



# THE CRUTCH.

VOL. II. U. S. A. GENERAL HOSPITAL, DIV. NO. 1, ANNAPOLIS, MD., SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 1865. NO. 68.

## THE CRUTCH,

A Weekly News and Literary Paper devoted to the interest of the Soldier, Published on

SATURDAY OF EACH WEEK,

At the U. S. A. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, Annapolis, Md.

### TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:

One Copy, one year, - - - - \$2 00.  
Single Copy, - - - - - 5 Cts.  
Any one taking 5 copies 3 months will be entitled to an advertisement of 15 lines for one insertion.

### TERMS FOR ADVERTISEMENTS:

For 1 square of 8 lines or less, 1 insertion, - - 75 Cts.  
For 1 square of 8 lines or less, 3 insertions, - - \$2 00.  
Yearly advertisements and cards at fair rates.

*From Harper's Magazine for March.*

### Driving home the Cows.

Out of the clover and blue-eyed grass,  
He turned them into the river-lane;  
One after another he let them pass,  
Then fastened the meadow bars again.

Under the willow and over the hill,  
He patiently followed their sober pace;  
The merry whistle for once was still,  
And something shadowed the sunny face.

Only a boy! and his father had said  
He never could let his youngest go;  
Two already were lying dead,  
Under the feet of the trampling foe.

But after the evening work was done,  
And the frogs were loud in the meadow-swamp,  
Over his shoulder he slung his gun,  
And stealthily followed the foot-path damp.

Across the clover and through the wheat,  
With resolute heart and purpose grim,  
Though cold was the dew on his hurrying feet,  
And the blind bats flitting started him.

Thrice since then had the lanes been white,  
And the orchards sweet with apple-bloom,  
And now, when the cows came back at night,  
The feeble father drove them home.

For news had come to the lonely farm,  
That three were lying where two had lain;  
And the old man's tremulous, palsied arm  
Could never lean on a son's again.

The summer day grew cold and late,  
He went for the cows when the work was done;  
But down the lane, as he opened the gate,  
He saw them coming one by one.

Brindle, Ebony, Speckle and Bess,  
Shaking their horns in the evening wind;  
Cropping the butter-cups out of the grass—  
But who was it following close behind?

Loosely swung in the idle air  
The empty sleeve of army blue,  
And worn and pale, from the crisping hair,  
Looked out a face that the father knew.

For Southern prisons will sometimes yawn,  
And yield their dead into life again;  
And the day that comes with a cloudy dawn  
In golden glory at last may wane.

The great tears sprang to their meeting eyes;  
For the heart must speak when the lips are dumb,  
And under the silent evening skies  
Together they followed the cattle home.

## A Touching Sketch.

A SCENE IN NEW YORK.

A traveler from abroad, passing through Broadway during one of our late severe snow-storms, was accosted by a female child, apparently about seven years old, who supplicated charity. Accustomed to such appeals in European capitals, he was about to pass unheeding, when something in the little mendicant's appeal arrested his interest. 'Please, sir,' she murmured, 'I never begged before.' Scrutinizing the speaker's appearance the gentleman saw that her features were delicate, her garments neat, though thin, and her small feet visible through rent slippers. She looked up at him timidly, with one cold hand extended, the other holding together, by its corners, a tattered shawl, on which snow-flakes were gathering thickly. Our traveler addressed her kindly, asking a few questions, and then, taking the child's hand, turned with her out of Broadway down one of the intersecting streets. A short walk brought them to the young wayfarer's home, which was entered by a dingy passage-way, leading through one high building to another in the rear, separated by a yard about eleven feet wide. This yard had at some period been laid with brick, but was now covered everywhere with muddy ooze emitting a foul odor. The space between front and rear houses being so contracted, and their brick walls very high, there was only a sort of snowy twilight in the area; but our visitor's conductress, accustomed to such obscurity, guided him safely into the back dwelling, and up its crooked staircase to the third floor. Then, groping for a door in the dark wall, she opened it, and ushered her companion into the apartment beyond.

