

THE CRUTCH.

Alonzo Colby, - - - - - Publisher.

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, JULY 16, 1864.

Our Affairs;

Still unsettled. Directly on the heels of the fire-cracking Fourth, come rumors that the free soil of Pennsylvania and Maryland is again invaded by the rebels. Although war has become the shadowy background of our life, we have yet to learn to meet its emergencies everywhere, and to treat it as a thing we may find at our doors any fine morning or evening, when we have fallen hopelessly asleep over the terrible statistics of a remote battle or skirmish, detailed in the last dispatches. In this, their last struggle, the enemy seem to be almost ubiquitous; consequently it behooves us to look at war as a fine art, and to devote all our energies towards making such appliances, as may foil the deep laid schemes of a wily foe. If every man in our midst, in these times, is not true and loyal to our cause, we are in danger of betrayal, of being put to confusion, just at the moment when we require all our strength, and are counting on each individual arm, to swell the host we need. We record with pleasure the fact, that Marylanders in this vicinity are acting up to the pledge they have given to sustain the government, and keep their soil unstained by rebel triumph. While armed hosts threatened its Capital, and the wildest rumors were abroad, citizens and soldiers, joined in the cry, "to arms!" and in almost an incredible short space of time, Annapolis was a fortified city, before which the tide of rapine and disaster must roll away whenever the arrogant invader is nerved with a desperation, that will reap him ruin! No loyal American will ever forget the disgrace that attaches to the fact, if he permits an invading horde to usurp this fair land, true to its old allegiance and old flag! The few coming months will evoke that which we most wish to know, of our country's "weal or woe." Let us keep cool, and look to see a development of strength and valor, rather than confusion and imbecility, and hope that united spirit, which once put in action, can hold the armies of rebeldom, at bay.

"THE Conestoga wagoners, like the chimney-sweepers, have nearly faded from the remembrance of the oldest inhabitants. Before the time of railroads they hauled goods from Philadelphia to Pittsburg, and were a jolly, rough, hard-working set of men, jogging through life at a leisure pace, cracking their whips and their jokes as they wound their way over the hills and through the valleys. Pete Deshler was well-known as an old wagoner, and more particularly at the taverns along the road, as "a good trencher-man"—or, as Shylock would have said, "a huge feeder." So well, indeed, was his character established in that particular, that few tavern-keepers who knew him were willing to entertain him, the pay for a meal [25 cents] being altogether insufficient to compensate them for the viands he consumed. Pete had, therefore, to seek new places of refreshment from time to time. Stopping one fine Sunday morning at a substantial hostelry in the vicinity of a small town, he asked for a meal. The family were at church, and a pig of considerable size was baking in the stove. Pete being in a hurry, the pig was set before him, "in full confidence" that there would be enough of it left for the family on their return. The astonishment of the landlord may be easily imagined when, on his return, he found Pete had gone "the entire swine;" and, like Oliver Twist, was asking for more." "Landlord," said he, "have you got any more of dem there little 'ogs?"

"How do I look, Pompey," said a young dandy to his servant, as he had finished dressing himself.

"Elegant, massa; you look as bold as a lion."

"Bold as a lion, Pompey! How do you know? You never saw a lion."

"O, yes, massa, I seed one down to massa Jenks, in de stable."

"Down to Jenks', Pompey? Why, you abominable fool, Jenks hasn't got a lion; that's a jackass."

"Can't help it, massa, you look just like him."

Crying Babies.

For the Crutch.

You see them everywhere; no corner so remote that they are not found. Do you take a pleasure trip and the car to the destined spot of joy? Lo! Your ears are regaled by a sound not unfamiliar, since it strongly resembles the one you left behind, and you take it for granted (because established by fact,) that all babies will cry as long and loudly as they please.

My home used to be a place of quiet, where I found rest from the troubles found in the teacher's vocation, and school with all its cares was forgotten. But oh, the change! Children have flocked thither until the little "Auntie" is prefixed by many little invaders, to the plain but substantial name given me in years ago. Substantial? yes, give me that in everything and I will be content. Even a crying baby, with a name for which I feel a genuine respect, helps me amazingly to bear with some degree of patience their long continued crying. Do I wish to read the evening paper and get interested in the leading article, printed in large capitals to the effect, that "the Army of the Potomac" is on the move; I have scarcely read the first paragraph ere the word is brought me through petitions, which unfortunately, convey sound with astonishing distinctness, that my presence is needed immediately; of course mine, for who but myself is at leisure.

