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Address letters to MILLHEIM JOURNAL.

The Crutch in the Corner.

[Written just after the war by John Mcintosh]

"Old Vermont."

"We had our room as cold as the hat
We had for the swamps and river.
Where we lost our master and tire,
And sixty more with the fever."

"Well, Tom, old fellow, it's hard enough,
But the best all the same, I know."

"The last stick of wood in the house
But that crutch in the corner yonder!"

"Sorry I listed! Don't ask me that, Tom:
If the flag was again in danger,
I'd aim a gun with an aching stung
At the few who were a brother or stranger.

But, say, ought you to have shot or shell,
Or been killed by them?"

Forever to doom a poor fellow to wait,
With that crutch in the corner yonder?"

"That crutch, old comrade, ought ever to be
A draft at sight on the Nation!

For honor, respect, and a friendly hand:

For clothing, and quarters, and ration!

My home, my wife, my sons, my House,

Where the bigbigs live in splendor,

And brag, o'er their wine, of the fights that

brought

Such that in the corner yonder!

"And Charlie—he goes to some place up town,
Snickers for a gun arrangement;

All well enough for a boy, but—"

But, Tom, his effect is estrangement!

I'd sooner have kicked the bucket twice over

By a shell or a round ten-pounder,

Than live such a life as I'm doing now,

With that crutch in the corner yonder.

"There's never nothing left to me or to sell,
And the whiteman's hand is on me now."

With my pistols and trusty sabre;

And those, by the sunlight above us, Tom,

No man can tell me that I have

Such that in the corner yonder!

"I can raise this arm that is left to me

To the blessed heaven above me,

And swear by the throne of the Father there,

And the angels all, who love us,

The last hand that I have

Wear over you stained and blundered,

And that crutch in the corner yonder.

"Do I ask too much when I say we boys,

Who fought for the Nation's story,

Now that the danger is past and gone,

In comfort we have told our story?

Such that in the corner yonder?

"And shivered our ranks, I wonder,

Had we known our lot would have been to beg,

With that crutch in the corner yonder?"

"There's little we hear of nowdays

But the soldier who fought and bled for both

Is left to his own destruction."

"Would be well, I think, in these nipping times,

For those Congress fellows to ponder,

And think of us boys who use such things

As that crutch in the corner yonder."

AN INCIDENT FROM

LIFE.

How damp and cold and foggy it was in Lambeth Palace Road one December evening. It was terrible noisy too, for huge carts, laden with heavy goods from the Southwestern Railway terminus hard by, rattled incessantly over the stones, and everybody hurried along to be out of the thoroughfare as soon as possible.

Three little urchins formed an exception to the bustling crowd, for they lingered for more than an hour round the big iron gates of St. Thomas's Hospital in spite of the constant knocks and pushes they received, custom having made them almost unconscious of such treatment. Besides, the attraction which kept them there was a powerful one. They had actually witnessed, while they awaited, the arrival of no less than three Christmas trees. Two of them, it is true, were only young fir trees dug up from a plantation somewhere in the country and sent straight to the hospital there to be dressed up in all their attractive finery but the third tree was a present from the wife of one of the consulting physicians and was already trimmed and decorated and covered with toys.

There was some delay in moving it from the light cart and carrying it into the building, and so the three small boys outside had time for a long look at it in all its beauty. One must be a child to understand what that beauty is; colored flags, gold and silver balls, dolls, trumpets, candies, crackers, sweets—these need a child's imagination to be appreciated, but we may perhaps, happily have enough of it left in us to know how much they convey to him.

The boys on the sticky pavement outside gave a long-drawn sigh as the beautiful tree went out of sight, and they turned away to their own usual surroundings—mud, fog, cold, discomfort, such as they had been accustomed to all through their short lives.

"My!" said one of them, Jimmy by name; "wouldn't I just like to be sick in there and have that there tree to play with!"

