

THE CRUTCH.

Charles Boswell, - - - - - Publisher.

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, MAR. 25, 1865.

Editorial.

A correspondent modestly requests us to change the name of the CRUTCH! My sapient friend what a vandal you are! Is your intellect in a healthy state? Change the name? Why look at the effect of it! There is not a more popular word in the English language than the *crutch*; its sound is not euphonious, it is true, but it has weight and meaning, and if you would pursue the thought it conveys, you would see how largely it enters into the practical and useful economy of the times. Philosophers, poets, artisans, and everybody but the lazy and timid lean on it, and look upon it reverently.

You suggest that 'the harp' would be prettier! My young friend, is your maternal protectress aware that you have strayed away from the precincts of the roof-tree? Or were you brought up by hand, and consequently without sage council in your early youth? What have we to do with such airy things as harps in these times? they are of no more account than fiddle-strings here in Maryland, where grand revolutions are taking place, and we are introducing the most sterling and substantial ideas into our 'new atmosphere.' Let me ask you what would become of the world, had all the Smiths and Joneses been left out because their names are not romantic? We regret our inability to gratify your taste, as you seem to be a cordial admirer of our unassuming little sheet, but this is not the time to abandon the CRUTCH, however grievously the sound of it may affect the nerves of some of its readers; neither can we console the dissatisfied with the old story, that there is nothing in a name, while the CRUTCH conveys so much.

For the Crutch.

Returned Prisoners.

We have had arrivals almost daily, for two weeks past, of released prisoners from the South. Like thousands previously received, their condition was a most pitiable one. But we rejoice that so many are out of the clutches of the rebel cormorants. May a kind Providence soon open the way for the deliverance of every man. All the accounts which these men give, correspond, and are the same sad story of starvation—want of clothing and every convenience to secure cleanliness or places of refuge from the chilling blasts and storms of winter. Many of them come with feet frozen. Hundreds were carried, mere skeletons, from the boats to the hospital. Those able to walk were evidently grateful to set their feet on freedom's soil once more. We have had conversation with a large number of these men—and have heard their experience of months in the prisons and hospitals in the South. These accounts if written out and published, would forever stamp the instigators and perpetrators of this rebellion, as beneath the respect of all civilized nations. At a future time we shall give some of these accounts in the columns of the CRUTCH. We have been looking over the diary of one who was, for a long time, a prisoner in Andersonville, Macon, and other rebel places of confinement. He was a young man from Michigan, the son of a Presbyterian minister. He lived about two weeks after being admitted to the hospital. He died in hope of a blessed immortality. The following extracts were taken from his diary:—

ANDERSONVILLE, GA., }
June 9th, 1864.

Oh! the cruelties, hardships and privations, endured by the poor prisoners! 'Tis more than tongue can express. The heart can only imagine them. It fails to conceive the true condition the poor prisoners have been in for weeks and months together. Here I have seen suffering and disease in most all forms, and had it not in my power to alleviate or allay the misery of one single sufferer. Since coming to this place there have more than 3,000 died: fully one-sixth of the prisoners in camp. Do our authorities know this? Do they know the suffering, misery and privation, endured by the defenders of the Union? Do they know that thousands live the life of hope from day to day, threadbare and naked—hoping every day for release? And do they know hundreds give up all hope, get discouraged, lose faith in Government, and just lay down and

die? Oh! how I have hoped, even against myself, and tried to keep up courage, and baffle it through; but it has been a hard, hard struggle. I have hope, not for my own sake only, but for the dear ones at home. How hard would it be for my dear parents to hear of my death in this place! But God in answer to their prayers has spared me thus far, and I trust to see them—my parents, brothers, all again. I have not heard from them for five long months. What a joy it will be after my release, and I am homeward bound, to breath again the pure native air of heaven—and to be greeted by smiling fields and verdant meadows, and a still greater joy to seek repose and quiet in the gratitude of home, which is full of a mother's care, and a mother's comfort—to again bring joy and gladness to the hearts which have so long been full of sorrow and anxiety on my account. I believe the day will come—will come soon, when the bonds of the prisoner will be broken, and the oppressed go free. As the days go by I have a stronger and stronger faith of a speedy release. And then to my fatherland, then to my home! Then warm greetings from parents, from brothers and friends; for I have not forgotten them yet—no I have not forgotten them! Let me have patience—the patience of hope, and all will be well.

September 8th, 1864.

I was called up at 2 o'clock this morning—got on the cars and started at 4 o'clock. I was glad to leave the miserable stockade, the living grave. Thank God for it. Passed through Macon—I heard there that we were going to another prison—I felt quite discouraged—thought of escaping to-day. Rations of corn-bread and boiled bacon.

ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE.

September 9th, 1864.

Early this morning, at 3 o'clock, made my escape from off the cars between Augusta and Macon, by cutting a hole in the cars.—'Thank the Lord, His mercy endureth forever.' I made my way through several fields in a northerly direction, I could not go far, for I was so sick and weak with diarrhoea and fever. Dug a hole in the ground with my case-knife for water, the water rose brackish and bad, I dare not use but little at a time.

On the 10th, at daylight, started north again, had to rest every little ways, I was so very weak, I found a fire in a cornfield; brought some along with me, I stopped and dug another hole for water to wet my parched lips.

