

THE CRUTCH.

Charles Boswell, - - - - - Publisher

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, FEB. 11, 1864

A Pleasure Trip.

We all recollect how we railled at Dickens for taking off our manners and customs so absurdly in his notes and what a rage the whole nation was in, when he persisted a long time afterward that his representations were all true, and that he would not take back a word he had written. We confess to a feeling of leniency towards Mr. Dickens, as we grow older and travel more, and are willing to allow if England can give us clean, roomy cars, good air and attentive conductors, and the Republic can not, so far the former is the most desirable ground to travel over. Not having seen much of the world of late, and not knowing exactly what to do with ourselves, we took the cars on a certain railroad the other day, and putting ourselves on our best behavior, took a seat by ourselves, and kept quiet. A furious red-hot stove hissed and smoked on our right, on our left, the wind through an open window, bore stifling fumes of tobacco and whiskey square in our direction, which made indescribable fragrances they mingled with the kerosene suspended in close proximity to our head. But we stood this very well, and thought the charm of a Republic lay in the universal independence of its people; it was cold weather; the offenders against good taste had probably fortified themselves for a long journey, and like Mr. Davis, would like to be 'let alone.' So long as they were quiet it was well enough, but they became noisy, and being of a jolly turn, others joined in the conviviality of the hour, and circling around the aforesaid stove, which never for a moment ceased to fume and sputter, having also taken 'too much' to warm it up, they began to evince symptoms of hostility towards it, by pelting it with cheese, apple-parings, and peanuts, mixed with copious libations of tobacco-juice, which altogether, made a very uncomfortable steam and odor, that set a very vicious baby, (who had been politely left to a seat alone with its nurse in a corner of the car,) plunging, kicking, and screaming in a most furious manner. The least we could do was to leave our seat; we spied one near the door, and going to it, we begged a sleepy looking man to drop an ill-favored boot from the back of it, which request he complied with so far as to transfer his foot to another open window, and we sat down contented that we had got a few paces further from the baby, and consulted the newspaper, without which no enlightened citizen or soldier is expected to travel. Being perfectly loyal to the principles of our government, we found great satisfaction in comparing our trials and perplexities with those of higher officials, and was consoling ourselves with the soothing thought that 'weary is the head that wears a crown,' when a new difficulty made wreck of all our comfortable philosophy, and set us denouncing traveling morals and manners in fresh and unmeasured terms. It is hard and unbecoming in an editor to say anything against our beloved country-women, to depreciate anybody who has inalienable rights;—but you, madame, who took the cars at E——, slammed the door behind you, demanded our seat in a sharp, wiry voice, that forbade altercation; destroyed our faith in the gentleness and goodness of your sex, and doomed us to share that fatal seat, the only empty one in the car, with the vicious baby, who would neither let us sleep, read, look out of the window, or even think, civilly. You we can never forgive! We can't speak of it now, without breaking down; it is a terrible night-mare in the memory, a 'scare' we shall never get over, while we live! After a season of discordant yells and hic-coughs, in which our eyes were threatened, our hair twisted around the purple fists of the little innocent, our only dickey ruined for life, we concluded to stand up for safety the remainder of the way;—we did it at the peril of being in everybody's way,—of being knocked down and trampled under foot, but then we could get up again, perhaps save what clothes we had left, and so we did it, consoling ourselves with

the thought of how silence and quiet once seemed, and with looking at the snow-streaked hills, and the sun shining along the valley-reaches, as we glanced at the swift landscape gliding by the window, until our journey drew to a close.

Must people leave their good manners at home when they travel? If so, we would suggest the propriety of dividing the cars pens, into where each person could be as disagreeable as she or he chose, without offending his neighbor! You, who sit comfortably at home reading the sunny-side of American travel, have very little idea of its perplexities and trials. You may look upon the above experience as an exaggeration. We wish it was.

U. S. Christian Commission.

The third report of the committee of Maryland, of the United States Christian Commission, embraces a large amount of interesting reading, calculated to quicken public interest and confidence in this admirable institution, as a means of untold grace and temporal good to all who come within the influence of its kind ministries.

Able as these reports are, they give the reader but a feeble conception of the stupendous work they represent; a work that will fill one of the brightest pages in history, when the annals of the war shall be written in full.— Knowledge and experience of its workings in this Hospital, bid us hail all its supporters as the true friends of mankind, wherever they abide.

Our Prisoners.

On Tuesday last, the Flag-of-truce steamer New York, arrived here with 1,170 paroled prisoners; among them were 8 officers. There were but one hundred hospital cases. Such as could walk went to the College Green Barracks where, we learn, they were received in a manner befitting heroes who have endured such hardships in the hands of a cruel foe, so bravely, and whose allegiance to the Old Flag, that welcomed them home, has remained unshaken through the horrors of an imprisonment worse than death.

