

THE CRUTCH.

Alonzo Colby, - - - - - Publisher.

W. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, AUG. 20, 1864.

For the Crutch.

Portland Correspondence.

Portland, August 12th, 1864.

DEAR CRUTCH:—Recently returning from a week's vegetation in the vicinity of Portland, Maine, I eagerly searched your columns for whatever of news, wit or fancy, they might contain. A Horn Point correspondent occupied a large corner, and the idea struck me as I read, that a communication from a friend at Portland, might not be without interest to Portlanders, at least, who are proverbial at the Naval School, I have been informed, for a maniacal attachment to their metropolis, and a somewhat frequent use of the word Portland in conversation.

Now, though we have no Horn Point, we boast very many good points of head and heart, not classified in Physical Geography under headlands, though, in some instances, they might be considered as *bluff*. Of late, however, points, whether of land or character, have been severely tried,—even by fire. As a friend with foreign accent remarked, "it has been a time to *dry* men's souls." Sea-side houses have been crowded, and the maniacs have revelled in Island parties, chowders, and clam bakes. But, at last, we have had rain, for which, Dame Nature, man and beast, with renewed cleanliness and courage, unite in one general thanksgiving.

During the past two days, Portlanders have outdone themselves in paying honor to the Congressional Committee, whose members, striking a happy compromise between pleasure and duty, are examining our coast defences. There has been a clam-bake extraordinary, target shooting with hundred pound Parrotts, and a levee graced by all the fashion and beauty of Portland belles, to say nothing of whiskerandos and shoulder-straps. To-day, their Honors—who, by the way, we feel fully convinced are men of wonderful capacity, depart on an exploring expedition, determined to find the end of "down East." Success to them!

Our Canadian friends, who, some think, love us so well they would fain grapple us to their hearts "with hooks of steel," are kindly looking after our welfare, and cooling their heels in our salt water. If they really have designs upon us, we should recommend, as a preliminary step, a general repair of the Grand Trunk Road, which is in a truly shocking condition to one's nerves. Our friends are no less remarkable for personal appearance than for their notorious sympathy with traitors.—The gentlemen are readily distinguished by their alderman like proportions, and a rubicund complexion provokingly suggestive of boiled lobster. It does one good to see them walk the street, as though they felt the dignity of all England on their shoulders. A soldier is said to have politely tipped his hat to one of them lately and to have inquired if the gentleman would be so kind as to tell him who lived on the corner. The gentleman drew back in undisguised wrath, exclaiming, "Confound your impudence! who lives on the corner? How should I know?" The soldier is said to have again tipped his hat, and to have replied with a perceptible grin, that he thought he could tell him, of course, for he *walked* as though he *owned* the whole street.

One of our daily papers recently contained a paragraph which attracted my attention by the heading, "Returned Heroines." Where so much is said of returned heroes, heroine has become almost obsolete in our language, and I eagerly read to learn what new honor Portland enjoyed. Imagine my surprise at finding the heroines were returned Hospital nurses from the Naval School. There was quite an array of names, and I could but feel a twinge of regret that I had not been a patient under their ministering care, that I might personally have known a heroine. Since reading the above mentioned article, I have learned that the "Returned Heroines" have frequent reunions, and have resolved themselves into a mutual admiration society. Many of their salutations, such as "U.S. Sister Minstrels," "Wan' to go 'cross," &c., are avowedly cabalistic.

I have spoken thus particularly of them, thinking many of your readers might feel an interest in those who had been so long in their midst. As for myself, I am a returned hero, in other words, a "condemned Yank," on duty at Camp Berry. Through you, I send greeting to my condemned brothers at Annapolis, hoping "When this cruel war is over," to enjoy many a friendly chat with some now there, who "hailed from Portland, Maine."

Yours, MANIAC.

For the Crutch.

The Power of a Song.

It was on an October eve, of 1863. The Harvest moon had thrown her silver light over the frost-tinted forests of New England, and the cool night wind hastens the fall of the dying leaves. But reader, close your eyes on these, (it may be) your native scenes, and come with me to the sunny South-land, where ruder breeze than this will never sweep. Come even to the far off State of Texas. The same bright moon is shining on her rolling prairies, and silvering her groves of orange and sycamore. Sixty miles from the mouth of the Brazos, about forty rods from the river, stands the stately mansion of Doctor Allen. In the background may be seen the white huts of the negroes, while the wild plaintive melodies of their inhabitants, come floating to our ears. But let us in the deep shadows of the trees, steal through the luxuriant shubbery, up to a window from which, the heavy curtains still looped back—there unseen we may look in upon the family circle—Doctor Allen, his son and daughter, compose the group. The Doctor is an old man. It is more than thirty years, since having graduated at Harvard, he took his young wife and set out to seek a future in the South.

As a skillful Physician, he has had an extensive practice, having resided in each of the Gulf states with the exception of Florida. He rendered valuable services as a surgeon, during the Mexican war. Now, with a princely fortune he has retired to spend the remainder of his days in the state of his adoption.

