

Miss Damm



THE CRUTCH.

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THE CRUTCH,

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From the Western Methodist Protestant
Wounded.

Let me lie down,
Just here in the shade of this cannon-torn tree.
Here low on the trampled grass, where I may see
The surge of the combat; and where I may hear
The glad cry of victory, cheer upon cheer:
Let me lie down,
Oh, it was grand!
Like the tempest we charge, in the triumph to share;
The Tempest—its fury and thunder were there;
On, on, o'er intrenchments, o'er living and dead,
With the foe under foot and our flag overhead:
Oh, it was grand!
Weary and faint,
Prone on the soldier's couch, ah, how can I rest
With this shot-shattered head and sabre-pierced breast?
Comrades, at roll-call, when I shall be sought,
Say I fought till I fell, and fell where I fought,
Wounded and faint.
Oh, that last charge!
Right through the dread hell-fire of shrapnel and shell
Through, without faltering—clear through with a yell.
Right in their midst, in the turmoil and gloom,
Like heroes we dashed at the mandate of Doom!
Oh, that last charge!
It was duty!
Some things are worthless, and some others so good
That nations who buy them pay only in blood;
For Freedom and Union each man owes his part;
And here I pay my share all warm from my heart:
It is duty!
Dying at last!
My mother, dear mother, with meek, tearful eye,
Farewell! and God bless you, forever and aye!
Oh that I now lay on your pillowing breast,
To breathe my last sigh on the bosom first pressed:
Dying at last!
I am no saint,
But boys, say a prayer. There's one that begins:
"Our father," and then say "Forgive us our sins;"
Don't forget that part, say that strongly, and then
I'll try to repeat it, and you'll say, Amen!
Ah, I'm no saint!
Hark!—there's a shout!
Raise me up, comrades! We have conquered, I know!
Up, up on my feet, with my face to the foe!
Ah, there flies the Flag, with its Star Spangles bright,
The promise of Glory, the symbol of Right!
Well may they shout!
I'm mustered out!
O God of our fathers, our freedom prolong,
And tread down rebellion, oppression and wrong;
O land of earth's hope, on thy blood-red-dened sod
I die for the Nation, the Union, and God!
I'm mustered out.

For the Crutch.

Slavery in the Old Dominion.

I sat waiting for Cousin George for over two hours, my anxiety increased by knowing that before twenty-four hours had rolled their rounds, Tom and Jim would be in eternity. I knew if any one could secure a pardon it was Cousin George. He and the Governor were like two brothers. At last he came, but it was to give no hope. The whole three must die. The Laws of Virginia were such, it was dangerous to grant pardon to a Slave guilty of crime. Of course I felt disappointed and sorrow-stricken, that all three of these boys, Slaves of Mr. G. must die a felons death. The circumstances were these, James G. and his sister had been left an estate by their father. The sister had quarreled with her brother, and the quarrel had assumed such a point, as to excite a perfect hatred between the two. She in her madness, had employed two of the Slaves to murder her brother. Tom and Jim were the two boys. But they felt that they could not do it. They therefore employed, by promising half they got from their mistress, a boy by the name of Harry from an adjoining county to do the deed. Harry came a little after dark, and approached the window near where Mr. G. was eating his supper, and there with an old pistol, deliberately shot him through the head. All of Mr. G's servants were arrested at once. It was soon found that Tom and Jim had some hand in the matter. By the promise of a pardon to Tom he told all about it. He and Jim had not done the deed. They could not do it. But their young mistress had urged them for weeks, and by the promise of a large sum of money and finally their freedom, she prevailed on them to consent. They told all to another boy, and he for the money, said he would do it. The whole matter was at length sifted. But what was done. Tom, surely, ought to have been pardoned. Indeed every one of them ought to have been. Their mistress was the guilty one, and by the Laws of Virginia even, she ought to have suffered. The law says, any white person enticing a slave to commit a crime is as guilty and shall be so held, as though they had performed the deed themselves. But here was the injustice.

There was no white testimony. Negro testimony would not be taken. All three of these boys therefore must die. Not even Tom who had turned States evidence could escape. Cousin George saw the injustice of the whole thing, and he determined to make every effort for their pardon. The day before the execution he went in person to the Governor, and plead for a commutation of the sentence. But without success. The Governor was willing but public opinion would not sustain him—all three were executed at the same time. It was a terrible sight; one that we shall never forget. And now the climax of the whole story is, that Tom and Jim, were both brothers of James G., who was murdered and of their mistress who urged them to commit the deed. What an argument against an institution that countenances and encourages such injustice.

Here was a sister causing the death of three of her brothers, and the facts were perfectly plain against her, but she could not be touched. But Virginia will soon be purged of her iniquities and breath the air of freedom.

True religion is a life unfolded within, not some-thing forced on us from abroad.

From the Knapsack.

Extracts from a Letter to a Soldier.

Prompted by some unknown impulse, I am seated with pen and ink, for the express purpose, friend Soldier, of writing to you. Some writer has said of letters.—"How devoid of life and influence they seem, yet how potent for good or evil." Many of my friends like you, have obeyed the dictates of patriotism, and have gone to plant the standard of freedom, where their fathers planted it, and to protect it from the enemy—willing to sacrifice themselves, if need be, on their Country's Altar. We cannot tell what the future has in store for us, we cannot look beyond—but we can look above, and know that our cause is in the hands of a merciful Father, whose watchful eye is ever upon us, and who does not afflict us, more than we are able to bear, and who will never leave or forsake us, unless we first forsake Him.

How many there are who would shrink with horror, from the thought of rebelling against the government of the United States, who are yet rebels against the government of one, who would rule them with love, if they would submit to his mild sway. There is an immortal principle within, which, unsatisfied with the fading things of earth, reaches after higher, and more enduring enjoyments. Could I but tell those who know not God—of the happiness of having felt his pardoning love, could I but give them an idea of the bliss which flows from implicitly relying on God—they would need no other inducement to seek salvation immediately. But it needs a seraphs pen, and the language of the upper world, to describe it with any degree of justice. If religion is anything—it is all it is represented to be—and thank God, I am proving daily, its author to be truth, beauty, and holiness. May God help you to consecrate yourself to His service, and prepare you to live with Him.

H. N. C.

God be thanked for books! They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levellers. They give to all, who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence, of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how poor I am; no matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling; if the sacred writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof, Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of Paradise, or Shakspeare to open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart, and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom, I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship; and I may become a cultivated man, though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live.

Influence is to be measured, not by the extent of surface it covers, but by its kind. A man may spread his mind, his feelings, and opinions, through a great extent, but, if his mind be a low one, he manifests no greatness. A wretched artist may fill a city with daubs, and, by a false, showy style, achieve a reputation; but the man of genius, who leaves behind him one grand picture, in which immortal beauty is embodied, and which is silently to spread a true taste in his art, exerts an incomparably higher influence.

No punishment is so terrible as prosperous guilt.