A Dangerous Game.

Crocodiles are more numerous in the river at Packnam-Ven than in that of Chantaboun. I continually saw them throw themselves from the banks into the water; and it has frequently happened that careless fishers, or persons who have imprudently fallen asleep on the shore, have become their prey, or have afterwards died of the wounds inflicted by them. This latter has happened twice during my stay here. It is amusing, however—for one is interested in observing the habits of animals all over the world—to see the manner in which these creatures catch the apes, which sometimes take a fancy to play with them.

Close to the bank lies the crocodile, his body in the water, and only his capacious mouth above the surface ready to seize anything that may come within his reach. A troop of apes catch sight of him, seem to consult together, approach little by little, and commence their frolics, by turns actors and spectators. One of the most active or most impudent jumps from branch to branch till within a respectful distance of the crocodile, when, hanging by one claw, and with the dexterity peculiar to these animals, he advances and retires, now giving his enemy a blow with his paw, at another time only pretending to do so. The other apes, enjoying the fun, evidently wish to take part in it, but the other branches being to high, they form a sort of chain by laying hold of each other's paws, and thus swinging backwards and forwards, while any one of them who comes within reach of the crocodile, torments him to the best of his ability.

Sometimes the terrible jaws suddenly close, but not upon the audacious ape, who just escapes; then there are cries of exultation for the tormentors, who gambol about joyfully. Occasionally, however, the claw is entrapped, and the victim dragged with the rapidity of lightning beneath the water, when the whole troop disperses, groaning and shrieking. The misadventure does not however, prevent their re-commencing the game a few days afterwards.

Memorable Dates.

An old man was sitting in his little room one Sunday afternoon. His Bible lay before him, opened at the blank sheets before the title-page, on which were written some dates of days and years. He was so absorbed in the contemplation of these that he did not notice the entrance of a neighbor, who asked him what he could find to read with such intense interest, where he saw only a few dates? The old man replied: 'Neighbor, could you but know what these dates stand for, you would not be any longer surprised.' These were the dates of all the principal occurrences of the old man's life. He pointed with his finger to one after the other. 'Here is the date of my birth, of my baptism, of my enlistment, my marriage,' and so on till at last he came to the date of the day when the Lord had effectually called him, and since which he had known himself to be the child of God, and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. And then he exclaimed, 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' and sang with tears and in a trembling voice:

'Could I a thousand voices raise,
A thousand tongues employ,
My heart would pour itself in praise,
In thankfulness and joy,
And still its happy song should be,
Hear what the Lord has done for me.'

How the Devil lost.

The following is too good to be lost. We clip it from an exchange paper, and respectfully call the attention to it of certain persons who feel disposed to spread in the newspaper line:

A young man, who ardently desired wealth, was visited by his Satanic majesty, who tempted him to promise his soul for eternity if he could be supplied on this earth with all the money he could use. The bargain was concluded: the devil was to supply the money, and was at last to have the soul, unless the young man could spend more money than the devil could furnish. Years passed away; the man married, was extravagant in his living, built palaces, speculated widely, lost and gave away fortunes, and yet his coffers were always full. He turned politician, and bribed his way to power and fame, without reducing his 'pile' of gold. He became a 'fillibuster,' and fitted out ships and armies, but his banker honored all his drafts. He went to St. Paul to live, and paid the usual rates of interest for all the money he could borrow; but though the devil made wry faces when he came to pay the bills, yet they were all paid. One expedient after another failed; the devil counted the time, only two years, that he must wait for the soul, and mocked the efforts of the despairing man. One more trial was resolved upon,—the man started a newspaper! The devil growled at the bill at the end of the first quarter, was savage in six months, melancholy in nine, and broke—'dead broke'—at the end of the year. So the newspaper went down, but the soul was saved.

The following parties are respectfully requested not to attend either of the series of Popular Lectures to be given in the city the ensuing winter:

The man with creaking boots.

The woman with the cough.

The man who sees a friend and desires to sit beside him.

The man who insists upon procuring a better seat for the ladies under his escort.

The man who cannot keep tobacco out of his mouth.

The woman who cannot refrain from audible criticisms on the looks of the lecturer.

The man who eats peanuts.

The man who laughs in the wrong place.

The man who is invariably ten minutes late.

The young woman who goes expressly to see the fashions.

The man who invariably has to go out five minutes before the termination of the lecture.

The man who continues to read his evening paper during the entire lecture.

No truly Christian man can be truly an indolent man.