

THE CRUTCH.

Charles Boswell, - - - - - Publisher

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, JAN. 7, 1864

Hospital Wards.

We must confess that we glory in clean, tidy, quiet, pleasant looking wards, where the beds are snowy white, and snugly made, the bottles shine, the tables can bear to be turned inside out, without changing color, the walls are clear of cobweb festoons and colored daubs, and the floors show neither sign or spot of the inevitable tobacco, the filthy effects of which, every ward is supposed to be duly provided against;—we would rather inspect such a ward, than the best drawing-room in Fifth Avenue. There are wards of this description in this Hospital, that will bear inspection any day, or any time of day; there are others that have their holiday suits on, occasionally. Things look very fair outside; you stand off at some distance, and everything shines as if it had been just burnished. You go nearer, and touch the luggage that has crept into the corners—it totters and crumbles—it is a heap of rubbish well preserved in a blanket, or an overcoat. There are knick-knacks and half-rations in the drawer, that have grown on to it like a fungus, and the rest of the space is filled with dust and abomination! The patients are restless and cross, for where there is no system of doing ward-work, no vigilance in trying to keep clean, as well as to clean, somebody must suffer, and of course, it is the one who cannot help himself, and so he is obliged to wait until the loose ends are gathered up. Is there any need of such a marked difference in the sanitary condition of wards? This is not a conundrum, but a plain, simple question, propounded in a humble spirit, by one who is desirous of information. Wards, need heads, as well as families;—the best regulated mechanisms have a main spring. To whom are we to look in this case, as the master-spirit of a Section? Is the surgeon, steward, or ward-master, responsible for the neatness and order of wards, with which they are connected? Having held a subordinate place to either of the above mentioned offices, and having been very much perplexed at times to know from whence orders came, we hope some benevolent person will set our mind at rest on this subject, and relieve the querulous fears of an

EX-NURSE.

New Year's Eve.

A stranger, from the ranks of civil life, had he paid a visit to the Full-Diet Hall of Hospital No. 1, on New Year's Eve, would have questioned whether the scene before him was one in which soldiers were the sole participants. Army life, whether at the front or in hospital, precludes, it is thought, by those in the quiet, peaceful scenes of home, all epicurean notions. Visions of 'Hard-tack' only come up before them, as they gather around the well spread table and think of those absent in defence of their country. But a soldier—at least a Union soldier, has his seasons of festivity, when the gastronomic powers are fully exercised, as well as other people. And such a season—a season when luxury and abundance appeared in almost every tempting form, was enjoyed by the assembled throng, at the time and place just mentioned. The tables in that large hall were filled with every variety of food. To enumerate some of the articles included in the bill of fare, we mention:—Turkey, oyster-soup, chicken-pie, boiled-ham, cheese, plum-pudding, hot rolls, with several kinds of cake. On enquiring we learned that this grand supper was provided by the Surgeon in charge, for all the extra-duty men in the hospital. And we are sure, from the hearty cheers with which he was greeted when he made his appearance in the hall, that they fully appreciated his kindness. The Hospital-Band enlivened the scene by playing several appropriate pieces of music. The tables were nearly filled, and each one seemed to fully enjoy the occasion, and to pay his most cordial respects to the tempting viands spread before him. May all who were there, live to see the close of the year just entered upon, and may as rich repast spread for them, mark its closing hours.

For the Crutch.

A parting word of a Snowy day.

Oh closing day of the dying year! In what beauty hast thou arrayed thyself for the final hour! wrapping a soft cloud-like veil about thee, thou hast come to say the last words of farewell—while all nature is adorned with the garment of purity fitting a holy festival. Thou hast thrown over all things a sheen of beauty, and hidden from us the bare and desolate places which thy own sisters have made—so that our hearts must forget them, even as the eye fails to observe them. Methinks in this farewell I hear you bid us to "look even so upon my life—my little life called '64. I came bright with promise as all New Years come. I have fulfilled all that the Father above has given me to do—but leaving unfulfilled to many an aching heart, its longing—to Him lift up those hearts with the bright New Year that comes.—Cover me in your hearts dear friends with this white shining mantle that my last day throws upon me. Look back upon the sad places I leave in your lives, through the softening veil of meek submission; and take my life and my memory as one takes broken but cherished treasures, and lay them carefully among the precious things of memory. Happy shall you be if in the last day and hour of your life you may be also clothed in a raiment "whiter than snow;" if you may bid all who shall think of you, to look upon your life as having fulfilled all the work God gave—if you may calmly bid all friends to take your memory as a fragrant thing, to look upon and reverence as a precious legacy. "Be ye also ready." C.

How to get rid of a Rock.