A calm succeeds the storm as it always does when its fury is spent, and I lay the sleeping child in its crib and turn to my personal matters again. I take my writing materials and proceed to work; but that is a marvelous operation to the little four-year-old, and in spite of earnest protestations to the contrary, I find myself obliged to provide pen and ink for the youngster to take his first lesson in the art, chirographical; wants supplied, I soon forget my pupil in answering some friendly missive, when a, "see dat! see dat!" calls me from work to a still greater trial. Not managing the pen with as much precision as a child of riper years, the inkstand has been suddenly upturned, and its black contents are saturating carpet and dress. I think my choice of pursuits for the hour exceeding unfortunate, but I have learned a valuable lesson, namely, to wait till night when curious little eyes shall be closed, before I perpetrate deeds of a black character, through the instrumentality of ink. Night has overtaken me at last, and I sum up the work of the day and find the credit side of the account in my favor, for I have accomplished miracles of patience, and—nothing more. I retire to rest wondering what the morrow will bring forth, but being taught that the morrow will take care of the things pertaining to it, I sleep calmly till—not morning, for dawn has not gilded the "Eastern sky" ere I am waited upon by a committee of two who inform me that "beckfast be most weddy." Me miserable! I remonstrate, but there is no remedy, I rub my eyes open; and, as I recall the words of the poet, "There are briars besetting every path." I conclude these two little disturbers of the peace are my briars.

"I do not love children?" You have guessed wrong. We always love those who love us; and anxiously as the children wait the coming of the absent one, and eagerly ask, when the whistle sounds, if Auntie is not almost there and how many hours before she will come; and when she is really among them if she will not "stay a great big while." Then for the stories of which I must always have a stock on hand, ready to deliver at the shortest notice. Oh, yes! they are troublesome, but I would not miss the caresses of those little arms. When tired I look towards them, for there is rest in the thought of the love of even the crying babies. AUNTIE.

At a public "Tea Party" recently held in one of our county towns, where "sentiments" were in order, a timid bachelor was bold enough to remind the ladies that leap year was upon them, by offering the following:

Three long years I have waited for this,
Now if you'll pop the question, I'll surely say yes.

To which the lady promptly responded as follows:

The man without courage to do his own wooing,
May do his own washing, and baking, and sewing.

The bachelor looked Despair.

The Soldier's Mail.

Home-sickness is a complaint that the world is apt to laugh at, but it kills, nevertheless. The doctors dignify it with a fine classical name—*Nostalgia*—but have no remedy for it in their repertory of drugs. It is of the soul, not of the body, and therefore there is no cure for it in the *materia medica*. Many a gallant fellow in the ranks of the Union army dies of it. The home-sick soldier says little of the hunger of the heart that is consuming him. What surgeon would sympathize with him? He can show no wound. He is simply dying to go home, but would think it very unmanly and "spooney" to say so.—Perhaps home forgets him. Perhaps the frequent mail that brings joy to his comrade is a blank—bears no letter, no precious box or parcel, superscribed with his name. Alas, much of the home-sickness in the army is occasioned by home-neglect. A gentleman writing from Chattanooga, says: "It pains me to think that more than one man has let his life slip out of a grasp too weak to hold it because his dearest friends did not send him a prescription once a week, price three cents—a letter from home. Is some poor fellow sinking at heart because you do not write to him? If there is, lay my letter down at once and write your own, and may He who sent a messenger all the way from heaven to earth with glad tidings, forgive you for deferring a hope to some soldier boy. You would not wonder at my warmth had you seen that boy waiting and waiting, as I have, for one little word from somebody. Too proud to own, and yet too sincere to quite conceal it, he tries to strangle the thought of home, and goes into the battle whence he never comes forth. Let me relate one incident: An Indiana soldier was struck in the breast at Chickamauga, and fell. The bullet's errand was about done when it reached him; it pierced coat and under clothing, and there was force enough left in it to wound, if not to kill him, but it had to work its way through a precious package of letters, indited by one heart and traced by one dear hand; that done, the bullet's power expended, there it lay asleep against the soldier's breast. Have you been making such a shield, dear lady, for somebody? Take care that it does not lack one letter of being bullet-proof. You have sons, husbands, brothers, or lovers in the army; see to it that the light of affection is sent into their camps at least once a week through the soldiers' mail."

CURIOUS PHENOMENA.—In various parts of our western country the phenomena of mirage is frequently seen. At the head of Lake Superior, sail vessels which are really thirty miles off, are seen flapping and belling about within touch. Turreted islands look heady and toppling toward the zenith. Forests seem to leap from their stems and go soaring like thistles, for the very sport of it. The Chippewas called the country the Spirit, or enchanted land. An officer writing from the Arkansas region, one hundred and forty miles from Council Grove, says: "Looking forward in the distance, one could swear that a beautiful lake, surrounded by tall trees, would soon be arrived at, where we could camp under refreshing shade, and bathe in pure and delightful water—an illusion, however, too soon dissipated, as mile after mile showed the same interminable waste, with no friendly tree to rest the eye upon; nothing but the drove of buffalo, and an occasional, antelope to break in upon the monotony of the scenery. The buffalos, when at a great distance, would seem like elephants, "looming up enormously."

INDUSTRY.—Man must have occupation, or be miserable. Toil is the price of sleep and appetite, of health and enjoyment. The very necessity which overcomes our natural sloth, is a blessing. The whole world does not contain a briar or thorn which Divine mercy could have spared. We are happier with the sterility which we can overcome by industry, than we could have been with spontaneous plenty and unbounded profusion. The body and the mind are improved by the toil that fatigues them. The toil is a thousand times rewarded by the pleasure which it bestows. Its enjoyments are peculiar. No wealth can purchase them, no indolence can taste them. They flow only from the exertions which they repay.