

Charles N. Burnham, Publisher.

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1864.

For the Crutch.
About Birds.

All through the dreary Spring days we looked for them; and at last, one gray afternoon, of a day the sun had not saluted, we perceived something that looked like bits of blue sky flitting across the yard; then followed a brief clear carol, and lo! the herald of the songsters was here—the blue-bird! Himself and clique, had everything his own way, for a few days, and then, followed the gay light-footed wren; the dutiful robin, the mincing dusty-coated ground sparrow, saucy blackbird, mischievous careering swallow, and last, the purple martin. Not one of these *avant-coureurs* of the Summer birds, had any of their flash and splendor; on the contrary, they are busy practical workers, careful about many things, and apparently taking no pride in showing off their dress or musical abilities. They buffet the cold storms, paddle about in the mud after sticks and straws, perch on leafless trees, with heads under wet wings, day in and day out; fight the battles of the year at one campaign, and all, for the privilege of "Squatter Sovereignty," in Maryland. Each one has his own peculiar enemy that he must keep an eye on, while he has the other out, discerning material, and furniture for his "Chateau in Spain," for these shrewd little builders, will appropriate anything that comes in their way, from a lady's ringlet to a Mule's whisker. They will have their rights, and as much over as they can get; we have noticed they adhere to this practice in times of peace, as in war, so their demoralization is quite unaccountable.

We could scarcely help admitting, the other morning, that the feathered tribe had caught the spirit of rebellion, as we found our hitherto deserted bird-house, tenanted by several pairs of persistent, determined Martins, pickets ranged along the roof, and guards patrolling before every open door, all silent but fierce for the contest threatened by the enemy, which soon attacked front, rear and flank in good earnest. Overcome by "superior numbers," the attacked party retreated within the walls they defended, but soon appeared with reinforcements—veterans which had evidently occupied those head-quarters before. With loud shrill notes of defiance, the belligerents dashed upon each other; they ruffle their feathers; they measure bills; they make desperate dashes from all sides, appeal frantically to each other to "win" or fly, until the battle gets so hot, there is no rest for the sole of a claw anywhere. Those occupying the debatable ground when the contest began, had the advantage, and to this circumstance they owed their victory, rather than to superior skill in military tactics.

How can any pure domestic affection reign in that house, we thought, as we saw the angry parties withdraw, panting and torn, and the victorious ones hastily skip into the shelter, that ought to be called a fort!—We did not suppose such indescribable rancor could so soon be forgotten, but as we passed the battle ground next morning, everything was "quiet." Various attitudes of repose and indifference, had been struck by the conquering parties, while the conquered, sat alone, balancing themselves on the slats of an old broken grape arbor, the silken lids falling softly over the blinking eyes turned sunward, as if to invoke strength for a new contest. Will some charitable reader, erect a new bird-house and let us all live in peace? ††

The large number of emigrants continuing to arrive here, becomes more and more a remarkable feature of the times. There arrived at New York last week 3,678, making the number since January 1st, 35,302, or over twice as many as arrived in the corresponding period of last year—four times as many as landed in that of 1862, and more than arrived in that of any former year, not excepting 1854, when the number of arrivals for the year was 320,000. The number that arrived up to April 20, of last year, was 17,650.

Mail communication northward from the Army of the Potomac has been suspended.

A Soldier's Letter.

The following is a letter to a little girl, acknowledging the receipt of a Thread-bag, sent by her to a soldier in this Hospital.

MY DEAR MISS:—I have this day been the recipient of a beautiful little comfort bag containing many articles very useful to a soldier, and among other things, a nice little letter, which has afforded me no small amount of pleasure. I hardly know how to thank you enough for the present which must have required much labor from your little fingers, and I think no soldier could but appreciate such a gift. Certainly I do, and I cannot help loving the little girls who are trying to make the soldiers more comfortable. But you wish to know something about "your soldier." As yet I am a paroled prisoner—was captured with many others at the battle of Gettysburg on the 1st of July, 1863, a day long to be remembered by every loyal American. During our long and painful march to Stanton, Va., (176 miles) our rations consisted of four pints of flour—not the best—and one half pound of bacon—that I did not consider any better than the law allowed—but we had to submit or die, and of course I preferred the former. A great many were taken sick on the way, your humble servant among the number, who thought he had rather a hard road to travel. The weather was excessively warm and water was very scarce. Still, while life lasted, I was bound to keep up, for in case of the failure of any man to keep up the bayonet was freely used, it mattered not how sick or sore we were. At last we arrived at Winchester and were ordered to halt in the middle of the town to take a little rest as I supposed, but much to my surprise, a rebel officer came riding along the line, hallowing and shouting, "Ladies of Winchester—here is the d—d cut-throat Yapkees—come out and see if you can find any of your piano thieves, if you can point them out, you shall have the privilege of doing with them as you please." Fortunately, they found none. Seeing a rebel officer near me, I asked permission to go to a house across the street for a drink of water. After due deliberation, he consented, keeping an eye on me, however, all the while. I at once made tracks for the house, pulled the bell, and a child about five years old came to the door, and asked who I was, and what I wanted. The door was open all the time, I had pulled the bell, because I didn't want them to think *Yankees* had no manners. Soon the child's mother appeared at the door and asked if I was a Yankee. I answered that I was a U. S. Soldier and wished she would be kind enough to give me a drink of water. "No," said she, "if I had fifty wells in my yard, you should'n't have a drop, you are nothing but a pack of thieves any how." And then calling the child by name, told it to spit in my face. Such is a Southern woman. About that time a thousand thoughts crowded into my mind, what did I think? I thought you might hunt *Yankees* all over, without finding a woman like her, but suffice it to say that I am once more in a Christian community. I was on Belle Island eight months and seven days, but my hardships there are fully counterbalanced by the sweetness of liberty now. I had often heard before being captured, that the *Rebs* showed no sympathy or feeling for the prisoners in their hands. At first I could'n't believe it, but now I am more than satisfied of its truth. They care no more for the life of a Union Soldier than for that of a sheep or a dog. They allow no consideration of facts—that the *Yankees* are human beings—sick, forlorn, distressed, to influence them in the least; to temper their cruelty one particle.

