'll stick by you as close as I did by my old friend, General Jackson. Now, what do you want me to do?"

"Well, Major," says he, "I've got a good many fishin jobs on hand that I don't hardly know what to do with; no, which to take hold on first. You know there's a Democratic Convention to meet at Cincinnati to make the nominations for the next term." (Here the President got up and locked the door, and set down close to me and talked low.) "The main question is, how to bring things to bear on that Convention so as to make the nomination go right. Marcy wants it, and Buchanan wants it, and Wise wants it, and Dickinson wants it, and perhaps Cass too, though he says he's done, and I don't know how many others, all good Democrats, you know; but we can't all have it; so you see I've got a hard team to pull against. As for Douglas, I think he'll go for me; if I'll go for him afterwards. The Cabinet and I have been tryin to get things ready before the nomination to give the Administration the credit of being the smartest and swiftest Administration ever held. We want, if possible, to go a little ahead of Jackson. You know we've already blowed Gray Town to atoms. We've struck a heavy blow to knock off the Danish Sound dock, and shall be ready for a splendid campaign there in the spring. We've got a rough arithmetic kindlin up between us and England, which will be just the thing if we can touch it off at the right time. But you know these things sometimes take fire too soon and do mischief both sides. I feel a little uneasy about this, and wish that stupid Congress would ever get organized so as to take part of the responsibility. Then we've got a quarrel brewin, too, with Col. Walker, out there in Nicaragua, and have refused to receive Col. French as his Minister. If Walker chooses to resent it as a national insult, we are ready for him. We shall give back a hair. Now, Major, what do you think of the chances for the nomination?"

"Well, General," says I, "I think if you manage right you'll get it. I'll do what I can for you, any how."

The General shook my hand, and got up and walked the floor. Says he, "The greatest difficulty now is with this confounded, stiff-necked, stupid Congress. They won't organize—that is, the House won't—and they seem determined to throw a damper on the Administration somehow or other. Here they've been holdin away their time six weeks and lettin the whole country bang by eye-lids—war and all. I had to keep my message on hand a month and let it almost spile just because the House wasn't organized. At last I happened to think it was a good chance for me to take the responsibility. So I let drive, and fired my message right in among 'em. It made quite a flutter among 'em. Some was quite wrathful; but I didn't care for that. I meant let 'em know I'd show 'em a touch of old Hickory if they didn't mind how they carried on. But here 'tis now goin on two months, and every thing is at a dead stand because the House won't choose a Speaker. We can't have any certainty of gettin enough money to keep the Government a goin till we get a Speaker, and all our plans is in danger of being knocked in the head. Now, Major, I wish you would shy round among the Members a day or two and see if you can't bring matters to a pint. I don't much care who is Speaker, if they'll only organize."

So I went round among the Members two or three days and did my best. I found out all very stuff, and the lobby members were stiffest of any. The third day I went back to the President again, and says he, "Well, Major, how does it stand now? Does things look any more encouraging?"

"A little grain," says I, "but not much."

"Well, how is it?" says he.

Says I, "It is, Banks 105, Richardson 73, Fuller 31, Pennington 5, scattering 3."

"But that's the same old tune," says he; "that's the same that's been for the last six weeks."

"No," says I, "you mistake. Don't you see the scattering has fall off one? Isn't that a little encouraging?"

The President looked disappointed.—said he, "That's a very small stray for a dromain man to catch at. But how do they talk? Do they grow any more pliable?"

"Well, the Feller men seemed to be the most pliable," says I, "of any of 'em.—They said they was perfectly willing and ready to organize at any time, and the only difficulty was the Banks men and the Richardson men standing out so stubbornly."

"What do our true Democratic friends, the Richardson men, say?" said the President.

Says I, "They say they'll stand there and fight till the crack of doom before they'll allow the Black Republicans to get the upper hand."

"Well, that's good spunk," said the President; "but the worst of it is this business will crack my Administration sometime before the crack of doom. Well, how do the Banks men talk? Is there any hope from that quarter?"

"They say they are in no hurry," says I. "They had as leave vote as do any thing else. They've got money enough and can stand it, and they'll stick where they are till they starve the Administration out."

