



THE CRUTCH.

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THE CRUTCH,

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April 20, 1864.

BY PRIVATE MILES O'REILLY.

Three years ago to-day

We raised our hands to Heaven,
And on the rolls of muster
Our names were thirty-seven;
There were just a thousand bayonets,
And the swords were thirty-seven,
As we took the oath of service,
With our right hands raised to Heaven.

Oh, 'twas a gallant day,
In memory still adored,
That day of our sun-bright nuptials
With the musket and the sword!
Shrill rang the fires, the bugles blared,
And beneath a cloudless heaven
Twinkled a thousand bayonets,
And the swords were thirty-seven.

Of the thousand stalwart bayonets,
Two hundred march to-day;
Hundreds lie in Virginia swamps,
And hundreds in Maryland clay;
And other hundreds, less happy, drag
Their shattered limbs around,
And envy the deep, long, blessed sleep
Of the battle-field's holy ground.

For the swords—one night, a week ago,
The remnant, just eleven,
Gathered around a banquet board,
With seats for thirty seven;
There were two limped in on crutches,
And two had each but a hand
To pour the wine and raise the cup
As we toasted "Our flag and land!"

And the room seemed filled with whispers
As we look at the vacant seats,
And, with choking throats, we pushed aside
The rich and untasted meats;
Then in silence we brimmed our glasses,
As we rose up—just eleven—
And bowed as we drank to the loved and the dead
Who had made us thirty-seven!—*Harper's Weekly.*

Nightfall.

The wind has gone down with set of the sun,
And left a lone cloud hanging dusky and still
Athwart the pale blue, where the tremulous stars
Are waiting to shine over meadow and hill.
They come flocking out on the soft dewy air,
Till thro' the wide heavens with their pulses of light;
The cloud stirs its folds and is tralling away,
Through fringes revealing the glitter of night.

For the Crutch.

The Hero of Chickamauga.

It is not my purpose to speak of ROSECRANS, who allowed his army to be surprised on the banks of Chickamauga, (the river of death,) and then rallying his astonished legions, hurled back for two days the outnumbering hosts of the enemy, till nearly forty thousand men, friend and foe, lay dead and dying on one of the bloodiest battle-fields of the war; nor will I speak of the noble THOMAS, who gallantly held the vital centre against every odds, and thus the road to Chattanooga, over which our army must pass to reach a place of safety. I will mention no officer as the hero of Chickamauga, although I saw an hundred deeds performed that might make our leaders immortal. My hero wore no shoulder-straps, nor in the calm, smooth face of the boy of sixteen, would you look to find the daring spirit he was. It was the morning of Sept. 9th that the event occurred that made Harry Hall a hero to me. I remember it well. It was a beautiful morning; far as the eye could see, through the woods and over the swelling hills, the rising sun shone on long rows of glittering bayonets, drawn up in deadly opposing lines. On either side, loud tones of command could be heard; the artillery was galloping to chosen positions, and dense masses of troops marching in the rear to strengthen the weak places. In the long wall of steel not a gun was fired, while the two opposing armies were preparing for the work of death. Now and then the morning breeze would waft the music from either side across the field, and our hearts throbbed with new life as the noble air of the "Star Spangled Banner" was borne to our ears, or burned with indignation as the savage yells of the enemy came blended with the inevitable "Dixie," making terrible discords.

The work of the day, opened with the rattling, scattering fire of the skirmishers in front,—then the cannon from right, left and centre, shook the earth with their terrible throes, and musketry roared so continuously and powerfully, that no interval of rest could be discovered in the firing. On every side death was reaping the harvest; many hearts turned cold in his grasp by hundreds that morning! The long lines swayed to and fro as the tide of battle ebbed and flowed. Victory seemed easy, and the manly cheer of the Northmen was heard above every other sound, as the rebel charges were repelled by the persistent advances of our men.

The battle stood thus until ten o'clock A. M., when a rebel battery obtaining a good position, raked the ground on which was posted two Kentucky and a Michigan regiment. The order was given to charge, and the line advanced shoulder to shoulder, and with ringing cheers and leveled bayonets they neared the rebel position. At this juncture, the father of Harry Hall, who stood by his side, fell dead. The noble boy stooped and gazed for a moment into the lifeless face, dearer than life to him; the line had left him, but was driven back by the rebels, and although urged by his comrades to fall back with them, he steadily refused, and standing over the body of his father with pale face and compressed lip, he continued to load, and fire on the enemy between two powerful opposing fires for fifteen minutes afterward, when a ball from our own ranks stilled the beatings of that gallant young heart, and Harry laid

motionless by the side of his father! Side by side we placed them in one grave, beneath an oak fretted by bullets, in the valley of the Chickamauga. Many a manly heart was stilled that day, but none braver than his.

The spring flowers bloom on his grave in that quiet valley; only the note of the singing bird is heard where once the cannon boomed. Far, far to the South the battles have receded, and the day is nearing when the glorious object for which my hero died, will be achieved.

A. K. C.

Naval School Hospital, Md., June, 1864.

For the Crutch.

Education.

If one fact more than another attracts the attention of the reflective observer in modern times, it is that of the increasing value and infinite importance of a good education. Man is said to be a moral, social and intelligent, as well as an animal being, but this, in the absence of refined cultivation, may properly seem but little else than a self-flattering, ethnological speculation.— True it is that education multiplies the sources of every enjoyment, and becomes almost indispensable to the accomplishment of every material success.

It has come to be the valiant rival of rank, wealth, caste and power. The want of it leaves us helpless slaves to the crafty designs of deceitful men, and dupes of the superstitious machinations and capricious fancies of Jesuitical priests and Utopian minds. In all countries, and in none more than in ours, mental faithfulness sooner or later, finds its sure reward. Look about you and see who are the real leaders in every department of life. Is it those who have dreamed away the golden hours of youth or dissipated the crowning glories of manly vigor and mental strength? I am sure you will answer, no! Is it the ease-loving, duty-shirking knaves who cheat society out of their living, and then still unblushingly demand their dues? With greater emphasis again, I hear you answer, "no!" Do you not see education honored in every sphere? Do you not find the highest tribute paid to mental toil? And do you not feel that mental faithfulness is a source of happiness that secures a double reward? I welcome an honest, hearty yes.

Need details be furnished, or illustrations be cited to awaken an interest in so important a theme? I trust not. Let your own minds indulge the thought and multiply innumerable the instances of the appreciation of educated merit, and no one will have long to wait for the spirit of emulation, when we recall the immortal names of Everett, Irving, Bancroft, Agassiz, Hugo and Humboldt, or the illustrious heroes of Yorktown, New Orleans, Vicksburg, Waterloo and Austerlitz.— Nor need any long wait the coming of some befitting occasion to educate themselves in the acceptance of some opportunity or the performance of some duty.—*MERRILL.*

JOSH BILLINGS' PHILOSOPHY.—Josh Billings, the philanthropist, begs leave to state:

That onions are good for a bad breath.
That Rockawa clams are an opening for enny young man.
That ships are kalled she because tha always keep a man on the lookout.
That boys aint apt to turn out well that don't get up till 10 o'clock in the morning.