

OUR SECULAR STORY

Crippled for Life.

Crippled for life! None are able to fathom the exact meaning of those words save they, who, in the morning hours of life, with fresh, strong hearts, lithe limbs, and buoyant impulses, have, in a moment of time, felt themselves change to a mangled, mutilated lump of clay, yet with a thinking mind, hoping, confiding, loving, but—crippled for life!

In the late civil war that startled the nation from accustomed quiet, Frank Hamilton, heeding not the remonstrances of relatives and friends, enlisted as a private soldier in the—th Pennsylvania Regiment. Twenty years of age, ardent, courageous, energetic, honest-hearted, noble-minded, he carried his education, talents, strength, honor, his proud manhood, his life, and laid all upon the altar of his country,—a free-will offering there.

Beloved at home by all who knew him, his pleasing address and fine qualities won him also many friends in the army. He spoke of all men as brothers, members of the great human family; high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, elevated in station or steeped in sin and depravity, no matter, they were his brothers, and whenever opportunity offered, he rendered the service of a brother. He carried with him to the Army of the Potomac the religion of humanity, and not by bitter curses but by tender thoughtfulness for others, by example, precept, without money and without price, did he win the hearts of many of his companions in arms to turn from wrong and evil to the practice of the high and true virtues of humanity. It is no wonder, then, that he should rise in less than one year from the position of corporal to colonel of his regiment.

Among his correspondents was one whose letters were watched for, and welcomed with delight, whose every word was dwelt upon with peculiar interest,—Ellen Dale! Beautiful as a poet's dream of beauty, admired and sought after, she had given her word of promise to Frank Hamilton that she would be his wife on his return from the war. It was the remembrance of her smile that helped to cheer him when far from the scenes of his childhood; yet sometimes, when thinking of her, an undefined feeling would creep over him, and he would feel as though, somehow, for him, light had gone out of the world; but all honesty and confidence himself, his heart would admit of no doubt of one loved so tenderly.

At Fredericksburg? Who that participated in that terrible battle can ever forget it? Men hurrying now here, now there, charging, falling back, fire flashing up through smoke and dust, shells bursting,

meadows, fields, roadsides thickly strewn with the dead and dying men, who but a moment before were strong and active, flushed with health, and now, lying there so stark and still—Oh! it was dreadful!

Batteries, their pieces all powder-stained, and artillery-men, pale, exhausted, but resolved to stand by their guns while life remained; skirmishers creeping slowly forward through tangled brush, officers giving quick orders, men coming out of the smoke for an instant, then disappearing to be seen no more; orderlies covered with blood, rushing hither and thither amid the deafening roar of heaving artillery,—it was an exciting and long-to-be remembered scene.

There was one Confederate battery, heavily barricaded by felled trees, brush-wood, and stone-walls, which all day long had been pouring upon the Union forces a terrible storm of shot and shell, and doing sad havoc among the brave boys.

The —th Pennsylvania regiment, headed by their gallant officers, volunteered to demolish that formidable battery, or perish in the attempt. So with knapsacks thrown aside, muskets gleaming in the sun, on they went upon the half-run, now pausing one instant to take breath, perchance to give one thought to "home, sweet home" and its treasured associations ere they faced those death-dealing guns.

"Come now, boys! Onward!"

It was Frank Hamilton's clear voice that rang out upon the black, smoke-thickened air, touching every heart within its sound like an electric shock.

A few minutes of flash and clash, grapeshot falling like hail, slashing, cutting, crashing, and—hurrah! hurrah! and cheer after cheer rent the atmosphere, for that battery was in the power of the Union troops.

But gallant Frank Hamilton was down,—one arm gone, shot clear away, a sabre-cut so deep that one of those flashing black eyes must surely be lost, and two or three gaping bullet-wounds, causing every nerve to quiver with pain and agony, proclaimed him crippled for life.

Crippled for life! a most weak, dependent cripple! Oh, it was cruel to think of that noble, manly form so mangled, wrecked, and crushed!

But is it not better to be crippled outwardly than to bear about a mind dwarfed, a spirit shattered by ignorance and superstition? Could we look upon the interior man, that which is shaded and kept from the eyes of the world, how many cripples should we behold among those who wear the outward form of perfect manhood, and how many perfect angels among those whose outward forms are distorted and maimed!

