

THE CRUTCH.

Alonzo Colby, - - - - - Publisher.

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

"Battle Summer."

The history of the war abounds in illustrations of unreasonable expectation and depression. There are people who will not be satisfied with moderate successes, they cannot see that a steady gain is full of prestige, that the result will be favorable; the pulse is kept up to fever heat until a blow is struck for Richmond, and then, if it does not happen to strike the vital spot, there is a reaction, and the poor enthusiast breaks into a loud wail, or indulges in a season of discontent and gloom. We are glad to believe that this class is small, and that as the tide of success ebbs and flows, the people generally, are waiting with patience, the destiny,—waiting on the toil endurance, skill and courage, that make armies defiant. This may properly be called the "battle summer," since our enemy stands invaded at all points, and every hour is laden with rumors that tell of action, or preparation for action, fierce and desperate.

Sanguine gentlemen tell us, this summer will close up the fighting, (grave news for army contractors, who think there is no doubt but it will all come out right, since they feel so well satisfied with themselves and the world generally.) The bilious gentleman who is not in the army, and does not affiliate with "perheads," predicts, that at the end of seven years we shall find ourselves conquerors, just in time to war with the English, who are itching to fight with us. The high-toned hopeful firm patriot, says little, but trusts in the power of principles, and the force of battalions; he has counted the cost of the contest; knows it involves life, honor, home, everything that he holds dear; no sophistry can swerve him from the ground he stands on, and the belief that he is right; he trusts in the God of battles, is calm serene, and confident.

But "battle summer" comes to each and all; and fearful it is, when the heavens are brass, and we think of impoverished granaries, dry springs, and the panting wounded, cast down parched and hot in the wake of a glowing sun, breathing an atmosphere through which a shower of rain had not sifted for weeks. Magnificent as the seas with its billows and breakers, its cool waves laving the shore, it seems shorn of its beneficent power, while the west wind creeps over the land with its hot breath, and drinks up mist, fog, snowy cataract, and trickling brook, causing the golden headed grain to bow with sad grace, and the oriole to poise his wings of flame in green thickets, instead of the social haunts he loved to dwell in. Let us hope this fair land may not be overhung with the black shadow of drought, but that its millions of acres may blossom in bright vases of perpetual green, that the "battle summer" may have its standard of golden value, and its eventful months be crowned with plenty.

The heated term of last week, was extremely trying to the strength, fortitude and endurance of the sick and wounded, lying in this Hospital; causing us to wish we had the "gift of tongues," that we might declare abroad how beneficent has been the work done here, by the Christian and Sanitary Commissions. Stimulants embracing every luxury in the way of food, and cooling drink, have been furnished generously, giving the languid and weary, comparative comfort, after long and agonizing exposure, and transforming many a sinking spirit into a hopeful condition.

Many thanks are due to Mr. MURPHY, for distributing ice-cream and cordials, with such a liberal hand, among the suffering, and whose prompt assistance, on all needful occasions, was so freely proffered. While these ministries helped to lighten the excessive labors devolving on our Surgeons, they also lighted the sad work with such gleams of devotion and disinterestedness, as will ever be remembered by our grateful soldiers.

Mankind are always happier for having been unhappy; the memory of happiness is happiness.

Letter to a Soldier.

