



THE CRUTCH.

VOL. 1. U. S. A. GENERAL HOSPITAL, DIV. NO. 1, ANNAPOLIS, MD., SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1864. NO. 20.

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 the Independent.

What the Birds Said.

The birds, against the April wind,
Flew Northward singing as they flew;
They sang: "The land we leave behind
Has swords for corn-blades, blood for dew."
"O wild-birds, flying from the South,
What saw and heard ye gazing down?"
"We saw the mortar's upturned mouth,
The sickened camp, the blazing town!
"Beneath the bivouac's starry lamps
We saw your march-worn children die;
In shrouds of moss, in cypress swamps,
We saw your dead uncoffined lie.
"We heard the starving prisoner's sighs;
And saw, from line and trench your sons
Follow our flight with home-sick eyes
Beyond the battery's smoking guns."
"And heard and saw ye only wrong
And pain," I cried, "O wing-worm flocks?"
"We heard," they sang, "the Freedman's song,
The crash of Slavery's broken locks!
"We saw from new uprising States
The Treason-nursing mischief spurned,
As crowding Freedom's ample gates,
The long estranged and lost returned.
"O'er dusky faces, seamed and old,
And hands horn-hard with unpaid toil,
With hope in every rustling fold,
We saw your star-dropt flag uncoil.
"And, struggling up through sounds accursed,
A grateful murmur clomb the air,
A whisper scarcely heard at first,
It filled the listening Heavens with prayer.
"And sweet and far, as from a star,
Replied a voice which shall not cease,
Till drowning all the noise of war,
It sings the blessed song of peace!"
So to me, in a doubtful day
Of chill and slowly greening Spring,
Low stooping from the cloudy gray,
The wild-birds sang or seemed to sing.
They vanished in the misty air,
The song went with them in their flight;
But lo! they left the sunset fair,
And in the evening there was light.

Words there are upon the tongue,
Musical as siren song;
Eloquence that can control
All the passions of the soul;
But the language of the skies
Only speaks through woman's eyes.

For the Crutch. The Haunted House.

Few of us fully estimate the power of superstition over the mind, or its wide spread influence for evil, although on close examination, we find ourselves invariably cherishing some pet sign, or belief in the *unaccountable*, as we term it, so thoroughly, that we make no effort to solve the riddle, but often set the matter aside, as something our grandmothers had to contend with, and their grandmothers before them, and why not we? As many a valuable life is lost through this pernicious influence working on weak constitutions until the whole system gradually loses its elasticity, and the mind becomes the seat of the wildest, most groundless fancies, I think it well to add one more to the innumerable instances already recorded, going to prove that superstition is not only one of the most dangerous evils that threaten us, but the most irradicable, since it carries with it that peculiar charm, that widens the sphere of vision, and leaves us half way between the outward actual world, and the mysterious and unknown, towards which, we willingly tend.

The following incident was given to me verbatim by a clergyman now residing in one of our large Western Cities. I have recorded his language imperfectly in my memory, but the facts may be relied on. "In the Summer of 1854, I found myself travelling through the interior of New York state in pursuit of health and some means of subsistence. I was very poor, and willing to follow any honest business, since the weakened condition of my lungs, prevented me from following my chosen vocation. Through the interest of friends, I at last secured a book agency in New York City whither I turned my steps accompanied by my wife, who was as robust strong nerved, and buoyant hearted, as I was feeble and dispirited. Our first object was to secure decent, cheap board, in a retired part of the city, accessible by omnibus, since I was not equal to a long walk. Several days of anxious seeking, convinced us that boarding was out of the question, too expensive to think of, so our next alternative was to look for rooms of sleeping and eating dimensions. I should blush to confess into what places I peered, and to what straits poverty reduced me, during that eventful search! Any wild animal whose paths had fallen among the sweet and pleasant places of the earth, had he by chance thrust his head into one of those cheap receptacles for the living biped, would have snuffed the air and turned on his hoof disgusted, had his stomach been ever so empty. I thought of the wandering Jew, but transferred my old sympathy for his circumstances to myself, since he never tried to get board and lodgings for two, although he was defeated in his other plans. A week's fruitless searching, climbing up innumerable flights of stairs, and questioning, totally exhausted my poor energies, and what was worse, we were living on the bounty of friends. I became silent and discouraged, wife grew uneasy and uncommunicative but started out one morning with a very defined purpose in her face, and after an added six hours search, brought me word that she had secured three large rooms in a haunted house, with the privilege of having access to all the other apartments, whenever we chose. "But," I remonstrated, "can we pay for three large rooms this week, any better than we could last?" Why, certainly

not," she replied, "but we pay nothing for them; the house is going to pieces for the want of a tenant, and the landlord will gladly give us the rent, if you will look after the estate, which is quite large and situated on East Broadway, but a short distance from your place of business."

The nature of this news might not be termed of a cheering kind, but it thrilled me with joy, and my wife joined with me in the delightful anticipation of living together, quiet and undisturbed, with plenty of room to breathe in, the busy world all in view, but nobody in it to meddle with us, molest, or make afraid; therefore we had nothing to dread, but everything to hope for, since we neither of us had any more faith in ghosts, or haunted houses than we had in "woolly horses!" So the next morning bright and early, we were on the way with our landlord, a cool reticent kind of man, to our new abode. While he opened the rooms for us, he remarked in an indifferent way, that a groundless rumor about strange sounds having been heard there in the night, had spread like wild fire among the people in the neighborhood, and had rendered his property about worthless. I ventured to suggest, that it would be wise to demolish the buildings, which were considerably time worn, and erect modern substantial ones in their places, which suggestion, he immediately repelled on the plea that he was not able to build, and the house was an old homestead; he would give me the rent of any part of it for one year, and if I was satisfied to remain longer I should do so, at a moderate expense. We were pleased with the proposition, because we liked the house, every nook and corner of which, we examined from attic to cellar. Its rooms were large, commodious and comfortably furnished, there was every convenience for house-keeping on a generous scale, and an air of cleanliness and newness, pervaded the whole house, contrasting strongly with our impression of its exterior. We selected the three rooms on the southern side, where the sun lay longest, and the wind gently waved the young grass, lying in emerald squares beneath the casement.

(To be continued.)

AN OLD BACHELOR.—An old bachelor is a poor critter. He may have heard the skylark, or (what is the same thing) Miss Kellogg and Charlotte Patti sing; he may have heard Old Bull fiddle, and all the Dodsworths toot, and yet he don't know nothin' about music—the real genuine thing—the music of the laughter of happy, well-fed children! And you may ax their father home to dinner, feeling very sure that there'll be no spoons a missin when he goes away. Sich fathers never drop tin five cent pieces into the contribution box, nor palm shoe pegs off onto blind hosses for oats, nor skeddaddle to the British sile when the country is in danger—nor do anything which is really mean. I don't mean to intermate that the bachelor is up to little games of this sort, not at all; but I repeat, he's a poor critter. He don't live here; he only stays. He ort to 'pologize on behalf of his parents, for bein here at all. The happy married man dies in good style at home, surrounded by his weepin wife and children. The old bachelor—he don't die at all, he sort of runs away like a pollywog's tail.—A. Ward.

“God—Grant—Victory.”