It was a sentiment echoed by the other two, as they edged themselves along the railing of the hospital, making their way back toward the room they usually slept in Lambeth.

"Well, we ain't sick," said another of them, called Peter, although the harsh, dry voice he spoke in his white, wan face might have told another tale.

"And so we ain't got no tree!" said the third boy, Bill. They had almost reached the corner of Westminster Bridge, in depressed silence, when Pet—as he was commonly called—suddenly stopped, and, with a smile that was pleasing enough to see, although his companions did not notice it, exclaimed:

"Ain't I got a hidea!"

After which statement he propounded to his attentive audience, ideas being, if not rare, always interesting to boys. And certainly Pet's was original and worthy of consideration.

He suggested that one of them

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A Sloshing Sloshvillite.

should feign to be ill; should get taken into the hospital, and when once there should see the tree in all its glory.

The plan sounded delightful, the only objection to it being that they could not all play the principal part in it.

They decided who should be the lucky one by the all-popular method of tossing, and Pet won the toss. This was fortunate, for besides having distinctly the first right to his own idea, which the lad did not think of, he was the only one of the three who would have been capable of acting his part; but Pet did not know this either.

"Then you are not ill, and have been giving us all this trouble for nothing. Why did you do it?"

He only gave Jimmy and Bill a few hints as to what they were to do, how they were to look as scared as possible when Bill's father came home at night, and how they were to say they knew nothing of Pet, except that he was suddenly "took bad."

Whereupon the "taking" promptly occurred, and with a thud that was unexpected even to Jimmy and Bill, Pet threw himself down at full length on the pavement. A small crowd instantly collected round them. Most of the people only stared a moment and then passed on; one or two expressed pity; and after a few moments the inevitable policeman arrived and pushed his way up to Pet's side, roughly questioning Jimmy and Bill. They whimpered a bit and looked frightened—to order, and the policeman, after rolling Pet over with his foot and finding him apparently altogether unconscious, said he must go to the hospital, and, with the help of a good-natured bystander, himself carried him there. Jimmy and Bill followed.

And so Pet had his Christmas tree, and Jimmy and Bill came in at the surgeon's invitation to see it, too, but Pet did not go back with them after it to Lambeth. He never left the hospital again, for consumption ran a rapid course with him, and before three months were over he died in the ward.

Florida Oranges.

In Florida, good land for orange groves can be bought for one dollar an acre. If the land is covered with wild orange trees, they only need grafting to become productive of good oranges. The land must be cleared, for in that climate all land that is not in use soon becomes covered with rank, luxuriant vegetation. Then some buildings have to be put up, and there also is the trouble and expense of evicting squatters, who are generally to be found in abundance on desirable land in Florida.

The expense for land is really a small part of the cost of starting an orange grove, and the reason that so many people fail in the business of orange raising is that they start with too little capital.

A young man with a few hundred dollars will go down there and think that, because he can get his land cheap, he may be fortunate enough to make a profit.

Then the surgeon, systematically and very patiently indeed, began at Pet's head and examined him down to his feet to find some cause for this extraordinary unconsciousness, and could find none. Disease he found indeed, for the poor little fellow's lungs were half gone, but as he said to the dresser: "Boys don't drop down unconscious from that!" Being strangely baffled, the surgeon ordered Pet to be taken to the children's ward, undressed and put to bed.

"We'll see what we can make of him then," he said.

It was not by any means easy for Pet to keep up his acting, especially when strong ammonia was put under his nose and almost boiling water to his feet, but he managed it, "more now from pride than from longing after the Christmas tree, even. Only when he was lifted by the nurse into a soft, clean, warm bed, such as he had never dreamt of before, that small closed mouth of his involuntarily parted, and something very like a smile, like the ghost of a smile, stole over his face.

The surgeon, noticing it, was struck with the idea that the boy might be shamming.

"Fetch the battery here," he said. Pet did not know what a battery meant, or his smile would certainly have disappeared as involuntarily as it had come.

