

## THE CRUTCH.

Alonzo Colby, - - - - - Publisher.

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 1864.

### Laurel.

A charmed word everywhere, and a familiar one, since the era of bravery and martyrdom commenced.—To us, who did not look for it away from its home, in the cool crisp New England pastures, and sylvan shade of pines, where it blends its petals of lace with the fine tracery of the fern and brake, its name has deep and sweet significance. We do not hunt it there, as for the frail anemones and gentle violets, in unknown nooks and untrodden by-ways. Everybody knows where the laurel grows, and we fence it in, like a King's hunting ground, and go to it confidently, as to a gold or silver mine. Sure it is there, and will yield what all its years have promised, and always fulfilled. Exultant, and unchangeable, it blooms in sunshine and shade, gathering strength from every June, and, when its day is done, it goes to its grave gayly as to a jubilee, clad in the splendor of its thick glossy leaves, which are all the year freshening, as if, for immortal brows. When we found the soft red loam of Maryland starred with this choice flower, we looked upon it as a usurper! The flower we had boasted of, and cherished, because it would grow and bloom so luxuriantly in spite of the rocks, poverty and ruggedness of New England's soil, standing breast high, side by side with the flaunting Catalpa, and eastern splendor of the Tulip tree! It might have followed the army thus far, on its march southward, but, we thought with Susan Nipper, that *leastwise*, amid all the deprivations war has brought, we might have been spared our laurels. But here it was, and still is, adding new testimony to that we have already had, that Maryland has untold resources within her soil, from which the magic hand of toil might draw marvellous treasures of wealth and beauty. Viewing the laurel from a southern point, we were not surprised to see Maryland cows browsing on its crimped pink-lipped buds, in preference to the grass in which they stood ankle deep, month in, and month out. Such sacrilege was made barely tolerable, by the thought of how cold and dumb the landscape would be, without them. You may look at any great meadow, or prairie land, green and flowery, touching the wide horizon like a sea, and overhung with luminous clouds,—interesting, perhaps poetically and historically, beautiful, for its quiet pensive charm, made up of bright lines and sunshine, but dead, and fixed as rock, without the cows! Could IRVING and HAWTHORNE, KENSETT or CHAMPNAY ever have invested New England landscape with romance without them? Do not the Legends of Douglas, and traditions of Devonshire, and our own Catskill depend largely on the bovine element for that peculiar warmth that brings the picture home alike to peer and peasant. Had we the poetical works of BRYANT, BURNS, KINGSLEY or WHITTIER at hand, we could point to numerous inspired allusions to this humble, but indispensable servant of man; as it is, we congratulate ourselves that we are privileged to catch glimpses of the genuine animal, though we can scarcely help indulging in the pathetic wish that she was ours, if only for a summer, while the berries are ripe, and the old-fashioned luxury we used to call butter, could be reproduced in all its golden splendor! As for cream, we have a vague recollection that it is something between ambrosia and nectar, just fit for the gods, and so the cow becomes idealized by classic association, until we are ready to exclaim with the mad poet of New Hampshire,

"Without thy grateful presence who would stay!  
A starless heaven is earth, without thy milky way!"

A most remarkable case of gun shot wound is that of a rebel soldier in Georgia, who was recently in the hospital at Marietta. Two bullets passed through his head, making four holes, at which the brains were coming out, and astonishing to tell, he was perfectly conscious, and conversed intelligently concerning his situation, and was anxious to know the doctor's opinion of his case. He was alive thirty-six hours after the wound was inflicted, and may be yet.

### Cave Life in Vicksburg.

The wife of a Confederate officer, who was confined within the "wall of fire" which surrounded Vicksburg during the memorable days of last April and June, has written an interesting volume on the scenes and incidents which there transpired. Like most of her companions she was compelled to seek shelter from the deluge of iron hail in the caves so often alluded to.

Caves were the fashion—the rage—overbesieged Vicksburg. Negroes, who understood their business, hired themselves out to dig them, at from thirty to fifty dollars, according to the size. Many persons, considering different localities unsafe, would sell them to others who had been less fortunate or less provident; and so great was the demand for cave workmen that a new branch of industry sprang up and became popular—particularly as the personal safety of the workmen was secured, and money withal.

Her faithful servant, George, who always remained with her, came near being killed one time by the "Yankee shells."

One night I could scarcely sleep, the explosions were so loud and frequent. Before we retired, George had been lying without the door. I had arisen about twelve o'clock, and stood looking out at the different courses of light marking the passage of the shells, when I noticed that George was not in his usual place at the entrance. On looking out, I saw that he was sleeping soundly some little distance off; and many fragments of shells falling near him. I aroused him, telling him to come to the entrance for safety. He had scarcely started when a huge piece of shell came whizzing along, which, fortunately, George dodged in time, and it fell in the very spot where he had so lately slept.

On another occasion, a shell penetrated the cave, to the great horror of the occupants.