Uriah Abell was a Connecticut farmer, and in his time a pretty good one. His farm, like a great many other Connecticut farms, was full of stones, and he delighted to clear them off out of the way of the plow. He built a great many rod of substantial stone wall, but he could not use up all the stone. He had cleared one field of all but one great boulder, about the size of a large hay-cock. He wanted to get rid of that. He would have "blown it to flinders," as he had a good many others, but it was within two rods of "the best room" windows, which might go 'to flinders,' at the same time. So he attempted to haul it out of its bed one day. After tiring his own and his neighbor's oxen, and breaking several chains, Uriah grew wrathful, and declared that "he would give five dollars to any one that would put that pesky rock out of his sight."

"Wa'al neow, I don't mind taking the job if you'll find a spade and throw in some dinner, and a mug of cider along in the afternoon."

This proposition was made by a stranger who had just then come up. He was a fair specimen of a working Yankee, and Uriah dropped the broken chain and turned square round to look him full in the face.

"Yes, I'll give it, and the dinner and the cider too, but I won't pull my oxen again at that stone, no how."

"Don't want you should. I'm to put the stone out of sight, make all smooth about here, so you can plough right along. That's what I'm to do, ain't it?"

"Yes, that is all I want. I don't care how you do it, but if you fail I don't pay anything. Do you understand? Very well, then come in to dinner."

That done, and a large quid of tobacco adjusted, the Yankee threw off his coat and took up the spade. He gave a look at the stone to see which way it would tip easiest, and then commenced digging a hole on the lower side, large and deep enough to bury the boulder quite out of sight. In three hours he got out and took a careful measurement, and then dug a little more upon one side. Then he went to the wood pile and got a stout stick of wood, which he planted firmly with one end in the bottom of his hole and the other bracing against the rock. Then he began undermining, and worked till he saw the dirt begin to give, and found that the rock was resting upon his brace.

"Now," says he, "I think that I will take that mug of cider."

Uriah, who had been watching him, ordered out the cider with a right good will. He even offered to add some doughnuts and cheese."

While the Yankee was wiping away the perspiration and drinking his cider, Uriah brought his oxen around and hitched a chain to the wooden prop.

"I did say I wouldn't pull my oxen again, and I don't mean to, 'cause it only needs a smart jerk."

Jerk it was, and down went the boulder, and with it a shovel full of dirt, and another and another, in quick succession, until all was smooth and level, and long before night the Yankee was ready to resume his journey.

"There," said Uriah, as he handed him the five dollars, "there is the best spent five dollars that I ever paid for work on my farm. Won't you take another drink of cider? You are entirely welcome. I have learned something of you."

Perhaps some persons who read this may learn something—learn how to get rid of some of the boulders that encumber the surface, and which are often blasted and broken up and hauled away 'just to get rid of them,' at a much greater expense than it would require to bury them where they lie, entirely out of sight.

Bear Hunting by a Woman.

One day a Lapp woman went out to fish on a lake, accompanied by her son, who was fourteen years old.—When they had caught a sufficient supply, they landed on a part of the shore that was thickly overgrown with fir and underwood. Presently the woman's quick eye fell on a large heap of boughs, reeds, moss, &c., and, on nearer inspection, she found a large hole underneath the mass of rubbish, and felt convinced it was the entrance to a bear's "hi," or cave. She was a courageous and resolute little body, and, nothing daunted by the discovery, nor reflecting that she was alone, hastened back to the boat to fetch her axe and rifle, for a Lapp woman generally goes armed, and is usually an expert shot.—Now, her sisters in most parts of the civilized world most probably would have been frightened out of their wits, and have beat a speedy retreat under such circumstances. Her only anxiety was lest the bear should get off.

On returning she proceeded to cut down a small fir sapling, which she pointed at one end and gave it to the boy to bradde about the hole, to see whether it was occupied or not while she stood with uplifted axe a little on one side. No sooner was the pole inserted than out came the head of a monstrous she bear, and down came the axe on her skull with such force that it remained sticking fast in the wound, and accompanied Bruin as the retreated to the farthest end of the cave. Time being up for round number two, and her opponent not putting in appearance, she determined to try the effect of a shot. No sooner had she fired down the hole, than out bolted a cub, about the size of a sheep dog, which her son cleverly managed to catch hold of by the hind leg. But it was too strong for the little fellow, and, after dragging him for some distance, managed to get away. Determined, however, not to lose him, mother and son went in pursuit, and speedily overtook the animal, which had taken to the water. A few well administered taps with the end of the oar soon rendered him hors de combat.

Having secured him the courageous little woman went back to the "hi," and gave it another stirring up. But all was still. Next she fired a second shot, but nothing moved. Concluding that the bear must be dead or else have escaped during her absence, she determined to dig her out, a work of no small labor. Success, however, attended her exertions, for at length she found the bear lying quite dead, with the axe still sticking in her cleft skull, and by her side another cub as big as the first, with a bullet wound through his neck, also dead. No mean achievement for a woman and her boy.—All the Year Round.

A young minister, in a highly elaborate sermon which he preached, said several times: The commentators do not agree with me here.

Next morning a poor woman came to see him with something in her apron. She said her husband heard his sermon, and thought it was a very fine one; and as he said the common taters did not agree with him, he had sent him some of his very best kidney taters.