

# THE CRUTCH.

Charles Boswell, - - - - - Publisher

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, JAN. 21, 1864

## Victory.

Again, loyal hearts everywhere are elate with the news of the glorious successes that continue to crown our arms. The official dispatches of this week, announcing the capture of Fort Fisher, and the closing up of the rebel port of Wilmington, are next in importance to the long-looked-for, and inevitable bulletin soon to be proclaimed—the occupation of Charleston and Richmond by our invincible forces. As a stirring Down-East orator has eloquently said: 'The American Eagle is a watchin' of us, and we seam to hear him scream from the columns of the 'New York Tri-bune,' and the 'Stebbinsville Flag;' Hooroar! for the resuscitated South! Trot out your secesh idolls an' I'll tear out their eyes with my victorious talons, an' then, Soarin' to my Erie on the bucolical apeckes of the onspeakable mountains, I'll laf an' flap my wings over Jeff, an' all his onmitigated minions 'till—'till; here the speaker was supposed to be interrupted by tremendous applause. But seriously, at this stage of affairs, when 'victory is perched on our banners,' and the great serpent rebellion lies powerless, in his self-imposed humiliation, we may be pardoned for feeling jolly, and excused if we give our patriotic sentiments free utterance, whether they fall from the lips of an Everett or a 'Spike.'

After nearly four years of darkness and doubt, the sunshine comes in with wonderful, almost dazzling effect, filling the air with gladness; then, the genius of our people takes strange shapes of thought; grand, serious, fantastic, as suits the temperament of the writer; its power of adaptation to any occasion is wonderful.—A foreseen event, that has cost the best contributor of the London *Times* five years' thought, is readily converted into 'thunder' as soon as it takes place, by a popular Lyceum lecturer, and is rolled off to an appreciative audience in the course of five consecutive minutes! Where *Punch* takes off one comic phase of life, the Yankee takes off ten, because he sees quicker and sees more, we do not say he sees further than his cousin.

We always appear very ridiculous to Johnny, when we get excited; and shall doubtless appear supremely so, when he hears that we are jubilant over the fact that we have accidentally crowded him out of that popular haven of his—Wilmington, while endeavoring to restore that hostile section of the country to the Union. We shall expect to find the next number of the *Times* less facetious than usual, but hope it won't be too hard on the *Crutch*, as its large circulation might give it an apparent advantage over our little champion for the right.

## Obituary.

For the Crutch.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

How sweet that rest, how blessed that benediction to the weary ones! These words come soothingly to our hearts as we dwell upon the sad events of death in our midst. Two of our workers so recently at their posts, have laid down to this rest, and have gone to their eternal reward.

The death of Miss Young, announced in the last issue of the *Crutch*, was followed in two days by that of Miss R. M. BILLINGS. For many months closely associated as co-laborers in this Hospital, they were not long separated by death. Room mates in health they laid side by side when attacked by the same disease, and after the fitful fever was spent, their lifeless bodies were together through the silent watches of a night in the room long familiar to both. Thus associated in their labors, and in their death, it is difficult to separate the thoughts of their lives.

Both had been long engaged in hospital service from a very early period of the war; both were earnest, devoted laborers, as ardent for the success of the great cause as any soldier who shows his battle-scars, as brave in the performance of duty as the best hero in the ranks,

as truly sacrificed for the country's cause as the warrior who breaths out life on the battle-field, uttering last words of courage, and devotion to the dear old flag. Miss Young left a pleasant home in St. Lawrence county, New York, soon after the commencement of the war, with her brother CAPT. JAMES YOUNG, of the 60th N. Y. Vols. For a while she shared his camp life, and was well known as a minister of good to all in the regiment. Her pride in the 60th was unbounded, and worthy a noble soldier—her faith in its valor never faltered. The 'white star,' the badge of the corps to which the regiment belonged, was also her daily badge, her medal of honor and her proudest distinction. The last conscious moments of her life were spent in thoughts for that soldier brother, between whom and herself existed the most tender devotion, and earnest sympathy. Her thorough identity with the soldier's life, and entire sacrifice to the cause was perhaps most fully and touchingly evidenced by the oft-repeated expression of a desire to be buried among the soldiers. When in usual health visiting the graves of those to whom she had ministered in this Hospital, she said 'if I die in hospital, let me be buried here among my boys.' This request was sacredly regarded; and on Sunday the bugle summoned us to the familiar chapel to pay the last sad offices to our faithful friend. It was strange to see her face still and cold, lying below the Christmas decorations in the chapel—hard to realize that one who had so often come there to say farewell to the remains of her soldiers, was now rigid in death.—The music from the choir, the discourse, and the prayer of the chaplain were all appropriate to the end of one whose life we could only think of as a *finished* one in all the work for 'life's great end.' At the close of the services in the chapel, the coffin shrouded in the flag, was borne by the stewards in uniform, acting as pall bearers, to the hearse. A large concourse followed the remains to the grave. The escort of soldiers accompanied by the Band, the attendance of the Surgeon in charge with the Medical Staff, the ladies associated with her in the work—all testified to the sincere respect in which the deceased was held, and the real sorrow occasioned by her loss. As she was laid in the grave, only the thought of her rest, and her reward came to mind, and while the Band played the sad strains of the dirge, our faith went up to the reality of the better harmonies of the Home above, with an aspiration that we too might be as ready to go up higher. Away from home and its comforts she lived a life for others—away from its peaceful rest, its quiet seclusion, she sleeps in the burial place of strangers. But as tranquil is the rest—as glad shall be the waking as though home and its endearments had sweetened the last hours, and held the sacred dust.

