



THE CRUTCH.

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THE CRUTCH,

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For the Crutch.

The Soldier's Elegy, Upon his L-E-G.

O wooden peg! O wooden peg!
Thou substitute for flesh and bone—
Thou limb within a forest grown,
Thou mournful semblance of a leg.

With moistened eyes on thee I gaze,
While all the changes time has made,
In sad procession now invade,
The bright domain of happier days.

While resting 'gainst this shady tree,
Through memory's field I strive to run,
Endeavoring to renew the fun,
Those halcyon days once brought to me.

I see myself once more a boy,
With all the wonder of a child,
Threading the forest's tangled wild,
Roaming the fields with youthful joy.

And now across the field of Time,
Borne on the gentle evening breeze,
Which softly murmurs through the trees,
I hear the Church-bells' measured chime.

But soon the echoes die away,
And swiftly fades this peaceful view.
My harsh companion! nought but you
My eyes behold, look where I may.

Some trusty axe did amputate
The limb of some old giant tree,
To make this wooden limb for me,
And leave me thus to amulate.

Perchance some olden forest stump,
Still shows like mine the ancient place,
Which once the limb was wont to grace,
Ere came the fatal dreaded thump!

While my poor leg has gone to share
The mould which makes the small acorn,
That future cripples still unborn
May have an oaken leg to wear!

How strange is then the wondrous fate
That time and chance should bring to nought,
That which the maker's hand hath wrought,
And take this way to compensate.

For since 'twas treason took my leg,—
Companion to its whizzing ball,
'Tis fitting that on trees I call
To furnish me a counter-peg,

I've moralized you see thus much
Upon the leg "Rebellion" seized,
While on the other now I'm pleased
To bring this offering to "THE CRUTCH."

J. A. E.

For the Crutch.

The War.

How greatly has the present war changed the condition of our country. Three years ago the United States had less soldiers, and was the least engaged in military pursuits of any civilized nation. We believed our republic immortal, and shrank from any sight, indicative of its overthrow. With great complacency we had studied the endless agitations of nations of the old world, and believed ourselves insured against such calamities. It had not been necessary for us to keep armies in the field, and men to be soldiers a portion of the year for the defence or safety of our country. We had almost forgotten that the sword was often the builder and destroyer of nations, and had too much neglected the military art; a mistake we bitterly regretted, when that southern habit of despotism took the form of civil war. Our people were all given to other than military pursuits, and had long considered war an evil that the progression of mankind could not tolerate, and was passing away with the darkness, ignorance, and tyranny of the world. The influence of the war of 1812 had passed away and even the fair fame of our achievements in Mexico, did not animate the nation to any desire for further war or even unnecessary military show. The schools of our country were effectual in suppressing the mobs and passions of the people, and there seemed to be no element in the land, or danger from abroad that would call for the mustering of armies, the sound of cannon, or the clash of steel, in our peaceful, prosperous, and happy country. But all is now changed, and unhappily for our nation war has become the only way for making peace. Let us not forget however that the war is only for the restoration of the union, and the perpetuity of those great principles for which our Fathers struggled in life and in death. It was a revolution that could not longer be avoided, and the war was forced upon us. We are now to fight to the bitter end, but when we have rescued from all danger the government made by Washington, and Jefferson, and Hancock, and Adams, and fulfilled our obligations to God and man, in thus securing for the world the example of Republican Government; let the sword drop from our grasp, and let us turn our minds and hearts to those pursuits that elevate and develop mankind. P.

For the Crutch.

Every Day's Acts Remembered.

How apt we are to forget that we, by our conduct are making up a record that shall be read in future years; that our character is noted and remembered by others. The man who is not heartily and entirely for his country in the hour of her peril will not be forgotten, when the danger is past. Like the tories of revolutionary days, they stigmatize their names through generations. The indifferent and silent spectator of the dastardly efforts of the enemy to destroy the government—afraid to speak out boldly, in public and in private—afraid to pray, if a minister of the Gospel, to the God of heaven for a blessing upon his country's rulers and her noble defenders, is marked. His indifference, his timidity and his regard for self are seen. In other and more peaceful days the finger of scorn will be pointed at him, and he will be held as unworthy the protection and care of the government, which he was willing to see destroyed.

The Last Hours of a Brave Soldier.

It is not of one, but of hundreds we could write whom we have seen pass away—brave and patriotic to the last. Sergeant L., of the 2d Michigan Regiment, was wounded through the right lung, at the battle of Williamsburg. With many others, he was brought to one of the Hospitals at Fortress Monroe. The Surgeons gave him no encouragement that he would get well. He felt conscious himself, that he had not many days to live. He spoke of the war, and the part he had taken in it. "The government must be upheld," he said, "upheld over every foot of our soil, or we have no country, and for this I came to fight; and I am not sorry, though death stares me in the face." He was a Christian soldier. In God was his trust. The night before he died, he sent for the Chaplain. When he came to his bedside, he said: "read me the 12th chapter of Hebrews, and then kneel and pray that God may support me through the valley and shadow of death, and then I am ready to go." The Chaplain did as he requested, and in a few hours he was called away. There was none more beloved in his Regiment, or none more faithful in the discharge of all the duties of a soldier. Hearts at home were made to bleed when the tidings of his death reached them. But he, and thousands like him, who have sacrificed their lives upon the altar of their country, will ever be held in remembrance. We shall not forget, that to you, soldiers, we are indebted for the safety and continuance of our noble government.

From the Knapsack.

A Word to our Soldier Boys.

"Never give up; it is wiser and better,
Always to hope, than once to despair;
Fling off the load of doubt's cankering fetter,
And break the dark spell of tyrannical care."

Never give up my brave boys. In these words there is a soul-lifting power, which will bear you onward to the attainment of your hopes. They form a watch-word which, if at all times relied on, will lead you from the lowest seat, to the highest distinction of fame. Indeed it is a motto that ought to be inscribed upon the tables of every heart, and when engraved there, it will exert a powerful influence upon the whole character. If your duty be an irksome one, if your path in life be strewn with thorns, if effort after effort be succeeded by disappointment, shall you sit down in silence, and let despair creep unconsciously into your hearts, and destroy all your hopes? No! no object in life, great or small, can be achieved but by perseverance. Glance for one moment at the bright example, that our forefathers have left, on the pages of history. They left the shores of their native land, crossed the dangerous deep to seek an unknown shore. They knew they should meet with obstacles, with privations. Yet they persevered. Despair formed not a lurking place in their hearts. "Liberty or death," was their cry, and they conquered. Thanks to their perseverance, for the liberty we now enjoy.

Doubtless, memory might furnish you with many illustrations, but experience, which is the best teacher, will tell you, without perseverance all your desires are useless. All in life have some noble objects in view, a worthy mission to perform. Go forth, take your place on the battle field, if need be, act well your part in this great conflict. To be sure there are difficulties, and crosses to encounter, but for one moment lift the veil of the far-distant future, and think and feel, how much your success, yea, your future happiness depends upon your efforts now. Then drive off despair, and do your best. Gird about you like an armor the words of the poet, then what an influence will be shed upon your whole lives. A FRIEND.