

## THE CRUTCH.

Charles N. Burnham, Publisher.

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1864.

### Something Sanitary.

The statistics of all great armies during their first campaign, prove that more die by disease than by the bullet. This fact is familiar to every general reader. It was so in our own army to an appalling extent during the first year of the war. New troops fell sick by thousands; by-way, and new-made cemeteries, received many, and our Hospitals were filled to repletion, even under the best, then existing, sanitary regulations. But in our army, as the men became acclimated, and inured to the fatigues of marching, or the rough duties, and exposure of camp, or picket life, a great change took place. And in addition to being more accustomed to the soldiers routine, the army was better provided for; better protected, better clothed, better fed, and those things, of a hygienic nature, which relate to the general health of the soldier, were better known, and better applied—in a word, the sanitary conditions, necessary to keep a large army in a state of health, and in good fighting order, were, decidedly more perfect, and satisfactory in their adaptation; and we find now, instead of the great number of large Hospitals in every direction filled with patients, with every form of disease; that many have been closed, or discontinued; and those continued are confined to certain localities; and that the services of a large number of medical officers are not required now, who were in the field, or in Hospitals two years ago. The sanitary condition of our armies now, is more perfect than it has ever been, and probably as much so as any army that ever entered the field. This sanitary condition extends to the whole army, whether in camp, or in Hospitals, and it extends to the rebel prisoners in our hands, as well as to our own men. We hear of no such wholesale mortality in their midst, as the record shows of our men in rebel prisons, and on Belle Island. When we return rebel prisoners, they are in very different plight from our men returned to us. The rebels, in most instances, are in fighting order, and nearly fit for the field; ours, only fit for the Hospital, or the cemetery, or, if by good nursing, and constant watching, they are able to walk again, it is not for months that they are incapacitated to perform the duties of a soldier again.—Indeed very few of them who arrive from the southern prisons ever return to the army, but are kept in Hospitals, in many cases, till the expiration of their time, as "Invalids," or if sent to duty, not to the duty of a perfect soldier; or if discharged, return home to eke out a miserable existence, either as subjects of pity, or charity, or a charge on indigent parents, illy able to support them, or to bear the shock of their loss.

Viewing the two classes of prisoners in this light, and their condition as the standard, there must be a great difference, or disparity, between the sanitary regulations of the two armies. If our army is in a healthy condition, and we apply the same means to give health even to our enemies, who are also in a healthy condition; if the same rule is applied by the rebels, our men in their hands being deplorably unhealthy, their army must be in a deplorable condition also. This is a fair way to judge if we give the subject so charitable a construction. But whatever the fault may be, when we consider the conditions, which are self-evident, that surround our men at the south, we cannot wonder at the sickly sight that meets our eye at the arrival of every flag of truce boat from City Point. We cannot avoid accepting the account of these things as true. If we had heard from only one, or two, or fifteen, or twenty, or one hundred or two hundred, we might have some doubts; we might think these a few dissatisfied individuals, who would be dissatisfied anywhere or under any circumstances; and it is possible to think they brought all their illness, and wretchedness on themselves, by their own acts; we might consider their poverty and stories of hunger due to that singular trafficking genius that Americans possess, as it is possible for them to have disposed of all their food, and clothing, and used the proceeds in some other way, in some other speculation—

these things are possible. But when we hear the story repeated by every individual, officers, and men, from every boat, and this for three years, when we hear by every letter, and even from the unblushing rebel prints; we cannot for a moment doubt the correctness of a single letter of the story, and if we believe the story of their surroundings, we must believe the story of their sufferings, and mortality. We need not, however, take mere say-so. The facts are too plain to deceive us, if such a paradox can be admitted, we are witnesses of the result and we can without much difficulty trace it back to the cause. The causes of disease are many, but, plainly given, and it does not take an aetiologist always to discover them. Common sense is all that is required. "Whatever is capable of deranging any one of the functions, or any part of the structure of the body, whether it be a form of matter, or merely a quality, condition, or action, is entitled to be ranked among the causes of disease." Our soldiers as prisoners in the hands of the rebels, suffer all the depressing effects of cold, or the morbid action of the vicissitudes of temperature, from improper clothing, and protection; influences of hunger, or the want of wholesome nourishment, or the baneful result of bad food; from the want of cleanliness, and from overcrowding. These influences, qualities, conditions, actions, continuing, either death is the result, or they are returned to us as we find them. We may know how many are returned to us, but we will never know how many have been returned to mother earth, nor the place that has received them.