The surgeon waited by his side, holding his small hand and thinking to himself that, shamming or not shamming, Pet had the most pathetic face he had met with in all his experience of sadness and suffering.

Then the battery was brought and a slight shock was administered from it down Pet's back.

"Oh! that was horrible!" thought the lad.

"What was it? Would it come again?"

He managed not to wince after the first time. A second and a harder shock was given. Pet did not quite

Scissors and shears!" yelled I, "I tell you I don't want to hear anything more about that blasted shindig, or me and Bill, or Jack Slopper's ranch or anything else that rioted around these diggings before the landing of Columbus. If you have any news—news that is news—just spit it out."

"Now, look a here, mister; never you mind about the landin' of Kerlumbus or any of the rest of them air forin' chaps; but listen to me and squirt that ink."

"Tangled snarles!" yelled he, "how easy to unravel! I have been poking the cobwebs out of my brain trying to think of some one fitted to fill my chair, while I enjoy a trip to Philadelphia, to attend the funeral of my lamented mother-in-law, and here comes Nimble Yankee Acker, Fsu, (my full handle) just the man for the place. By the flop of a fly's wing, I am in luck."

The die was cast, I was to run the Sloshville Cutter for one week, and at it I went.

"You want to be careful of your insinuations and bits of sarcasm," said the editor, as a parting caution, "for the people of Sloshville are a little nervous and a little excitable under the ticklings of the editorial pen; in fact, if I had my choice, I would rather tickle the hind leg of an army mule with a two-inch straw, than a nervous Sloshvillite with a forty-mile quill."

The next day the editor left for Philadelphia to enjoy the rarity of a funeral of a mother-in-law—it is usually the son-in-law's funeral—and I took up my task of grinding out items relating to Sloshville and vicinity.

I had not labored long, when in rumbled a huge specimen of a Slosher, who looked as though he had just crawled from under a land side. He wore a hat which had been viciously slashed by the scythe of time, the left side of the brim having been lopped off, as if to give freedom to the ear which meekly hugged the place which had in past ages given it shelter from the cold glances of a frowning world.

The other portions of his attire also attested to the changes which time may bring about during the flight of centuries—excuse the plural; the sun may never have shone in all its splendor.

"Did refugees at the dawn of the day; nor the benevolent moon cast its dim radiance in the quiet night, upon those garments for more than one century, but be that as it may, they were frilled and shaggy, like unto the eyebrow of Barnum's best monkey, and were in danger of being torn asunder when he sat down and began:

"Howdy, mister; so ye the fel's as is goin' ter run this here shebang while the ed'ter is off ter Philadelphia, eh?"

"I jest thought I'd scoot in and

get yer a pint or two about town-

doin's. My name's Hank Hankerson."

"Ah, Mr. Hankerson, glad to see you. Anything stirring about town?"

"Wall, 'now; I should say there was.

Do you think I'd come prowlin' round here if I had nothin' ter shoot off ter ye?"

"Wall, I rather guess not! I

cackle I am the man who can whoop up more Sloshville news for yer in an hour, than any other galoot could in a week."

I may have looked a little doubtful of his ability to fill the bill, for said:

"Don't catch on, eh? Wall, get yer

quill and I'll sling more gollam-

ized stories in fifteen minutes, than

yer ever herd whooped from one man's

tongue in a lifetime, or I hope a cy-

clone will scoop me up and drop me

from the highest peak of the Rockies.

Here she goes; now slop around the

imperial-looking man beside him.

"Vhas for?"

"To help put down the rebellion.

The time has come when every man

must show his colors. Are you for the

Union?"

"Vhell—vhell——"

"Are you a patriot, or not?"

"Vhell, I tell you it was. If dere

was oil in my land, I hold it for one

thousand dollars an acre and vhas a rel-

ief. If dere vhas no oil, I sell it to you

for two hundred dollars an acre and vhas