

THE CRUTCH.

Charles N. Barnham, Publisher.

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1864.

Summer Come.

"Change is the essence of life." It is this fact that reconciles us at this present moment to the departure of Spring, with its wooing airs, grateful freshness, its manifold health giving influences, and busy maturing life, giving golden promise of the future. But the Summer is here, calling nature to adorn herself as for a festival, and lo! a bewildering troop of flowers wait on her steps and looking over the red rich hills of Maryland, we see them tracked with green footsteps; a purple bloom cover the far-off tree-tops, and traces of snow and orange over the landscape, that tell of up-springing daisies and buttercups, where the clover has not assumed a prior foothold. Sometimes we think it would be pleasant to escape from the open steady working world, beyond the beating of drums and hoisting of flags, into those sweet haunts when we could question the Genii of the woods, and learn the secret of the coming and departing glory of the seasons; why the birds trill deeper, richer notes in the mid-summer? and hill and valley pour such floods of color into the gray lap of Autumn? An old-fashioned luxury we are not justified in the indulgence of, now, so will be content to listen for the clangor of arms, and the peal of cannon as the fitting music for the times. On the wings of the soft south wind that whispers of acres of bloom and sunshine, of fields all flushed with fruit blossoms, of skies mellowing morning and evening into chalcids of rosy light, brave hearts, we send you greeting! asking no rest from toil, no indulgence for weariness, but only striving to do the behests of duty, as if it were the invocation of love, we bid you God-speed, though our voices may never reach you. Many summers have dropped sweetness into our years, lighting up the sombre side of life with broad sunshine and a warm touch, that strengthened the nerveless hand, and quickened the spirit's flow; but none ever opened with a prestige like this. We have new vantage ground; we await new vintage, and though the Angel of death sweeps us in passing and touches the earth with sadness, its gold is not dimmed, its laurels not faded or spent, but fresh for new conquests and above the plaint and murmur, the heart of the people throbs with the anticipation of a new born freedom. Bloom on then, oh myriad flowers, passing through the cycle of life and death; strike deep, happy leaves, mingling with the earth that shall be redeemed; for this shall be a Summer of noble work, and its fruitage may prove a rich heritage to the coming centuries, and

"Death sublime
Shall bear away the seal of time
So long in woe bewailed."

A Letter from a Soldier.

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, May 5th, 1864.

DEAR CORPORAL:—Strict fidelity in the account of my daily doings, will hardly render my letter very interesting to you; but cut off as I am, from all the usual amusements and resources of civilized existence, I shall have little to communicate not furnished by my observation. My principle amusement while on duty is watching for the erection of a steam mill in the vicinity, for thrashing rice. There are already two, on the plantation quite out of repair, but, as renovation is a word unknown here, they have been abandoned to the pigs and bats, and a new one projected. The owner of the anticipated mill, seems to have an unsuspecting reliance upon Providence, or his neighbors to help him; but day after day passes by and nothing but the corner stone is visible above ground, although the blacksmith, cooper and carpenter come every other day, and take a good survey of the premises, and sit on the timbers and smoke till the next meal time disturbs them. They are good honest men however, and a little more contact with Yankees will bring them all right.

My walks are rather circumscribed, but to-day, as I started one of the thickets I stood still to admire the wonderful beauty of the shrubbery. Every shade of

green, every variety of form in leaf, grew so profusely everywhere, that its rich garlands and wreaths almost forbid the steps of the explorer. The magnolia and wild myrtle, rise to a height of eight and ten feet, branching out in luxuriant tufts, of exquisite beauty and fragrance. But the special pride of Dixie, is the magnolia grandiflora, whose lustrous dark foliage, would command admiration, aside from the regal flower, whose perfume is unequalled. The mocking-bird sings in its branches, and beneath these the palmetto forms a thick cover for the smaller birds, and a highway for innumerable snakes and adders, whose delight is to bivouac in the hot morning sun, where there is the most fragrance and the fairest flowers.

Our friend F—, made the acquaintance the other day of a live rattle-snake, captured it, and brought it to the tent for inspection. It might have been a young one, the negroes pronounced it so, but its length was eight feet, and its vivid vicious eye, and darting tongue, made us more sensitively aware of his presence, than was quite agreeable. What to do with it was the question. But after some consultation it was decided we should send for black Eddie the "charmer," and have the creature subdued. In half an hour Eddie was on the ground, all smiles and importance. He had brought a noose for the snakes head, and a small wind-harp with triangle depending from it, on which he beat time with a slender wire. You should have seen the open eyes and mouths of some of our boys when the ceremony commenced. At first the snake which was called Jeff by way of compliment to the Rebel President, did not seem impressed with this "concord of sweet sounds," or rather, he was not favorably so, since he levelled his forked tongue at us, and squirmed, and rolled nearly out of his bonds several times. But as Eddie warmed up on the jigs, and then on the national airs, Jeff became calm, rubbed his head like a kitten against the side of his basket, and then began to blink his eyes complacently at the breathless spectators, who waited to see him stand on the tip end of his tail next, or on his head, if he wished to use his tail for a shillalah. But he did neither. Quietly stretching himself he closed his eyes and assumed an attitude of perfect repose until the music ceased—then coiling himself into a ring, he raised his head—he measured us with side glances: then with eyes transfixed, he seemed to be gathering with giant propensities, those horrible forces, that make men quail like timid birds, or give them almost superhuman command over the quality of fear. I confess to a sense of fascination and torture, as I saw him prepare for a spring, although he was well guarded. But Eddie knew his game, and at the right point he touched the sweet plaintive air of "Lilly Dale." In a second the eye and alert head relaxed its expression, and as the tune became softer and slower, the coils loosened, and the creature dragged itself forward as if to reach its master. Now was the propitious time to assert command. Two small pigs and a pail of milk, brought Jeff, to the amiable condition desired by his entertainers, and Eddy says "a week's right smart practice with him, will make him tame as a rabbit." I have written a long letter for a military man; hope you will return the compliment. We are looking for stirring news from your quarter of the world, and await it with the calm confidence, that it will prove to be the right kind. Neither party is idle.