"It was about four o'clock, one Wednesday evening—the shelling during the day had gone on about as usual—I was reading in safety, I imagined, when the unmistakable whirring of Parrott shells told us that the battery we so much feared had opened from the intrenchments. I ran to the entrance to call the servants in; and immediately after they entered, a shell struck the earth a few feet from the entrance, burying itself without exploding.

I ran to the little dressing room, and could hear them striking around us on all sides. I crouched closely against the wall, for I did not know at what moment one might strike within the cave. A man came in very much frightened, and asked to remain until the danger was over. The servants stood in the little niche by the bed, and the man took refuge in the small ell where I was stationed. He had been there but a short time, standing in front of me, and near the wall, when a Parrott shell came whirling in at the entrance, and fell in the centre of the cave before us all, lying there smoking.

Our eyes were fastened upon it, while we expected every moment the terrific explosion would ensue. I pressed my child closer to my heart and drew nearer to the wall. Our fate seemed almost certain. The poor man who had sought refuge within was most exposed of all. With a sudden impulse, I seized a large double blanket that lay near and gave it to him for the purpose of shielding him from the fragments; and thus we remained for a moment, with our eyes fixed in terror on the missile of death, when George, the servant boy, rushed forward seized the shell and threw it into the street, running swiftly in the opposite direction. Fortunately the fuse had become nearly extinguished, and the shell fell harmless—remaining near the mouth of the cave as a trophy of the fearlessness of the servant and our remarkable escape."

Owing to the press of matter in this week's edition, we are unable to publish the list of wounded admitted from Petersburg, but they will appear in an "Extra" next week.

Among the prisoners brought from Gen. Grant's army to the white House, last week, was a woman—a course-featured Amazon—who was in charge of a rebel battery when she was captured, and had on an officer's uniform of the United States.

### Josh' Billings on Dogs.

Dogs are various in kind, and thanks tew an all wise Providence, tha are various in number. Tha are the onla animal ov the brute perswashun who have voluntary left a wilde stait ov natur, and cum in under the flag ov man. Tha are not vagabones bi choise, and luv tew belong tew sumbody. This fact endears them tew us, and I hav always rated the dog az about the seventh cusin tew the humain specious. Tha kant talk, but tha kan lik yure hand; this shows that their harts iz in the plase where other foaks lungs iz! Dogs in the lump are useful, but tha are not always proffittable in the lump. The Nufoundin dog is useful tew saiv children from drowning, but you hav got tew hav a pond of water, and children running around kareless, or else the dog aint proffittable. There aint nothing maid boarding a Nufoundin dog. Rat Farriers are useful tew ketch rats, but the rats aint proffittable after yu hav ketched them. The Shepard dog is useful tew drive sheep; but if yu hav tew go and by a flock ov sheep, and pa more than tha are wuth, jist tew keep the dog bissy, the dog aint proffittable, not mutch. Lap dogs are very useful, but if yu don't hold them in yure lap all the time tha aint proffittable at all. Bull dogs are extremely useful, but yu hav tew keep a bull tew, or else yu kant make ennything on the dog. The Coach dog iz one ov the most usefulest ov dogs I kno ov, but yu hav got tew hav a coach (and that aint always pleasant) or yu kant realize from the dog. Thus we see, that while dogs are generally uzeful, there are times when tha aint generally proffittable. I don't really luv a yaller dog, nor a mad dog, but, with these tew unfortunate excephuns, it is dredful hard work for me tew say a word agin enny dog. The wag ov their tails is what takes me. Enny man who will abuse a dog will abuse a woman, and enny man who will abuse a woman iz thirty five or forty times meaner than—a pale yaller dog. These are my centiments, and I shant change them, until I receive notis that the camil has smoothed down the hump on his back, and the sarpent ceased tew wiggle when he wanders.

### Conundrums.

Why is the Crutch an emblem of truth? Because it is never used while lying.

Under which General do sick and wounded soldiers like to rally best? General Hospital.

Why should the members of the Band take the temperance pledge? Because they have so many horns in a day, and play with so much spirit.

Why is Section 1 the wealthiest in point of art? It has a Claude.

When did Newton "cut up shines?" When he divided the rays of light.

Why is Maryland like a blind bird? Because she can't see seed (*secede*.)

What is the difference between one's mouth and a handbox? Not much: either is a good place to put a muff-in.

A journeyman weaver took to his employer a piece of cloth he had just finished. Upon examination, two holes but half an inch apart were found, for which a fine of two shillings was demanded.

"Do you charge the same for small as for large holes?" asked the workman.

"Yes—a shilling for every hole, big or little."

Whereupon the workman immediately tore the two holes into one, exclaiming:—

"That'll save a shilling, anyhow."

His employer was so well pleased with his wit, that he remitted the whole fine at once.

A West Indian, who had a remarkably red nose, having fallen asleep in his chair, a boy who was in waiting observed a mosquito hovering round his face. Quashy eyed it very attentively; at last it lit upon his master's nose, and instantly flew off again. "Yah, yah," he exclaimed, with grate glee, "me bery glad to see you burn your fut."

"Wake up and pay your lodging," said the deacon, as he nudged a sleepy stranger with the contribution-box last Sunday.