Of course we do not know exactly what sanitary condition the rebel army is in, it may be wretched in the extreme, but we are disposed to believe that they do not extend the same courtesy, the same means to maintain their prisoners in a state of health that they do to their own men. And yet we think it would be policy to do so. A health-police is as necessary to a city, or a region, as water or bread. It is from such places as Belle Island and Libby Prison, the most loathsome epidemics, scourges, emanate—those pestilences that destroy even nations, and it is well for them to see that while they are being destroyed by the sword, they do not have added to such destruction, pestilence, whose attending angel spares none. Devastating epidemics in the South, have occurred even within the recollection of some of us, and if so in the times of peace, when more time was given to conditions of health, and no accumulation of causes occurred to give it increased energy, how must it be under the present circumstances, with all necessary concentration of causes to fulfill a mission of destruction. We are rather surprised that the rebel authorities do not view the subject in this light. It is worthy of such consideration, and ought to have prompt action. We hope we need fear no such results for ourselves. We believe everything is done to prevent it. Under such a sanitary corps as we have, we believe such a thing would be impossible, *per se*. We believe, in addition to our armies, the whole territory of all the loyal States, is better policed, and is in a healthier state than ever before. If we have an epidemic it will come from abroad, or be wafted over from our enemies in the South.

For the Crutch.

### A la Hiawatha.

Happy, happy, thrice be happy, that which teaches to remember, scenes of other days, outnumbered by the sands upon the seashore. When in youthful gladness, tempered by the myrtle, joyous groupings, childhood taught us were endearing—we took part, and took our partners, in the merry romps of play-time; or in rambles o'er the hill-tops, with our baskets laden over—rambles when we gathered flowers, growing wild from foot to summit; and our wilder growing laughter echoed through the woods, and valleys; laughter from the heart of childhood, than the air, was clearer, lighter. When the little village party, or the larger ones of city, filled our minds from night 'till morning, filled our dreams, our waking moments; took our appetites; and banished, thoughts of school time, thoughts of lessons; all other thoughts than those more pleasing—what to wear, and who should be there; wondering if we'd look the sweetest; if our dress, or habit richer,

gayer, plainer, costlier, cheaper, would not take the palms, the prizes, or ourselves be taken rather, by the very lump or piece-meal, by the little belles or beaux there. And when all this over, how then, would the gossipings fly round; our names coupled with the many, how we acted, how it ended. Happy is it to remember all these brighter scenes of childhood; and of youth, when it but lingers in the waiting lap of manhood, when our childish things are laid by, and more serious, sober, growing, wait for nobler themes of action, for the grandeur of the coming, of the hopes that we have cherished, of the parts in the arena, we shall take and what accomplish. But this happier time has risen, come upon us ere we knew it—this that looked so in the distance, and when young we scarce expected—scarcely dared to count the years on, lest some mishap should o'ertake us. For we thought that man was different, childhood was a separate being, childhood made for childhood only, man was made the same for manhood, and there never could be union, one could never be the other. But 'tis so and time has rolled by, and as earth from flowers shrieking, or the bright stars beckoning upwards, we were left far on the bright strands, where receding wavelets left us, and as time shall still go backwards, we shall further still be going—we shall still be firmer manhood. This far time has come then fully; noblest time with noblest aimings; when each one shall act for each one, and his doings shall be written, written by his own deep foot-prints; written by his words, demeanor; works of whatever nature are they, whether works all glory bearing, pointing to the times hereafter, when his name shall live in story, when his time shall be no longer; or of works of love, and kindness, carrying blessings where he enters, cheering hearts of deepest sorrow—friend of friends, and of affliction; or that closer, balmy loving—love that ever joins two beings, love of loves—that leads to duty—pure as light, and lasting ever; love that like a pebble dropping, in the clear lake silver shining, makes its ripples, rolling wider, reach the furthest social bound'ries. And these times are happy truly, or may happy be if need be, for it much depends on which way, we shall travel, we shall journey, from the starting point we stand on. We have passed from out the thresheld, on the sloping lawn before us, where are many roads diverging; and if happy we continue, or if to be more happy yearning, we should surely take the right path; pathway though not strewn with roses, yet may happy all the way be, if our object makes us happy—two can safer go than one can.

Tyro.

The chief amusement of Frederick the Great was playing on the flute, on which he performed very well for an amateur, though compared with the professional performers, he necessarily made rather an awkward figure. Frederick, who was afraid of nothing else, was so much afraid of failure in his flute playing, that, whenever he had a new piece of music, he shut himself up in his closet some hours beforehand, to practice it; and although no one was permitted to be present at those concerts except a few select friends, he was always observed to be remarkably nervous at the commencement. He had a fine collection of flutes, all made by the same man, and for which he paid one hundred ducats apiece. He had an attendant whose sole office was to keep those flutes in order. During the war when his finances were reduced to so low an ebb that he paid bad coin to every one, he took care that his flute maker was paid in good coin—lest for bad money he should give him bad flutes.

Handel not only continued to perform in public after he was afflicted with blindness, but to compose in private. The duet and chorus in Judas Maccabæus, "Sion now his head shall rise," were dictated to Mr. Smith by Handel after the total privation of sight. Handel not only exhibited great intellectual ability in the composition of his duets and choruses, but manifested his power of invention, in extemporaneous flights of fancy, to be as rich and rapid a week before his decease as they had been for many years. Subsequent to his privation of sight, he was always much disturbed and agitated, whenever the affecting air in Samson, "Total Eclipse" was performed. The last orations at which he attended and performed was on the 6th of April, and he expired on Friday, the 13th, 1759.