With Miss BILLINGS the writer has been most pleasantly associated in arduous hospital work. Meeting beside the couch of a sufferer, a sympathy in the work was established which never failed. The first watch kept with her through the weary hours of night in that dimly lighted fever ward, comes as vividly to mind as an occurrence of yesterday. This first service for the soldier was in September, 1861, at the Patent Office, in Washington. That sufferer in the ravings of his fever, turned to her as to a sister, and she ministered to him with the gentleness of a sister—from that time, on to the day of her death, the one aim and happiness of her life has been to prove herself indeed a sister and a comforter to the suffering soldier. Though tenderly cherishing all the endearments of home, and dependent upon its sympathies in a peculiar degree, and having never before been long separated from the shelter of a mother's presence, she was only glad to give up all, and to brave discomforts and difficulties for the sake of those who had made the same sacrifice for the country. A holy principle of duty and self-sacrifice actuated her in all her daily walk. No service was esteemed too small to perform with alacrity for the benefit of the sufferer—no sacrifice of self she counted too great for the good of another. Thus while heart and hand were ever active for the comfort of the body, the dearest interest of her work was in speaking to those under her care of the love of Jesus.—Her religious life was ever active, and was peculiarly happy and peaceful in its character. Gentle, unassuming, and devoted, those who best knew her springs of

action traced all peace and joy to her ever present dependence upon her Saviour. Her hospital life in its dangers, led her into some scenes of hard experience for one so delicate as she. At Falls Church, in a field hospital, and again at Fredericksburg in the summer of sixty-two she was exposed to many privations, and much discomfort, but always the same devotion was manifest, and the same earnestness to do good. When urged by the beloved home circle to abandon the work, and come back to its quiet rest, she would allude to the expression of some grateful soldier's thanks, or to the pouring out of a broken-hearted brother's blessing for her kind ministry to the dead darling, and say, 'How can I leave such work—is not this reward enough for all that I can do?' 'Reward enough,' indeed, will be found in the deep gratitude of many a soldier's heart, who looking back to days of suffering, recognizes her presence as that of a ministering angel at his bedside;—'reward enough' in the record of the death of many whose eye she turned to the Lamb of God, and taught them thus to find peace at the last;—'reward enough' dear friend, above and beyond all, you have found in the presence of Him who said: 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' The unusual labors of the past few months proved too much for her already enfeebled constitution, days of weariness, and frequent nights of watching had exhausted her, and when attacked by the disease which proved fatal, there was no vital energy to withstand the shock. She failed rapidly, and died in two weeks after the sickness developed itself. Nearly all the time unconscious, she was unable to express her thoughts in view of death, but we know from her life here, what the life hereafter shall be for her. She was permitted to welcome at her bedside the dear faces of mother and sister, and we can but believe that it would have been her choice to lay off her armor in the familiar scenes of her long and faithful labors. Her remains were taken home to rest—to be laid tenderly beside others who have gone before her to the spirit world. After a brief service at the Ladies' House, her remains were accompanied to the depot by the Hospital Band and escort, the chaplains, and her sisters in the work.

Thus out of our midst have gone two earnest, faithful women—willing, noble sacrifices to the cause which binds all loyal hearts in sympathy. For them we can scarcely weep—for 'they rest from their labors;' for the dear ones left desolate we have truest sympathy, and prayers that the God of all comfort will be near them; for ourselves—let us take this sad lesson to our hearts—let us wake to greater diligence in every good work—to follow their faithful examples—not knowing how soon we too may be called to lay down the work and burden of life. 'Be we also ready.' C.

A PRETTY MOWER IN SAXONY.—At Dresden I saw the Sistine Madonna with inexpressible delight; but I saw another sight not quite so poetical an ideal, yet still to be looked upon with interest and pleasure. One day I was walking through the public square to the picture gallery. I happened to notice a woman mowing. I stopped; sat down and looked at her for half an hour. She was apparently two or three and twenty. Her head was finely formed, and set firmly on her shoulders. Her hair was neatly braided round it; her features were regular; complexion brown as a berry; form vigorous, well rounded like that of Dorothea in Goethe's poem.—From her ears hung golden ear-rings. She wore a bright colored petticoat, reaching a little below the knees; her legs were bare, and her feet encased in embroidered shoes. She was the picture of health and robust beauty. She swung the scythe with an inimitable ease and grace; and as she did there was a placid expression on the pleasant countenance, which spoke of a good conscience, a contented spirit, and a willingness to the work which her destiny pointed out. I examined the swaths; the grass was cut as smooth as velvet; you could not tell where one swath commenced and the other ended and the next began. An English lawn looked no smoother. It was the work of art; and an American farmer might have taken a useful lesson. I wish I could have taken her portrait as she stood before me.