

THE CRUTCH.

Alonzo Colburn, - - - - - Publisher

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Horn Point Correspondence.

July 20th, 1864.

Messrs. Editors:—It did not occur to you, I suppose, that I should so readily accept your complimentary invitation to become a correspondent of the "CRUTCH." It is usual with you, doubtless, to flatter your friends in this way, but while I lay this "unction to my soul" particularly, I am at a loss to imagine what you expected me to write about. Cincinnatus was so happily constituted, that he could teach, or work, let "it rain or shine." But how can a modern military man of advanced years and rustic habits, be expected to express himself in fitting terms for the press, while the rebels are threatening his humble abode on one side, and the drought his whole summer's work on the other? As soon as these dangers are fairly over, I think I shall enjoy "the sweet and bitter agony of composition;"—as it is, I am writing just to please Prudence, who has always been possessed with the ambitious desire that I should become a correspondent or a reporter, of the NEW YORK TRIBUNE, ever since we took that paper. For reasons quite immaterial to the reader, I have declined in favor of the CRUTCH, and since we are so isolated from the telegraphic and newspaper world, you will pardon a retrospective look now and then, on the score of patriotism.

The Fourth passed off here very quietly and pleasantly; there was no general celebration, but people amused themselves in their own way, which of course was no way at all. Since then, we have been waiting for rain, and watching to see if all was quiet along the Chesapeake, or if Fort Vanderkift hadn't been mined while we were out catching crabs. I am happy to state, that as far as the eye can reach, the old flag is seen waving triumphantly. The vegetables here are having a hard, hot, campaign; gasping for water, and trying to hold their own against tribes of bugs and grubs, jostling each other for a chance to "occupy the land." Locusts and grasshoppers are festive, drowning the songs of bird and bee, with their fiery hiss; the fruit harvest does not promise well; only the ducks and goslings are radiant. Can one apply a more *scot*-able word to this atmosphere, than smoky? Prudence asks if this is a conundrum, and persists in it, moreover, that the atmosphere is not smoky but foggy! Why are we not amphibious then, if during all these long weeks, we have been drenched in fog, and the sun has been wading through its cool and vaporous depths, instead of a pitiless, jaundiced sky, hot-breathed and shining as brass! I make this remark to you, and not to Prudence; women will have things to be just as they see and feel them to be. I never insult them by reasoning with them. There are some things which we must be permitted to enjoy and compass after our own fashion; some things about which people must always differ just as Prudence and I do, about the weather, and one thing is music. In my sober senses, I could never go anywhere to here a fiddle. elegantly called a violin, but I never miss creeping along the shore and down to the water's edge to hear every strain from a distant band, or a snatch of song, wafted from some passing boat; this, with the surge and lash of waves beating against the shore, makes wonderful harmony. It has been said we can produce no sound that will not accord with the roar, or the ripple of waters. We may reasonably conclude then, according to this theory, that sound, wherever heard, has its rining accompaniment. This is a pleasant thought; and if we think of it, music underlies, like the eternal chant of the ocean, a great part of our happiness. Can one conceive of a more stupid world, than a dumb one? anything more perfect than a sphere of melody!

Music, is not only a socializer, but a grand palliative of sorrow, passion, emotion, fear. Sometimes, Prudence and I get high in debate over the Generals, the only topic we quarrel upon. She decides fiercely for McClellan in the onset, and I must agree that he is the greatest man of the times—that he is a Napoleon for mili-

tary skill, heroic as Washington, and sagacious as Julius Caesar,—ora—fool! It is a ridiculous alternative, an absurd position, but she gives me no middle ground; I must admit one thing or the other, or be subject to an interminable war of words. Unity of sentiment is particularly desirable at "meal times," and I usually parry the dreaded topic if I can; until after breakfast; if I cannot, then I know where my refuge lies, and I flee to it, at once. I open the window, listen attentively, and in the very height of our social rebellion, the band of the Navy Yard heralds guard mounting, with a burst of some well known melody, which causes Prudence to start from her seat like one mad; and catching her hat, she starts for that point of land nearest the enchanted spot, whence come strains that soothe to silence the fervor and heat of the hour, and awaken emotions not to be intellectually defined, but experienced, if one would have the revelation.

Prudence has forgotten the generals, and comes home, bright, placid, and sweet as a summer's morning; she has heard "Sounds of Home,"—the wild bewildering floating, "Elfin Waltzes"—the breezy, playful carol of the "Mocking Bird," or the stirring "Marseillaise." All these strains you must know, come to us across the water, double refined, as through the medium of a vast aolian harp; on the hushed morning or evening air, fall the receding notes, finer and finer, until the whole is spent in little echoes, that leap from rock to rock, as they are borne like tender messages to the wavelets below. But come and hear for yourself. I can offer you good wading on a cool beach, and tolerable blackberry browsing. Prudence warns me that I "was not invited to fill the Crutch;" a very appropriate remark, with which I will close.

Yours &c.,

TUTTLE.