The President jumped up, and I must say he looked more like Old Hickory than I ever see him before. Says he, "Major Downing, this will never do; we must have a Speaker, by hook or crook. Can't you contrive any way to bring this business about?"

"Well," says I, "there is one way I think the business may be done; and I don't know but it's the last chance; and that is, for me to go and bring the Two Polities round her guns to bear on the Capitol. Then send in word and give 'em orders to organize. If they don't do it, then better the house down about their ears, or march in the Downingville militia and drive 'em out, as old Cromwell did the Rump Parliament."

The President stood a minute in a deep study. At last he said, "Well, Major, a desperate disease sometimes needs a desperate remedy. If you think you are right, go ahead."

So here I am, Uncle Joshua, aboard the Two Polities. I just stood to write this account to you, and shall now up anchor and make all sail for the Potomac. And if things is no better when I get their you may expect to hear thunder.

I remain your loving nephew,
MAJOR JACK DOWNING.

YANKEE DOODLE.

The tune of Yankee Doodle is said to have been composed by Dr. Shackburg, attached to the British army, in 1755, when the troops of the Northern Colonies marched into Albany, preparatory to the attack on the French posts at Niagara and Frontenac. The habiliments of these recruits presented a strange contrast to the orderly appointments of the English soldier, and the music to which they marched was as antiquated and out-of-date as their uniforms. Shackburg, who possessed some musical knowledge, composed a tune for the new comers, which he told them was one of the most celebrated of those in use by the army. To the great amusement of the British, the provincials accepted the gift, and "Yankee Doodle" became very popular among them.

The tune was not original with Shackburg, as it has been traced back to the time of Charles I., in England. In the reign of his son we find it an easy accompaniment to a little song on a famous lady of easy virtue of that date, which has been perpetuated as a nursery rhyme—

Lucy Locket lost her pocket,
Kitty Fisher found it,
Nothing in it, nothing in it,
But the blinding brand it.

A little later we have the first appearance of that redoubtable personage, Yankee Doodle. He seems even at that early stage of his career to have shown the characteristic of making the most of himself—

Yankee Doodle came to town
Upon a Kintish pony,
He stuck a feather in his hat,
And called him Macroni.

It is not impossible, however, that Yankee Doodle may be from Holland. A song in use among the laborers, who, in the harvest time, migrate from Germany to the Low Countries, where they receive for their work as much better-milk as they can drink, and a tenth of the grain secured by their exertions, has this burden—

Yankee doodle, doodle down
Diddle, diddle, later,
Yankee vive, vover vover,
Botermilk and Taunter.
That is, buttermilk and a tenth.

This song our informant has heard repeated by a native of that country, who had often listened to it at harvest time in his youth.

The precise date when
Father and I went down to camp
cannot, we fear, be fixed with accuracy, but as the tune was sung at Bunker Hill, may be assumed to have been in 1755.

Our copy of the words is from a broadside in a collection of "Songs, Ballads, &c.," purchased from a ballad printer and seller in Boston in 1813, made by Isaiah Thomas. The variations and additional stanzas in the notes are from a version given in Farmer and Moore's Historical Collections of New Hampshire, iii. 157.

THE YANKEE'S RETURN FROM CAMP.

Father and I went down to camp
Along with Captain Gooding,
And there we see the men and boys,
As thick as hasty pudding.

Chorus—Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
Yankee Doodle, dandy,
Mind the music and the step,
And with the girls be handy.

And there we see a thousand men,
As thick as "Squire David,"
And what they wanted every day
I wish it could be saved.

The lasses they eat every day,
Would keep a house a winter,
They have as much that I'll be bound,
They eat it when there's a mid to—

And there we see a swamping gun,
Large as a log of maple,
Upon a duced little cart,
A load for father's cattle.

And every time they shoot it off,
It takes a horn of powder,
And makes a noise like father's gun,
Only a nation leader.

I went as high to one myself,
As Squire's underpinning,
And fitter went as high again,
I thought the dice was in him.

Cousin Simon grew so bold,
I thought he would have cock'd it,
It scared me so, I shriked it off,
And hung by father's pocket.

