

seat of war in search of government contracts and other money prizes, are too deeply engrossed with their own affairs to care much about those of the country except in so far as they interfere. But even the military were but little excited, perhaps because *etiquette* forbade their evincing any feeling one way or another. The next day was Sunday. Among the sermons advertised was one to be delivered in the Hall of Representatives by a missionary who had laboured among the blacks in the conquered territory on the coast of South Carolina, and which was to be rendered more attractive by the presence of Lincoln himself. As we were walking down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol our attention was attracted by a crowd, above whose heads the bayonets of the patrol were glittering. Elbowing our way into it we saw a handsome black lad being mysteriously handled by an officer. He seemed to be ripping up his clothes and we therefore concluded that a southern messenger had been caught and search was being made for letters and despatches. But far from that, the innocent youth with his native love of finery and perhaps out of enthusiastic respect for his deliverers, had arrayed himself in the cast off uniform of a northern soldier, abundantly besprinkled with brass buttons; and it was in despoiling him of these, which were stamped with the emblem of the glorious Union, and in wearing which he was dishonouring the republic, that the officer was engaged, operating with his penknife. From witnessing this ludicrous and pitiable exhibition we entered the Hall of Representatives. It was tolerably well filled with a respectable audience. The speaker began by stating the why and wherefore of his mission, and then proceeded to recount its glorious results. He had found the negroes not only diligent and industrious, but anxious of bettering their condition and emulous of the comforts which one or another among them had procured. Then they made good scholars and were as apt to teach as to learn. His success in Florida had been most gratifying. It seems he extended his exertions thither in a semi-military capacity while cruising about to pick up fugitive negroes and levying soldiers for Hunter's black regiments, while establishing schools in Fernandino. An incident occurred there of a really marvellous character. He had landed to recruit, but on the Sunday collected the people together and intimated that on Monday he would open a school. A white soldier was selected to teach the ninety little blacks that assembled, but as his unaided efforts would have availed little towards compassing so much work he looked about for an assistant, whom he found in a negro girl, able to read, write and sing. To teach the children she first wisely addressed herself; but after giving a lesson of half an hour a dead silence ensued,—of a supernatural description—which at length she broke by singing in a clear, shrill voice:—

“Old John Brown's ashes lie mould'ring in the grave.”