Sunday the 11th, opened warm. Last night I journeyed northerly and westerly, till the moon was near gone down, then I slept till daylight near a cornfield, went searching through the cornfield for fire to cook me something to eat, found some beans, they were green; I was obliged to go to a negro cabin for fire; was treated very kindly, and a large corn-cake and stewed fresh pork enough for three meals was given me without even asking for it. They told me which way to go, and wished me all the luck in the world. They saw hard times.

Monday, 12th, I was so weak I could not go far, I went towards the rail-road, then staid in the woods all day. Near night started again; just after dusk I was observed by a planter in his carriage, and stopped, took me to his house and gave me a good supper of tea, hard biscuit, pancakes and a hoe cake, and something to carry along with me, 10 o'clock took me to the cars, so I was a prisoner again.

On the 13th reached Augusta, I was treated kindly by the ladies and children, I was told we were going to Charleston for exchange, and all this sort of thing; my lips are so parched the skin peels off.

September 16th, 1864.

I am very weak and exhausted; I traded off some salt for two gills of meal, and baked it for my breakfast. No rations issued to day, and the poor men are suffering intense hunger.

September 27th, 1864.

Pleasant last night, slept but little, feel very weak. We have very heavy dews here.

Local and Personal.

DIVISION ONE was honored on Thursday, by a visit from Surgeon JOSIAH SIMPSON, U. S. A., 8th Army Corps, and Lieut. Col. JOHNSON, Medical Inspector, U. S. A.

On the 24th inst., this vicinity was visited by a severe gale, that did considerable damage among the tents, stripping the canvass into shreds, overturning tables, crockery, &c. The fine liberty pole in front of Headquarters toppled over, and several chimneys outside the Hospital were decapitated.

We regret to learn that REV. E. C. GUILD, Agent of the Sanitary Commission, at this Post, has been called from his efficient service here, by more pressing home duties and interests.

REV. JOHN F. MINES assumes the duties heretofore so satisfactorily performed by MR. GUILD.

Artemus Ward says that 'the chaps who write for the Atlantic, know how to sling ink. I went in an' saw 'em. I told 'em that theirs was a high and holy mission. They seemed quite gratified, and asked me if I had seen the Grate Origin. I replied by sayin' I had seen the monkie; and bid them a fond adoo.'

Talleyrand and Arnold.

One day when Talleyrand arrived in Havre on foot from Paris, it was the darkest hour of the French Revolution. Pursued by the blood-hounds of the reign of terror, Talleyrand secured a passage to the United States, in a ship about to sail. He was a beggar and a wanderer to a strange land, to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow.

'Is there an American staying at your house?' he asked of the landlord of the hotel; 'I am going across the water, and would like a letter to a person of influence in the New World.'

'There is a gentleman up stairs, either from America or Britain, but whether from one or the other I cannot tell.'

He pointed the way, and Talleyrand, who in his life was bishop, prince and minister, ascended the stairs.—A miserable suppliant he stood before the stranger's door, knocked and entered. In the far corner of the dimly lighted room, sat a man fifty years of age, his hands folded and his head upon his breast. From a window, directly opposite, a flood of light poured upon his forehead. His eyes looked from beneath the down-cast lashes, and upon Talleyrand's face with a peculiar and searching expression. His form, vigorous even with the snows of fifty winters, was clad in a dark, but distinguished costume. Talleyrand advanced, stated that he was a fugitive, and with the impression that the gentleman was an American, he solicited his kind feeling and offices. He poured forth his history in eloquent French and broken English.

'I am a wanderer and an exile. I am forced to fly to the New World without a friend or a home. You are an American. Give me then, I beseech you, a letter of yours, so that I may be able to earn my bread. I am willing to toil in any manner. A life of labor would be a paradise to a career of luxury in France. You will, please, give me a letter to one of your friends?'

The strange gentleman rose. With a look that Talleyrand never forgot, he retreated toward the door of the next chamber, his eyes still looking from beneath his darkened brow; he spoke as he retreated backward; his voice was full of meaning—

'I am the only man of the New World who can raise his hand to God and say: 'I have not a friend, not one in America.''

Talleyrand never forgot the overwhelming sadness of the look which accompanied these words.

'Who are you,' he cried, as the strange man retreated to the next room, 'your name?'

'My name,' he replied, with a smile that had more of mockery than joy in its conclusive expression, 'my name is Benedict Arnold.' He was gone.

Talleyrand sank in his chair, gasping the words, 'Arnold the traitor.'

Thus he wandered over the earth, another Cain, with the wanderer's mark upon his brow, and his sad fate is likely to be shared by others of our own day, who are proving traitors to their native land.'

SOMETHING TO SET US THINKING.—Ninety years hence, not a single man or woman now twenty years of age will be alive. Ninety years, alas! how many of the lively actors at the present on the stage of life will make their exit long ere the ninety years have rolled away! And could we be sure of ninety years, what are they? 'A tale that is told,' a dream, an empty sound that passes away on the wings of the wind, and is forgotten. Years shorten as man advances in age. Like the degrees in longitude, man's life declines as he travels toward the frozen pole, until it dwindles to a point and vanishes forever. Is it possible that life is of so short duration? Will ninety years erase all the golden names over the doors in town and country, and substitute others in their stead? Will all the now blooming beauties fade and disappear, all the pride and passion, the love, hope and joy pass away in ninety years, and be forgotten? 'Ninety years,' says Death, 'do you think I shall wait ninety years? Behold, to-day and to-morrow, and every day is mine. When ninety years are past, this generation will have mingled with the dust, and will be remembered no more!'