And Captain Davis had a gun,
He kind of clapt his hand on't,
And stuck a crooked stabbing iron
Upon the side of on't.

And there I see a pumpkin shell
As big as mother's basin;
And every time they touched it off,
They scampered like the nation.

I see a little barrel too,
The heads were made of leather,
They knuckled upon't with little clubs,
And called the folk's together.

And there was Captain Washington,
And gentle folks about him,
They say he's grown so firm proud,
He will not ride without 'em.

He got him on his meeting clothes,
Upon a slapping station,
He set the world along in rows,
In hundreds and in millions.

The flaming ribbons in his hat,
They looked so tearing gay, ah,
I wanted peckily to get,
To give to my Jesubah.

I see another snarl of man,
A digging graves they told me,
So tarred long, so tarred deep,
They thought they should hold me.

It scared me so, I took'd it off,
Nor stop'd as I remember,
Nor turn'd about, till I got home,
Lock'd up my mother's chamber.

Dryden's, Cyclopaedia of American Literature.

wantonly harassed by arms. The king was furious, but he had a tough character in Langton to deal with. He was insensible to fear. While John was furious, Langton hastened to London, and at a second meeting of the barons, on the 25th of August, he read Henry the First's liberal character, and after inducing the barons to approve its provisions, Langton made them swear to be true to each other and to conquer or die in support of their liberties. One month after, a new Papal legate arrived, Cardinal Nicholas, and found John warring against the character of Henry. The treasurer-king bowed in homage to the Pope, paid fifteen thousand marks to the legate, and promised fifty thousand to the bishops.—The court of Rome at once joined John in all his outrages, aided him in warring against the liberties of England, and went hand in hand with one of the meanest, lowest, most treacherous and ferocious tyrants that ever wore a crown.

But Archbishop Langton was true to the cause of liberty, even after Pope Innocent had abandoned everything connected with it. Langton was the life and soul of the cause of Magna Charta. He was to that cause what Samuel Adams was to that cause of American liberty. He could bear the fiercest insult and the sharpest rebuke without a quiver. When at the feast of Epiphany, the barons waited on John and demanded an answer, he wished to put them off until Easter, and they granted the respite on condition that Cardinal Langton would be one of the king's sureties that he would do justice to their demands. After he got rid of the barons, John attempted to court the Church by yielding certain privileges to it. But Stephen Langton was unflinching to the cause of liberty. Innocent wrote an insolent letter to Langton, in which the Papacy expressed itself in unmistakable terms that it would support John right or wrong. But neither king nor pope nor papal dominion ever caused Cardinal Langton to swerve for single moment from the cause of freedom.

When John attempted to meet the barons with an army of foreign mercenaries, and bishop Pandolph urged Langton to excommunicate the barons, according to orders from Rome, Langton turned the tables and threatened to excommunicate John's army unless it dispersed, which act it speedily performed. The spirit and firmness of Langton crushed John, and on the 15th of June, 1214, at Runnymede, John signed the charter. The barons looked to Langton as the life of the whole work, and while they held London, they could do the Tower to the fidelity and courage of Langton. He lived for twenty-four years in the enjoyment of the liberties he had thus secured. Pope Innocent was as busy with his excommunications of Magna Charta and its friends as John was in his butcheries and assassinations, but the ferocious, treacherous, brutal John and his flimsy, Achanes, Pope Innocent, died without being able to overturn the charter of English liberty. Should such a man as Stephen Langton, who never in his priestly office and high ecclesiastical honors forget what was due to freedom, be lost to the memory of honest and true men? While liberty has a votary on the earth, Stephen Langton's name should be held in honor, amid the execrations that belong to king John of England and Pope Innocent of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy.

THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

The news received by the Archduke is undoubtedly important, but to rightly estimate the real extent of that importance, we must wait for advice by the next steamer, and perhaps, even, for those by the steamer succeeding that. The acceptance by Russia of the Austrian terms as a basis of negotiation may mean a great deal, a very little and perhaps nothing at all—it may be the premonition of an early peace, or merely a move in the complicated game of diplomacy. Looking at the astuteness which usually characterizes the policy of Russia, her readiness to gain time by negotiation, even when already decided on the point at which Pope Innocent began. King wished to appoint John de Gray, Arch-bishop of Canterbury, the Pope appointed Stephen Langton. When John made war upon his barons, in 1213, Langton opposed him with firmness. The king and the archbishop met at Winchester, kissed and made friends.—Langton having no confidence in John, and John hating him as the cause of all his kindly troubles. When John undertook to make war upon France, the barons refused to assist him, because Magna Charta was not secured. From the island of Jersey, John, finding himself unsupported, returned in 1214 to Northampton. Here Langton caught up with him, and the prelate said:

"These barbarous measures are in violation of your oaths; your vassals must stand to the judgment of their peers, and not be

ROMISH PRISONS.

The American Eagle, published at York, Pa., on the 28th ult., contains the following startling announcement:

From the very best information we possess that we are about having another MISS BUNKLEY affair, but the circumstances are of such a nature that a statement of the particulars would perhaps defeat the efforts now making for the release of the lady in question. The young lady is very well known by many persons in York county, and although she is confined in a Roman Catholic Female prison, she has succeeded in letting the world without know that she desired freedom. We dare not, at this time, particularize further, for we very well know that a knowledge of the person would at any rate cause her humiliate removal to other quarters, if not endanger her life.—In due season we shall publish a full account.

How do you do, Mr. Printer, I want a Sunday school lesson printed: we are going to be a tartin' forth of July celebration and our school starts a banner. What do you say?

So you ought, now. What do you want on it?

And I want to know what you want on it?

Why, I don't know; we are to have a tart of strip, on it, I suppose!

That's a good idea.—What shall it be?

Why, I thought this would be as good as any.—Do you see you are right; then go ahead.

her influence on the side of Russia. There is a want of definiteness, also, in the terms in which the acceptance of the Czar is announced, that must, until dispelled by more complete details, increase the doubt as to the real estimate to be placed upon the importance of the event. An acceptance of the terms proposed as a basis of negotiation, may mean not an unreserved intention to accept the terms themselves as a final settlement of difficulties, leaving minor points only for future arrangement, but merely a willingness to seize the opportunity for a renewal of negotiations. Of course if this be the sense in which Russia announces the intention, the actual prospect of peace is in no degree advanced.

We do not design by these remarks to detract from the real importance of the advances by the Archduke. There are an abundance of cogent reasons why Russia may be willing to accept peace upon terms that touch so lightly her prestige and power as those offered by the allies, and for the cause of humanity and progress it must be hoped that it is her sincere desire to do so. If on the one hand she has not been conquered or humiliated by her opponents, yet on the other, the fact has been abundantly demonstrated that in the face of the powerful coalition formed against her she cannot expect to accomplish the purposes which originated the war. The allies also powerfully feel the pressure of causes that must induce them to seek for peace and to throw no unnecessary obstacles in the way of securing it. These reacting influences may be sufficiently weighty to render both parties earnest in their efforts at conciliation, and give to the diplomatic conferences that must ensue a unity of purpose which will quickly finish a war that already been heavily felt and threatens so much in the future.

The nearness of peace will suggest questions as to the influence it will exert, if actually concluded, upon our own interests in view of the unsettled relations we hold with Great Britain. The immediate effect, we may reasonably conclude, would be to confirm the Palmerston ministry in power, and to render it more tenacious in maintaining its position towards this country.—Against this unfavorable influence we may properly place the unwillingness of the mass of the people of England to engage in a new war, whilst the sacrifices and sufferings of one just concluded are so fresh in their remembrance. To this general unwillingness there must also be added the special unpopularity of a war with this country, the real insignificance of the causes existing to hostility, and the variety and weight of the mutual relations of interest that must always dispense the two countries towards the maintenance of peace. These are causes that would be strongly felt in England, and must make her pause, even when ready armed for the conflict, and with all the advantage of already organized armies and disengaged fleets at her command, before she irretrievably committed herself to hostilities with a people who are her best and most servicable friends in peace, and in war have twice proved their ability to defy her power and defeat objects.—Bellamy's American.

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