BROOKFIELD, MASS. }
June 1st, 1864. }

My Soldier Friend.—If I could come to help you, and all the brave boys about you, and bear your suffering, I should like it much better than staying here, so many miles away, and sending you only a few, poor, useless words, that wont cook you a nice supper, or bring you fresh water, or open the windows for you, and fan the hot air, or take care of an ugly wound, or make you in any way more comfortable. But I cannot be a nurse. I might as well shoulder a knapsack and go into the ranks to-morrow; one is no more impossible than the other. You don't want people coming to take care of you, who would have to be taken care of themselves in a week, and who don't know anything about sickness, and would leave you a good deal more uncomfortable than they found you. I think such are wiser to stay at home, don't you? But we can think of you, and work for you, and pray for you, and that we do, and we feel more sympathy for you too, than you know. Perhaps you are saying to yourself that it is all nonsense for me to talk so. What do I know about all the painful days and sleepless nights, and long, long months of suffering that you have to bear? Yes: What do I know? nothing. But that doesn't prevent my feeling for you. I can be sorry for you—very sorry, just the same, can't I? That is about all I can do. It wouldn't help you much for me to preach about being patient, and laughing at the pain, and thinking it's for the country, and all that, which you have heard and tried many times already. I know it's for the country, but I know it is pain for all that, and hard to bear, and I know you find it so, without being unreasonably about it, either. It is because I know it, that I should like, if I could, to say or do something, to make it easier. Now there is one thing I want to say, though I am afraid it will make you think my letter is very sober. Did you ever feel inclined to grumble at this hard, hospital life, and to complain that it should have fallen on you to bear, when so many others are allowed to be on the field, or at home? I shouldn't wonder if you had; I am afraid I should, if I were in your place. But there was one thought that came to me, about it, which I wondered if you ever had, and then decided to ask you. Did you ever stop to think that God deals with us, just as a good General does with his men? Should you put any confidence in a commander who told you just what he meant to do with you, and why he did it; who let his plans be known all through the ranks almost as soon as he knew them himself? Don't you expect a good officer to keep his reasons to himself, and don't you trust the care of marches and battles and winter-quarters to him, and obey his orders without once thinking of setting up your own way, and telling him it is much the best one?—What should you think of a soldier who went into his General's tent with a map, and a good scolding, and told him the army was on the wrong road, that they ought to turn right about his way, or they would surely be cut to pieces? Now do you know, that we do something very much like this, when we complain of what God is doing with us? How do we know but what it is necessary to His great plan for us, that we shouldn't know why He does as He does with us in this world. Supposing He should tell you why He has taken away your musket and kept you idle and in pain, how can you tell but what it would do you a great deal of harm to know? Perhaps He couldn't make you understand His reasons if He did tell you. Whatever they may be, I am sure they are good ones. I don't believe He would give you all this suffering for any other reason than because He loved you, and wanted you to love him. That would help you to be brave and strong, through these hard days. I tell you there are no such soldiers in the army, as the men who are His soldiers. Theirs is the finest courage after all. Perhaps you think so too. I hope so. I hope you are not going to throw down this letter and say "Pshaw! that's preaching!" I don't mean to "preach," but I know that there is nothing which would help you bear your pain, however great it may be, like an honest, manly trust in God—such a trust would make you love Him, and pray to Him. You think

this over to yourself, and see if I am not right. Now, my brave friend, I hope you do not think this letter quite a sermon; I wanted to say the thing which would help you most, and I felt sure that thoughts of this love that will never forsake you, would do that. I think I can understand a soldier's wants, and feel with his sufferings, and know the right things to ask for him in prayer, because I had a dear friend in the army who loved his country just as you do. He was in the army, but now he is "mustered out" by the great Captain whom we cannot see, and has gone to a heavenly home where am sure he remembers all his brave fellow-soldiers, who suffer as you do. Trusting I may be able at some future time, to render you some aid more substantial than words, I remain, one of the many who remember the soldier.

For the Crutch.

New Catechism.

Ques.—To what religious sect did Eve belong?
Ans.—It is only known that she was Eve-angelical.
Ques.—What did Adam call the apple, after Eve had tasted it?
Ans.—Crab—because it led her backward.
Ques.—Did she become Eve-ill, (evil)?
Ans.—She did.
Ques.—How did she manage to light the garden?
Ans.—The serpent did beg *ile* (beguile.)
Ques.—What did our first parents find doing as much mischief as the serpent?
Ans.—Pair-er-dice. (Paradise.)
Ques.—Who got the first Caning?
Ans.—Abel.
Ques.—What did Noah excel in?
Ans.—Ark-itecture.
Ques.—If Adam had been a military man, what Corps would he have probably preferred?
Ans.—Apple-core.

Conundrums.

Why is a man who has just stepped off a pair of scales like the chairman of the Committee on the conduct of the War? Because he's Ben Wade.
What kind of a syllable is Cash? A money-syllable, (monosyllable.)

A Good 'Un.

A young man who hails from the rural districts, visited Philadelphia a few days since in pursuit of work. On arriving at the Middlesex street depot, he accosted the first man he met, with:
"I say, friend, can you tell me where I can get a job?"
"Yes," replied he, "I know of a first-rate chance; one where you can get \$400, and \$13 a month."
In ecstasies, the young man immediately replied;
"By golly, you don't say so, do you? Where is the place?"
The gentleman directed him to call at the church, corner of Central and Merrimac street, and inquire for Captain Weymouth, and he could learn all the particulars. So the young man started down Middlesex street at the rate of 2.40, with his coat tail flying in the air, bound not to miss this fine opportunity. Arriving at the church, he inquired for the captain, and wished to know if he had a job for him.
"Certainly, sir," replied the captain; "a good one."
"How long a time do you want to hire me for?"
"Three years."
"By gracious, how much do you pay?"
"Four hundred dollars down, and \$13 a month."
The young man could not stand this any longer, so he inquired:
"What is it you want me to do?"
"Oh," replied the captain, "shoulder a musket, and fight for your country."
Then came the reply, after scratching his head for a moment:
"I'll do it."
Down went his name upon the roll, and no doubt he'll make a fine soldier.
When God breaks our idols to pieces, it is not for us to put them together again.