During my stay on the Island I had an opportunity of seeing some of your fair sisters of the South who were very different, I must say and more lady like than my lady friend in Winchester. One of them remarked to me that "the ladies of the North were more united than the ladies of the South." I asked how that was. She said that the organizations of the Christian and Sanitary Commissions reflected credit on them, and they might well be proud of their work in connection with them.—So you see that you have by your noble work, not only won the admiration of your friends but that of your enemies. Oh! I thank Heaven for the fair deeds of the women of the North! The Sanitary and Christian Commissions will long be remembered. The good they have accomplished will form one of the bright pages of history. May God bless you, ladies of America, the Christian and Sanitary Commission and all connected therewith, may your lives be prolonged and may they be of uninterrupted happiness, is the prayer of your soldier friend. E. C.

For the Crutch.

From the Army of the Potomac.

24th MICH. VOLS., CAMP NEAR CULPEPPER, VA.
April, 9th, 1864.

MR. EDITOR:—The rains during the past week, have been almost continuous, and as a consequence, we do not look for a movement of this army for some days to come. Old citizens and "intelligent contrabands" argue a late and wet Spring, as an offset for our warm and unusually dry winter. My letter this morning, is as words set to the music of the pattering rain on the canvass roof of my cabin. The *strain* of the storm has been kept up, without intermission or solo since midnight. The Blue Ridge is still decked in a snow white robe, which adds a chilliness to the "gentle zephyrs" of this Southern clime, and makes *wood* as much a necessary commodity, as in mid Winter. During our stay in "these parts," we have finished the herculean task of clearing up Jack Pendleton's farm for him, so that when the war is over, he can "put in" his whole plantation, and reap over ground, which, had it not been for the *kindness* and industry of our soldiers, would still have been a wilderness waste. Whether he will thank us for the job or not, I cannot say, nevertheless, it is completed, and next fall he may scratch it over, sow his seed, reap his crops, in his own way and time. Whether Uncle Sam will charge him for the labor of his boys this Winter, remains to be seen, but in our judgment he ought to, and put in the claim as an offset for the dry rails &c., used in the culinary department of the army.

Gen. GRANT is fast winning the hearts of the troops that compose this army. He has a way of doing his work, peculiarly his own, so *business like*, that we are looking for, and expecting, a *vigorous and victorious* campaign, and so confident are we, of success, that we can scarcely refrain from the exclamation, "Behold the morning breaketh and the day, with its high noon of freedom and peace is drawing near." To this end let every one "watch and fight and pray."

To the soldier in Hospital, let me say; your duty in the field is done, nobly done, as your wounds, and scars declare, and yet, while you no more march with us in the war path, ne'er again sight the old and trusty musket, you can help those of us, yet in the field. While we watch and fight the enemy, you can *pray for us*.—In the heat of battle, we shall have but little time for that blessed work, and we must depend upon you. Will you do it?—Oh, yes! you will not forget, we will trust *you* and go forward to victory, and may be, death—feeling that while battling for freedom and right, we are not forgotten by comrades, whose prayers go up to heaven, having a twofold power, because of a twofold sympathy. May God bless you. CHAPLAIN.

When old Squire Crane was first elevated to the dignity of Justice of the Peace, down in South-western Missouri, he knew less of law and legal forms than he did about killing "bars." It was his fortune to be a witness of the first marriage ceremony the old fellow ever undertook. The young couple stood up in the Squire's office, and the happy bridegroom desired the functionary to "prope!"—to which impatient request the Justice acceded, by inquiring,

"Miss Susan Roots, do you love that 'ar man?"

"Nothin' shorter!" responded Miss Roots, with a subdued laugh.

"And you, John Kennon, do you allow to take Sue for better and worse?"

"Sartin as shootin', Squire!" earnestly responded the enamored John, "chucking" Sue under the chin.

"Then you both, individually and collectively, do promise to love, honor, and obey each other, world without end?"

A satisfactory reply was given.

"If that 'ar be the case," continued the magistrate, "know all men by these presents, that this 'ere twain aforesaid is hereby made bone of one bone, and flesh of one flesh; and, furthermore, may the Lord have mercy upon their souls! Amen!"

I left the office with the conviction strongly impressed upon my mind that the Squire, although not particularly posted up in the marriage ritual, had a very good *general* idea of legal forms and ceremonies.