Ellen Dale wept a few bitter tears when she heard of young Hamilton's misfortunes.

"It is too bad," she exclaimed, "he was so handsome! but of course he cannot expect me to keep my engagement now. He cannot think that I will."

But he did half hope that she would, for she was very dear to him.

"I am," said he, "no coward, no false man, and I fondly thought she gave me a true woman's deathless trust, but I was mistaken."

Not long after, Ellen Dale married Charles Linton, who did not go to the army, but who gave an examining physician a hundred dollar bill for a certificate testifying to constitutional debility, to be used in case he should be pressed or drafted into the service of his country, although he was in the best of bodily health.

Poor Ellen Dale Linton! No one should envy thee in thy luxurious home, for thy heart is beating sorrowfully to day, and thy only wish is to lie down in the still earth, for, when it is too late, thou hast realized that thou art crippled for life!

Winter snows and summer sunshine fall upon the grave of Frank Hamilton, and the scarred body is, sometime since, at rest. The consciousness that he was a cripple was not borne long, and very quietly he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

"My work," he whispered, "was finished at Fredericksburg."—[Susan H. Wixon.

A Good Answer.

An English rector preached a severe sermon on the eternal fate of the wicked, and afterwards sought to "improve" the lesson by personal admonition.\* Meeting an old woman who was noted for her gossiping disposition, he said to her, "I hope my sermon has borne fruit in your mind. You heard what I said about that place where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth?"—"Well as to that," answered the dame, "if I 'as anything to say, it be this—let them gnash their teeth as 'as 'em. I ain't."

Common Sense.

Two little girls were getting ready to go to Sabbath school, and they were late. One said, "Let us kneel down and pray that we may not be tardy." "O no," said the other, "that will not do; for if we take the time, it will make us later than ever. I'll tell you what let's do; let's run."

Lively Times.

Mrs. Goth—"I don't see how you can endure a little place like Lawn. Nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to talk about." Rural Guest.—"Land sakes! Why, our own church has changed ministers three times within a year, and the other church is having a row with theirs."

Count Tolstoi, Religion and Science.

BY MRS. M. M. TURNER.

In his preface to a pamphlet by Edward Carpenter, Count Tolstoi gives science a severe "hauling over the coals". He says:

"The strong, sensible laborer supposes that men who study and are supported by his labor, shall be able to tell him where to find happiness. Science should teach him how to live, how to act toward friends and relatives, how to control instincts and desires that rise within him, how and what to believe. . . The laborer is dissatisfied. He insists on knowing how to live. . . The essential thing is the total view of life, its meanings and aims. Science can not rise to that view. Religion alone can do so."

The count realizes that the present conditions of life are woefully unsatisfactory and unorganized. The laborer knows not where to find happiness or what to believe. The religion that, without evidence or prop, but with rack, fagot, social and industrial persecution, has dominated the world, in the name of God, for nearly 2000 years, has failed, according to the count's showing, to secure happiness, or to teach what to believe. He claims that science should take the human family into her guiding, loving, "everlasting arms", but says, at the same time, that she cannot "rise to that view; religion alone can do so". He does not say which of the religions, that have been struggling with the subject all through the ages, he means.

The count overlooks the fact that science is only now emerging, victorious, from her long, bitter, bloody warfare with theology; he does not recognize that she is yet surrounded by hosts of enemies armed with credulity, conservatism and inheritance and led by learned men who must crush her and keep her out of the field or be forced themselves to retire from their positions of emolument and power.

When the "fatal weapons of precision with which the advancing forces of science are armed" have cleared the way, when the truths of science are welcomed and honored by all, not alone for the mastery they give over the outer world, but for the clear light they throw upon questions of moral obligation, then science, with the energy of the uniform laws of the universe at her heart, will be fully equal to teaching the laborer how to find happiness, and what to believe. Theology has its unproved theories, but science has its demonstrated and demonstrable truths.

"The total view of life, its meaning and aims," as taught by the religion the count refers to, is found in the following passages from va-