There is a striking contrast between the son and daughter. In this fair girl, you see my cousin Edith Allen. She is the image of that mother, who years ago, placed her hand upon that sunny head, and gave it her dying blessing. Eugene, her half brother, for Doctor Allen has been twice married, also strangely resembles his mother, who was the pride of one of the first families of Virginia.

A thoughtful mood seems to have fallen upon the little circle, and I have the key to the thoughts of one of them, to cousin Edith's. She is thinking of the present rebellion, but with what feelings, neither father nor brother have the right conception. True, she has never expressed any sympathy with the treachery of the South, but this they have attributed rather to her undemonstrative nature, than to any lack of sympathy with them. Doctor Allen is a professed enemy of the Union, and Eugene has just received the commission of Colonel in a rebel regiment, but Edith, though beside the institution which has been the main cause of the war, has never been blind to its atrocities and debasing effects. She has never forgotten the words of her mother, as she languished for her early home. "Let me go home to die, let me draw my last breath in the free air of New England." Having no sympathy with its cause, she can have none with the rebellion, but waits with anxious heart, for the blow to be struck which shall palsy forever, the upraised hand of treason. These sentiments she has hitherto concealed, thinking that their divulgement would only serve to excite the animosity of her friends, but now the soil of Texas seems about to receive its share of the bloody baptism. General Banks is marching across the bayou to Point Isabel. The Stars and Stripes are once more unfurled to the breeze of the rebel State, and the voice of patriotism in the heart of my cousin struggles for utterance.

The young officer is the first to break the silence.—"Come Edith, don't be heavy hearted because the Yankees have landed on our coast, we'll soon set them a going. This evening is the last I shall be with you, 'till the Confederate States are acknowledged independent, so cheer up, and sing me a parting song that will make a better soldier of me."

A heavier cloud falls on the heart of Edith. She feels more deeply than ever the fatal mistake, which is luring him on to ruin. Conscience forbids her longer to remain silent, yet she dares not think of the storm which may be awakened. But, as has been truly said, "Strength is born of trial," now is the time for action, and that brother going forth, to fall perhaps, in an unholy cause, shall know that there is *one heart* left in his Texan home, that still beats true to the *dear old flag* of its country.—Edith seats herself at the piano. Suddenly its rich tones ring out in a prelude to the *Star Spangled Banner*, and her sweet voice tremulous with feeling, sends those heart-stirring words through the spacious parlors, even out upon the still night air. Father and son seek each other's eyes in amazement, but looking in that pale face, they know that her *soul* is in the song. There is a pathetic pleading in those melting tones, which disarm them of their anger, and that old man bows his head upon his hand, and listens. Old memories come thronging up the memory of his boyhood, of his youth, the hour of parting with his aged parents, and the words of his gray-haired father, as he took his hand for the last time, and said: "Everett, beware of the love of gold, and never, I beseech thee, stain thy heart with the price of humanity." And how had that parting injunction been fulfilled? Alas, he had gradually yielded to the force of surrounding influences; moving among the wealthiest classes, his eyes were dazzled by mammon, and he lived a worshiper at his feet. He was soon called upon to part with his loved companion. He made her grave in the crescent city, within reach of the sound of the auctioneer's hammer, as he knocked off his victims, to the highest bidder, for the toil, and death of the rice swamps. These are the thoughts which throng the soul of Everett Allen, as he listens to the voice of his daughter. It seems as though she were calling to him from the spirit land, warning him to *pause*, to take back the words, though he may not undo the deeds, which have stamped him as a traitor to his country.

These are moments to us all, when some unseen power seems tearing the veil from our eyes, when conscience will not be silenced, and the truth is revealed with startling distinctness. Thus is it, with Doctor Allen. These few moments have wrought a revolution in his soul, which years could not have expected to accomplish. The song ceases—the silence is stirred by the voice of the old man, deep and solemn—"God bless the *Star Spangled Banner!* Oh! my children, if we were back once more under its protecting folds, and free from the soul-withering curse of slavery, I could surrender the fragments of my lost manhood in peace, to the King of Terrors." E.

THE FIGHTING QUAKER.—A patriotic young Quaker enlisted at the commencement of the war to help fight the battles of his country.

The Elders were shocked, and called in to see him at once, suggesting that they had serious charges to make against him.

"Proceed," said the young soldier.

"Friend James, we hear that thou hast joined a wicked and worldly society called Masons. We also hear that thou hast volunteered to go and shed the blood of thy fellow-men."

"Proceed," again said the fighting Quaker.

"That is all, Friend James. What dost thou say to these charges?"

"That I wish you had a hundred more of the same kind to bring against me, said the noble young patriot.

Our Quaker friend is now a major, and his name appears among the wounded in the late great battles.—A letter now before us states that he is one of the bravest officers that ever handled a sword.

EXTENSIVE SALE OF AN EX-SHAKESPEARIAN COMMITTEE MAN.—"I don't think," said a would-be literary Duke, "you can find a single Irish character in all the works of Shakespeare."

"Yes, you can," boldly ejaculated young Edmond, "for I can cite two—Miss O'Phelia and Corry O'Lanus."

The noble Duke instantly started for Manchester.—*Punch.*