Yours loyally,
JERRY K. WARNER, Co. I, &c., &c.

OUR PRISONERS AT RICHMOND.—Considering the scarcity of provisions in the beleaguered city of Richmond, the prospect for our poor fellows held as prisoners there is gloomy. But there is some comfort in this fact; that by exchange and by removals to North Carolina and Georgia, the number of these Union prisoners in Richmond, which a few months ago was from twelve to fifteen thousand, has been reduced to about fifteen hundred, exclusive of the additions from the late battles. That these unfortunate men will be the first in the rebel capital to starve in the event of a protracted struggle for its possession, from all that we know of the horrors of Libby prison, cannot be doubted.—*New York Herald.*

Correspondence of the Crutch.

ANNAPOLIS, MD., May 21, 1864.

MR. CRUTCH:—Permit a constant reader to express through your columns the great pleasure we Annapolitans derive from a near residence to the Naval School. In the first place, its freshness and cleanliness, makes it a special delight to look upon, and then we enjoy beyond expression the fine music that reaches us from the band. After the ferment and tumult of the day is past, we are ready for music, and then those beautiful airs have a singular fitness to the hour. We are sure they must act like the true elixir of life on the sick within your walls. I met a sick soldier the other day, walking with great effort from the College to the Naval School Hospital, he stopped by the wayside to rest a few moments, and on questioning him, I found he was making an almost superhuman effort to reach the yard in time to hear the band performances which had just commenced. He was a Frenchman, and had caught now and then, a strain of the Marseillaise, as it was wafted in snatches on the wind to his distant ward room window. His enthusiasm and eagerness were perceptible in every lineament of his face, and his dark eye glowed like fire.—"Then you long to hear the Marseillaise?" I said, "If I could not walk I'd creep ten miles to hear it," was his reply. Another pale and silent sufferer by his side said, "Well sir, I don't know what there is so mighty healing in them horns and drums, but somehow they drive the pain out of my stump, tho, I have a heap of it, when they ain't goin'." These few rough testimonials of the efficacy and beneficence of music, are sufficient to strengthen the old adage of the Persians, that, "A drop of music in the soul, is a spring in the desert." All hail then to the sovereign power of music! We can't have too much of it; we wish there was a perpetual spring of it bubbling up in every man's garden, a sweet purifying strain of it in every man's heart, that harmony might prevail over discord, and every house become a temple of praise. If we have failed to express our most grateful thanks in this simple apostrophe to the band, we must be pardoned on the score of inadequacy of language.

Gratefully your obedient servant,

J. P. M.

THE CAPTURED GENERALS.—The *New York Times* correspondent says that when Major Gen. Ed. Johnson was brought to headquarters in the woods, where General's Grant and Meade and their staffs were seated around a bivouac fire, Gen. Meade, who had been an old friend of Gen. Johnson's shook hands with him and introduced him to Gen. Grant. "Formerly of the 6th Infantry?" inquires the Lieutenant-General. "Yes," replies the rebel General: "you were of the 4th, and we were both of the same brigade." Almost all of the staff appear to have been old friends and acquaintances of Johnson, and numerous mutual inquiries in regard to old army comrades are being made. Gen. Hunt, Chief of Artillery, when he met him, had a mind to make a set speech, but the old familiar formula, "Ed, I am glad to see you," came out in a salutation to which Johnson replied; "Well, Hunt, under the circumstances, I am not glad to see you." He spoke of the capture of his division, but said with a quiet, good natured menace, that we would have a hot time of it yet. When Stuart—G. H.—was brought in, Hancock offered his hand, but the high-born captive drew back, saying that "his feelings would not allow him to shake hands," an incident that created a merry laugh at headquarters.

JOHN MINOR BOTTS says, "From the portico of my house, I and my family have seen nine battles fought on my own fields, and just before my own door, between hostile troops who but yesterday as it were, boasted of a common history, a common nationality, and a common destiny."

The public debt of the United States, May 14th, amounted to \$173,087,920.83; reduced by the amount in the treasury, viz: \$15,620,278.93, together with interest to the amount of \$71,717,991.47. Of the debt upwards of \$508,000,000, bears no interest.