

Miss Dana



THE CRUTCH.

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THE CRUTCH,

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Youth and Age.

In the happy days of yore,
That will come to us no more,
When youth was free, and bounding as the deer;
When the rose was on the cheek,
And the laughing eyes would speak,
And the merry voice would warble sweet and clear.

Then we clambered o'er the hills;
And we waded through the rills,
Or sailed our little boat upon its tide;
Or we gathered flowers along
By the wayside, or among
The briars where the sweetest blossoms hide.

Or if in the Autumn, then
We would seek the cedar glen,
And set our traps to catch the timid hare;
Or would thresh the nut trees brown,
And would knock the apples down,
Then store them, and for winter time prepare.

And if in winter, O,
How we liked the falling snow,
To fight at snow-ball in a battle grand;
And of sleighing we were fond,
But the frozen, glassy pond
Was where we loitered—all our truant band.

But those happy days have gone;
Years have passed by, one by one,
The picture of them almost faded now;
And slow age is coming on—
Age on time's broad pinions borne,
That soon throws furrows on the youthful brow.

Glossy locks are growing gray,
And deep wrinkles thickly lay
On the face that once was beautifully fair;
And the eyes their fire have lost,
But the cheek is faded most,
And the voice no more rings with its evening air.

And the step is no more gay,
But the tottering limbs give way,
And feebleness now clothes the withering frame;
And the mem'ry's growing less,
So that we can scarcely guess
What has passed, or our nearest neighbor name.

But the time is coming soon,
It may be a happy boon,
When we shall lay us in the graveyard near;
But of all, the greatest grief,
If apart from life so brief,
Is to feel so few of youth will guard our bier.

For the Crutch. Military Tactics.

The "CRUTCH" is a creature of the terrible Civil War in which we are now engaged. It is read and supported mainly by soldiers, and is conducted (very successfully we may observe, parenthetically) in their interest and for their benefit. Among its readers are some, doubtless, who have studied critically the art of war. These know well, to what great captains we moderns are indebted for our theory and practice of this cruel art. But there are many others who have not investigated this matter, and to those we address the few considerations presented in this article.

FREDERICK I, of Prussia, known as FREDERICK the GREAT is reputed the inventor of modern military tactics.— Since his day, though somewhat modified and improved they have undergone slight changes compared with those of which they were the direct result. He understood full well the tactics of the ancients, as well as those of his contemporaries. He saw the defects of the system adopted by the latter, and was not slow in turning them to his own advantage. Hence the great victories which won for him the reputation of being the foremost captain of his age. FREDERICK derived many of his ideas of military discipline and efficiency from his father, FREDERICK WILLIAM, than whom none could be a stricter disciplinarian. He (the son) drilled his troops with a constancy, an untiring diligence, which if imitated in our own vast armies, would render them absolutely invincible. His infantry were at once the admiration and the terror of friend and foe alike. In the first battle of the first Silesian war his troops showed in a notable manner the effects of the severe discipline to which they had been subjected. On one of the wings of his army were posted a few battalions of infantry, interposed between two bodies of cavalry, to eke out the inadequate force of this latter arm which was at his disposal. In the first charge, the Austrian cavalry at that time the best in the world, utterly routed his own horse, and by turning his flank would have decided the fortunes of the day against him, had it not been for those few infantry battalions. Amid all the chaos of ruin and carnage which surrounded them, they stood firm as a rock, absolutely immovable. Against their adamant sides the Austrians dashed, like angry waves of the sea, with fearful impetuosity, only to be hurled back crippled and disheartened. They had never been under fire before, and yet twenty long years of earnest drilling had given them the stability of veterans. Never was there a greater triumph of discipline, never a more resolute stand made against such overwhelming odds. The relation of this single incident will have been in vain, if it does not tend to show the vital importance, the supreme necessity, of mere drill. True, this is often a dull, tiresome routine to the soldier, a drudgery which he would gladly dispense with, at least for the most part, and yet without it there can be no such thing as efficiency, even under the most favorable circumstances. In its absence courage avails but little, for in modern tactics there is comparatively little scope for the display of individual prowess. Battles are decided by the movements of organized masses of men, mere human machines, and unless the component parts, the individual soldiers, are properly drilled and disciplined, success cannot be attained, and all the direful consequences of defeat must be expected and endured.

For the Crutch. Mrs. Elisabeth B. Browning.

We have been reading lately the poetical works of Mrs. ELISABETH BARRETT BROWNING, and with the same feelings of delight, that we had, when we read them many years ago. No female writer that we have ever known, possesses more vigor and nobleness of conception, more depth of spiritual experience, and commands more classic allusions than does Mrs. BROWNING. In the first quality she especially excels, and most wonderfully, for usually it is a quality that female writers do not possess. They do not grasp a subject with simple energy, or treat it with decision of truth. Their writings are generally remarkable for delicacy of feeling and grace. Mrs. B. has, what may be called a true woman's heart, and in delicacy of perception may vie with any of her sex. Most women are apt to pay excessive attention to the slight tokens, to the little things of life, and thus, in conduct and writing, they tend to weary us by a morbid sentimentalism. From this fault Mrs. B. is wholly free. Personal feeling is in its place, enlightened by reason, ennobled by imagination. The earth is no despised resting place for the feet, the heaven bends wide above, rich in starry hopes, and the air flows around exhilarating and free. The calm conviction expressed by Mrs. B., in her sonnets, come with poetic force, because she was also capable of writing "The last Bower," "Loved Once," "Bertha in the Lane."

In the "Drama of Exile," where she arrives at a Miltonic flight, or Dantesque grasp—not in any spirit of rivalry or imitation, but because she is really possessed of a similar mental scope—her success is far below what we find in the persons of feeling and experience, for she has the vision of a great poet, but little in proportion of his plastic power. She is at home in the Universe; she sees its laws, she sympathizes with its motions—she has the imagination all compact, and like MILTON she sees the angelic hosts in real presence. Like DANTE, she hears the spherical concords, and shares the planetary motions.

We compare her with those great poets, though we have read her preface, and see how sincerely she depreciates any such comparison, not merely because her theme is the same as theirs, but because her field of vision and nobleness of conception are such, that we cannot forbear trying her by the same high standard to see what she lacks. Our favorite above anything we have read of hers, is the "Rhyme of the Duchess May," equally admirable in thought and execution, in poetic meaning and romantic grace. Most of her poems have great originality in the thought and the motive powers. It is these we suppose that have made "The Brown Rosarie" so popular. It does not please us so well as many others, but still it is full of beauty, delicacy and grace. To our lady friends in the Hospital, who have displayed so much talent, and have conducted so ably the "Knapsack," we respectfully recommend Mrs. BROWNING to their leisure moments.

What is the difference between a volunteer who shoots wide of the target, and a brute of a husband who blackens his wife's eye? The one misses his mark, and the other marks his missis.

A movement is on foot in Philadelphia, to establish an "invalid corps" of teachers, in which provision is to be made for old and faithful teachers.