For the Crutch.

We Touch no Wire but vibrates in Eternity.

Influence never dies, transmitted from object to object successively it becomes a powerful force, increasing and strengthening, till in its effects and results it becomes stronger than the unconquerable will, more universal than the discrimination of light and freer than the air we breathe. So widely is it diffused, and so common does it become, that there is not an action or a motion but exerts the force, and however small it may be, it never loses its impetus, but lives on forever. Said a distinguished philosopher, "no atmospheric vibration ever becomes extinct; the pulses of speech when they have done their work and become, to our ears inaudible, pass in waves among and wander still repeated, hither and thither through the regions of space eternally."—The position of the sound is changed, but it is indestructible.

We utter no voice but reports at the throne of God! we perform no deed but it is written indelibly on the book of time; we cannot see in life the end of human action; the act may be a little thing, yet, in ever-widening circles it reaches beyond the grave and its vaults, are evident long years after the source has passed away. The pressure of a hand, a "God bless you," a kind word may be the commencement of an upward progression, the first thought of a lofty aspiration, the beginning of a noble end, the impulse to a life of earnest usefulness, the results of which keep on increasing and enlarging, till mind after mind has become affected, and the simple act grows into a mighty power, that forever influences the course of the whole world. The influence of a kind word changed the course of Martin Luther. As a poor boy struggling against adversity in his efforts to grasp the principles of truth and right,—the cold repulses with which he met, shed gloom over his spirit, and he was about to retrace his steps to his father's humble dwelling, when a kind voice shed a ray of light over his darkened soul, and touched the springs of his being, restoring to action the mighty energies of his soul; and to day, Protestant Europe and Protestant America are indebted to that simple act for the freedom of humanity and of religion which they now enjoy.—There is no one however young or obscure but exerts the same undying force in a greater or less degree. The

little child passing away so soon that it never wrought one of those deeds that men call useful, has unconsciously thrown around itself the silent power of teaching its friends lasting lessons of innocence and purity.

Perhaps the deepest and most abiding impressions that the mind receives are made by a mother's teachings. Home influences linger about the memory long after all other impressions have passed away; they touch the heart, determine the conduct, keep one from a career of sin long after other chords are broken. No one can wander so far from his home as to be beyond the reach of its associations. He may engage in new duties in distant lands; he may become a soldier, and while fighting for his dearly loved country, unconsciously he may plunge into the midst of vice and wrong; but around him whispering voices will tell him of a mother's solicitude, of a father's anxious thoughts concerning him; he may drink the fiery fluid of the intoxicating cup, he may wait in prison cells the doom of a ruined man, but one kind reference to his early home will cause tears of sorrow and penitence to flow.

Hitherto we have spoken of influence as good, but it is of a two-fold character. Shakespeare indeed wrote truly, when he said, "The evil that men do, lives after them." The individual who allures others from duty, sets in motion a train of influences that spreads over a wide domain.

The person who has been drawn into the snares of vice, has received impressions which can never be annihilated, and his days of recklessness have not only impaired his own faculties, retarded his progress and prevented his attaining to the degree of usefulness which otherwise he might have done, but they have extended the same train of evils which influenced himself, and these again will influence others, and so on, the mischief of one wrong deed passes from generation to generation.

But there are stronger forces exerting this influence than we have mentioned; they are more silent too. We speak of books, from which streams of influence for good or evil are ever flowing. While good authors are implanting in the hearts of their readers valuable truths and noble aspirations, bad authors are inflaming the passions and poisoning the soul with fatal errors. Each is sending into the world heralds that can never be recalled. Their works live after they are dead, and through them they influence the world, while they themselves are mouldering in the grave. No one can extend and perpetuate his or her principles so well as to send them into the world on the printed page. Each work may produce thousands like itself. The evil contending with the good, both are breathing forth sentiments touching chords of the soul whose vibrations extend to eternity.

Finally, every one influences himself as well as others; every thought, every word, every deed exerts influence that does much toward the formation of character. Impure thoughts and words contaminate the soul; polluted deeds harden the heart in sin, and unfits us for eternity. Hence it becomes a serious thing to speak and to act.

B.

Bridgewater, July 18th, 1864.

"Don't stay long, husband!" said a young wife, tenderly, in my presence one evening, as her husband was repairing to go out. The words themselves were insignificant, but the look of melting fondness with which they were accompanied spoke volumes. It told all the vast depths of a woman's love—of her grief when the light of his smile, the source of all her joy, beamed not brightly upon her.

"Don't stay long, husband!" and I fancied I saw the loving, gentle wife setting alone, anxiously counting the moments of her husband's absence, every few moments running to the door to see if he was in sight, and finding that he was not, I thought I could hear her exclaiming, in disappointed tones, "Not yet."

How near akin laughter is to tears was shown when Reubens, with a single stroke of his hand, turned a laughing child in a painting to one crying; and our mothers, without being great painters, have often brought us, in like manner, from joy to grief by a single stroke.