

THE CRUTCH.

Charles Boswell, - - - - - Publisher

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, DEC. 10, 1864

In Memorium.

The largest funeral known in any hospital in this country, and the saddest spectacle ever presented, was witnessed here on Tuesday last, by a large concourse of people, drawn together from sincere respect for the noble dead, who, after meeting all the exigencies of a terrible war, had bravely set their faces homeward, to live, it might be, or die if they must, on their own native soil. At ten in the morning, the ambulances, thirteen in number, containing forty-three bodies of paroled men, many of whom had died on their passage hither, drew up in line before the chapel, attended by guards, and preceded by the Hospital Band, with muffled drums, playing a solemn dirge. The funeral services were performed in the open air, the chapel steps being occupied by the Officers of the Post, a committee from the Sanitary Commission, and the chapel choir. After the beautiful dirge, "Hark! to the Solemn Bell," had been sung, the silent assemblage was addressed in the most solemn and impressive manner by Mr. Love, of Wisconsin, who paid a just and lofty tribute to the memory of the dead, many of whom, while living, bore grateful testimony of his ministering and brotherly kindness.

It was a scene never to be forgotten—the silent awe-struck crowd, standing with uncovered heads, bowed, and tearful eyes, between the long line of dead and their dear kindred, scattered, alien—blind to the gathering clouds in their sky—deaf to the invocation sent on High by stranger lips in their behalf! We trust the scene may never be repeated, while we take consolation in the thought, that these wronged and lamented brothers, died in ministering hands, and were cherished as a peculiar people by those who received them, and have spared no means of smoothing their last hours.

After a touching prayer had been offered by the Chaplain, followed by a benediction, the band struck up a dirge, and the sad procession moved on towards the cemetery, when other appropriate services closed a chapter in the sad history of Hospital life, long to be remembered. And here we must pause—while thousands of weepers are wrestling in agony, waiting, and listening, on distant shores, for voices that will never find utterance; the fruition of return; the reprieve from worse than death; let us hope the destroying angel has nearly achieved his perfect work, and that the white wings of peace may be folded, where tempest shook the land.

For the Crutch.

Looking into the Fire.

What a strange fascination there is about the winter fire! especially in the evening, before its weird light is overpowered by the bolder glare of the gas, or lamps, or candles.

They are the lights to see by, to work by, but the evening firelight is the light to think and muse by.—In its wavering light the ghost of the past, and the "fairy brood of fancy" meet and mingle, from their nest in the heart. Hope's fledgelings flutter forth in the cheerful blaze, and even sorrowful memories smile upon us consolingly from the quivering shadows that play around the hearth.

The vacant places in the fire-side circle—if loved ones have left it for another home in the better-land, seem no longer empty, and there is something very beautiful in the idea, that the spirits of the departed linger with us like the birds at the close of autumn, loth to leave the spots where they first waved their joyous wings.

And we sigh when the visions dissolve, and the cold matter-of-fact world comes back to us, for there are enchantments in the ruddy center of the winter evening fire, which transcend all the magic of oriental story.—A world of wonders open upon us as we gaze with half closed eyes through the gray bars—we talk of castles in the air, they are but mere fabrics of mist and moonshine compared with castles in the fire. As we gaze, memories are revived which we had thought long since for-

gotten; but touched upon by some link of association they come out afresh, though seemingly blotted out by time's ceaseless wave, yet as their wave passes their lines are all uneffaced.

As the woodman passing through the forest carelessly strikes into the young oak, and goes on his way, the bark of many succeeding years forms over the wound, and hides it from view; but when the tree is felled, there is the mark of the axe.

Impressions made on the mind of the young too, are permanent, and the memories of the child linger around the man, and are cherished in old age.

When the events of yesterday are hardly remembered, the hymns of infancy and nursery tales of childhood are not forgotten; and all these are remembered as we gaze into the fire.

There are some perhaps, who never saw anything in a fire, save wood and coal—who never thought of anything while looking in it, except the price of fuel—but such matter-of-fact persons are to be pitied, I think, not blamed, perhaps because it is not their fault that they lack poesy, but pitied, that is the word, for they know not what they lose.

How To Take Life.