We are not writing fiction, and shall not linger in description. Truth to say, there was little to describe in this room. On the hearth smoldered a few cinders; on the floor was a heap of straw, only half confined by torn sacking. A chair without any back, an old pine table, whereon were a few bits of crockery, a tin saucepan, and a wooden bucket, comprised the furniture. But there was another object glittering in the light admitted by a single window, which at once attracted the visitor's glance. It was an officer's sabre, with silver-gilt hilt and richly-chased scabbard; such as might draw one's gaze to some plate glass Broadway show-case. But hardly did the gentleman's eye fall on this weapon when a hollow cough from the bed below directed his regards to its occupant, toward whom the child had already darted.

'Dear grandmother—a kind and rich gentleman has come to see you!' was the hurried whisper, which just audible, caught our traveler's ear. He approached and stooped over the cot.

There was no mistaking the revelations of that miserable couch. It was a death-bed. The soul which looked back through its dim casements to the stranger, was slowly drifting out to eternity. A woman of fifty years, or more, with thin, silvery hair parted over a forehead which bore the lines of long suffering; with sunken cheeks marked by spots of hectic; with lips dry and cracked, murmured feebly—'Drink, dear!' The child quickly brought water from the bucket, in a broken teacup. She held it to the sick woman's mouth,

and, wetting a muslin rag, moistened her cheeks and temples.

'My child,' said the gentleman; 'have you nothing else—no medicine—'

'No, sir,' answered the little girl; 'nothing but water.'

'No food! no medicine! and the woman dy— Stay child! I will bring you everything!' cried the stranger, abruptly starting to his feet. 'Wait till I return!' In another moment he had descended the steep staircase, threaded the dark passages and gained the street again. A few moments sufficed to purchase immediate necessaries, and he retraced his steps, bearing bread, meat and wine. He paused not to notice the squalid neighborhood which he traversed; the narrow alleys, reeking courts, filthy doors, and prison-like dwellings; the dens of drunkenness; the abodes of disease; the lairs of crime; the bleared, shrunken, deformed human beings that crossed his path. He hastened back to the death chamber, where lay that woman on the floor; where the little child knelt; where the cavalry sabre was gleaming in strange contrast with surrounding destitution.

It would have gladdened the Good Samaritan's heart to behold his disciple bending on the floor of that hovel, dispensing morsels of delicate meat to the child, who put them to the lips of her nearly-famished grandmother. It might have moved the heart of a miser to hear that little one tell of long, weary weeks passed in cold and hunger; of poor grandmother's rheumatism and cough; of mother's fever, and her death three months before; of many visits to the pawnbroker's—till, one by one, all articles of value had been parted with; till, piece by piece, the furniture was gone; when grandmother got sick, and could not sew, and the rent was behind; till, at last—ah! at last, this morning grandmother's cough was so bad, and there was nothing to eat or drink, and no fire; and—so 'I went out into the snow,' said the little child. 'I never begged before, sir; but we were so hungry, and there was nothing left but—but—my papa's sword!...' And here her trembling lips quivered, her voice broke, and sobs gushed from the orphan's overcharged heart.

Too late came the consolations of charity to her for whom the child had gone forth to beg that wintry afternoon. Mortal food and medicine were powerless to recall the ebbing life of this poor woman on the floor. But the slight nourishment which she could swallow revived her wasted strength for a space; and she rehearsed her simple story to the traveler. They had been 'better off' once; but reduced in circumstances after losing her husband, she had struggled twenty years to rear two sons who might be comforts to her age. They had both enlisted for the war; both had died for their country. The last, her youngest, gave his life just as he had gained promotion and became an officer. 'That's my boy's sword!' said the childless widow, reaching out to draw the weapon to her side. 'They gave it to him for his gallantry! And when he died, sir, it was sent to me—with this—' She took a little volume from the straw beside her head. It was a pocket Bible, and she lifted it, with trembling clasp, to her lips, and pressed them upon it. 'God was good to me!' she murmured. 'They sent my Willie's sword