

ELEVENTH LETTER.

CORRECTING A MISTAKE—THE REVIVAL OF OLD MEMORIES—CORRECTING THE MANUSCRIPT—THE "O. B." LETTERS AS A LEGACY TO POSTERITY

LOUISVILLE, KY., June 18, 1883.

Dr. John P. Phister—My Young Friend: There is a mischievous fellow in Maysville. I wrote you that my friend Dr. John Shackelford had contributed to the *material* interests of Maysville. You must have read it that way to some of your acquaintances and they have gone off in a spirit of mischief and reported that I wrote *national* interests. Now, what could be more absurd. I have no knowledge of the doctor's engaging in any national interest except that debate on the public lands, of which I wrote you, and I am now almost sorry that I referred to that. I am not finding fault with you or any of your friends to whom you may have read my letters. It would not be proper for me to do so, when I may be the innocent cause of this misreading. I could not practice law and study penmanship at the same time, a dictionary is convenient but it breaks in with the current of thought, and I would rather take the chances on misspelling than lose a good idea. My daughter, Annie Gordon, has been much worried because of my frequent letters to you. She thinks they have been irksome and that you may make sport of the irregular way in which I get my sentences and expressions together. She was educated in schools where there was more grammar than mathematics. I tell her that when you read my letters to your friends that they will see that my feeble efforts in the way of reviving old memories of the town are in the right direction, and that they will be inspired to take hold of the subject with interest and aid in working out the problem of what Maysville was in the past, what it is for the present, and what it may be in the future. If my letters to you have excited an interest in the minds of my contemporaries and the younger citizens to know more of the place in which they live, I shall be content, and you will feel more kindly to me and freely forgive what my daughter, Annie Gordon, thinks an imposition upon you.

Now, my young friend, won't you some time when you are making capital for a rainy day look over all my letters, I suppose you have kept them, and see that they are dressed up in some kind of holiday language. Don't let any ridiculous misreading creep in such as I have referred to in the case of my friend Shackelford. When blunders are found the context will generally show what I was aiming at and if it is the truth it should not be suppressed. When you have done these things seal the letters up hermetically, get a jug of whisky and wait for the erection of a new market house. Place the letters and jug under the corner stone and when in

after years the archæologist and historian shall discover them they will regard you and I as public benefactors in a small way, and our descendants will rejoice that their ancestors did not live in vain. For the present you will need the sympathy of the people and I may be the subject of their sport and condemnation. I am old and afflicted and must soon go away. When I am gone my contemporaries who linger on this side of Time's river will wonder how I should have dropped from their memory for more than forty years and thus unexpectedly reappear as "O. B."