Take life like a man. Take it just as though it was—as it is—an earnest, vital, essential affair. Take it just as though you personally were born to the task of performing a merry part in it—as though the world had waited for your coming. Take it as though it was a grand opportunity to do and achieve, to carry forward great and good schemes; to help and cheer a suffering, weary, it may be heart-broken brother. The fact is, life is undervalued by a great majority of mankind. It is not made half as much of as should be the case. Where is the man or woman, who accomplishes one tithe of what might be done? Who cannot look back upon opportunities lost, plans unachieved, thoughts crushed, aspirations unfulfilled, and all caused from the lack of the necessary and possible effort? If we knew better how to take and make the most of life, it would be far greater than it is. Now and then a man stands aside from the crowd, labors earnestly, steadfastly, confidently, and straightway becomes famous for wisdom, intellect, skill, greatness of some sort. The world wonders, admires, idolizes; and yet it only illustrates what each may do, if he takes hold of life with a purpose.—If a man but say he will, and follows it up, there is nothing in reason he may not expect to accomplish.—There is no magic, no miracle, no secret to him who is brave in heart and determined in spirit.

Little Nancy is a close student of the Bible, but not very clear as to some points. "Ma," said she, one Sunday evening, after having sat a good child all day in the house, "have I honored you to-day?" "I do not know, Nancy; why do you ask?" said her mother. "Because," said little Nancy, shaking her curls sadly, "the Bible says, 'Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long;' and this has been, oh the longest day I ever saw."

An Irishman dropped a letter into the post office the other day, with the following memorandum on the corner, for the benefit of all indolent postmasters into whose hands it might fall:—"Please hasten the delay of this."

A Raft in Mid-Ocean.

H. B. STR. SWORDFISH,
Inside Sandy Hook, Nov. 12, 1864.

This vessel cast anchor here two hours since, after a passage of twenty-two days from the Cape of Good Hope. On Friday morning, 10th inst., lat. 35 deg. N. lon., 66 deg. W., the lookout on the fore-top descried a strange looking object on the lee bow, which on nearing, proved to be a raft, with a number of people on it.

So singular a circumstance threw the ship into great excitement. The captain ordered a boat launched immediately, supposing the people to have escaped from a foundering vessel, and of course desired to be picked up.

By this time we were within hailing distance, and the steamer was nearly stationary. A jury mast was rigged on the raft, and they cheered lustily. Our captain never swears in English, but is addicted to a sort of Persian oath.

"By the great ox," he cried loudly, "what does this mean?"

There were about twenty-five men on the raft, and they were in a jolly humor. Seeing the boat lowered one of the party shouted "send us some whiskey. We don't want to be picked up."

The captain could not stand that. "Where are you going, and where are you from?" he shouted.

"None of your business; send us some whiskey, and we'll send you a dispatch to take into port."

The raft was now close under the lee of the ship, and a rope was thrown out to it, which they held on to, while a barrel of whiskey was slung off.

As soon as they got it safe, they let go the rope, to which they had tied their dispatch. On opening it there appeared a list of passengers, which the clerk read aloud.

The first name on the list was James Guthrie.

"By thunder," cried the captain, "that is the Chicago Platform!"

A cheer and a yell went up from the raft as the sail was spread again to the breeze.

The clerk went on reading the names. The list was as follows:—James Guthrie, George H. Pendleton, Horatio Seymour, Fernando Wood, C. L. Vallandigham, S. S. Cox, and nineteen others.

When last seen, the raft was making south-east, apparently on a bee line for the coast of Africa.

Respectfully,

BULLJACK.

We find the following partial confirmation of our correspondent's report, in the *Leader* of this morning, under the head of "Important Marine News."

Leader Special Dispatch.

"Point Lookout, Nov. 11th.—The wreck of the "Chicago Platform," which foundered during the heavy gale of Tuesday last, has broken up.

Captain McClellan lashed himself to the first plank, labeled "Union," and has floated safely into Tammany Hall.

It is feared the first mate Pendleton is lost.

The crew seems to have deserted the wreck and are making for the nearest port, where they will ship on board the staunch old ship "Jacksonian Democracy." The steamer "New York City" picked up many of them.

A portion of the wreck is drifting towards Ohio, and when last seen Vallandigham was upon it, waving a copy of the *Philadelphia Age* as a signal of distress.—There is no hopes of saving him.

Conundrums.

Why are sheep at once the most dissipated and the most unfortunate of animals? Because they gamble (gambol) in their youth, spend the greater part of their lives upon "the turf," many of them are "black legs," and they all get fleeced at last.

Why did Joseph's brethren put him into the pit? Because they thought it a fine opening for a young man.

When were salt provisions first introduced into the Navy? When Noah took Ham into the Ark.

Why was Pharaoh's daughter like a bill discounter? Because she drew a little profit (prophet) from the rushes on the banks.

Why was the inventor of steel pens a most immoral person? Because he made men steal (steel) pens, and told them they did right (write.)

What relation is the door mat to the scraper? A step-father (step farther.)

If a young woman hopes ever to have the honor of giving the mitten, she had better learn to knit.