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Poetry

THE PAST.

The Past, has passed, we never can recall it,
By taxing genius to its utmost power,
Vain the attempt, no art can e'er restore it,
Or snatch one moment from the by-gone hour.

The past has passed, and our young days departed,
Old Time keeps wheeling on his round of years,
Headless of those who linger broken hearted,
Wandering alone in this wide vale of tears.

The past has passed, and life hath many troubles,
Yet still this life must end and we no more,
We'll pass away like one of Ocean's bubbles,
That parts in sunder on the sea girt shore.

The past has passed, yet who e'er thinks upon it,
The present, is to us our only theme,
The future will absorb the past and present,
And all will vanish like a summer's dream.

The Past has passed, the Future we must meet it,
The Present we can only call our own;
Let's use it so that we in Faith may greet it,
The last dread trump that calls us to His throne.

A. J. M.

[From the Household Magazine.]

THE WAY OF ESCAPE.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

(Concluded.)

A few weeks afterwards I was present when a gentleman of large wealth and good standing, both in church and society, said to him—
"I didn't see you at my house last evening."
No, was the rather curt reply: "It is safer for me to keep off of the devil's ground."
I don't understand you, sir! replied the gentleman, a flush of sudden anger in his eyes, for he felt the remark as a covert insult.
Martin's face grew sober, and he answered with a calm impressiveness that caused the anger to go out of his listener's eyes, and a thoughtful concern to take its place.

I am fighting the devil, he said, and must not give him the smallest advantage. Just now I am the victor, and hold him at bay. He has his masked batteries, his enclanted grounds, his mines and pitfalls, his gins and miry sloughs; and I am learning to know the signs of hidden danger. If I fall into any of his snares, I am in peril of destruction; and though I struggle, or fight my way out, I am weak or wounded, and so the less able to meet the shock of battle when he rushes upon me as I stand on guard, ready in God's name for the conflict.

His enchanted ground is a social company, where wine flows freely. I speak of what it is to me, and call it, so far as I am concerned, the devil's ground. He caught me there not long ago, and me at his own advantage. But I will not again set foot thereon. If you, good citizens, make of your homes, in my taken hospitality, places where the young find temptation, and the weak, stumbling block, men, such as I am, must shun them as the gets of hell.

His manner had grown more and more impressive.

It is so bad as that? remarked the gentleman, in a voice that showed both surprise and pain.

Just so bad, Martin answered, impressively; I believe R-igart's oldest son was at your house?

Yes.
It was the devil's ground for him? An hour or two ago I saw him coming out of a school, so drunk that he could not walk straight! And only three days ago, his father told a friend that his boy had, certainly refused, and that he had more confidence in his future than he had felt for a long time.

You cannot mean—what you say? The gentleman exclaimed in visible agitation. I have told you only the sad and solemn truth, was Martin's answer; and if I had accepted your invitation, I might now be lying at a depth of misery and degradation, the bare thought of which makes me shudder!

The gentleman stood for a little while as if stunned.

This is frightful to think of, he said, and I saw him shiver.

It is the last time, he added, after a pause—the last time, that any man shall go out of my house weaker and more degraded than when he came in. If my offering of wine cause my brother to offend, then I'll get of fer it again while the world stands.

Ah, sir! answered Martin, if many, many more of our good citizens would so resolve, hundreds of young men now drifting out into the current of intemperance, might be drawn back into safer waters; and hundreds of others who are striving to make head against it,

saved from destruction. I speak feelingly, for I am one of those who are struggling for life in this fatal current.

The way of safety for a man like Martin, is very narrow and straight. If he steps aside into any of the pleasant paths that open on the right hand and on the left, he is in the midst of peril. If he grow confident in his own strength, and less dependant on that which is given from above, the danger of falling becomes imminent.

Martin fell again. Alas! that this should have to be told.

Was that Martin who passed us? asked a friend with whom I was walking.

No, I answered in a positive voice; and yet, as I said the word my heart gave a throb of fear—the man was so like him.

It was I am sure. Poor wretch! He tries hard to reform; but that cursed appetite is too much for him. I'm afraid there is no help. He'll die a drunkard.

I turned back quickly and without a response, following the man we had passed. Just as I came up to him, he had stopped at the door of a drinking saloon, and was holding a brief parley with awakened appetite.

In God's name, no! I said, laying my hand upon him.

He started in a frightened kind of way, turning on me a haggard face and blood shot eyes. I drew my arm within his, and led him away, passive as a child. Not a word was spoken by either, until we were in his office, which was not far distant, and the door shut and locked. He dropped into a chair, with a slight groan, his head sinking upon his chest. He was the picture of abject wretchedness.

"He leaveth the ninety and nine that are safely folded, I said, speaking in a low, tender voice, and goeth out into the wilderness to seek that which is astray."

He did not answer.

You have looked to the strong for strength, you have prayed to him for succor, and he has come very near to you and helped you. Because you again went out of the fold, his love has not failed. He has found you out in the wilderness, and brought you back to a place of safety. Only trust in him, and all will be well. He is the friend that sticketh closer than a brother. His is a love that never falters.

I waited for him to reply, but he kept silence.

It must have been no ordinary temptation, I said.

Still he was silent.

The enemy must have come on you unawares, I added, after a brief pause. The bolt must have fallen ere you saw the warning flash.

I was taken at a disadvantage; but I had time to know my enemy, and should have given battle in God's name, instead of yielding like a crows.

Such was his reply. It gave me hope.

Tell me the whole story, I said.

He raised himself to a firmer attitude; and I saw lights beginning to flash in his dull eyes.

Wounded again in the house of a friend, he replied.

What friend?

One on whom God has laid the special duty of saving human souls—our minister!

Not Mr. L.—?

Yes.

I was confounded.

I went to him for help, continued Martin, and instead of the counsel and support I then so much needed, for my old enemy, appetite, was gathering up his strength, and setting his host in battle array. I was tempted and betrayed! I should have gone to God, and not to man. With his Divine Word in my thought, and prayer in my heart, I should have opposed the awakening enticement of desire, as I have so often done and prevailed.

Tell me how it happened, I said.

As I have just told you, he replied, I was not feeling very strong. That old restlessness of which I have spoken, had come back upon me, and I knew what it meant. So, I said to my wife, I think, Mary, that I'll step around and see Mr. L.—. I'd like to talk with him. She looked at me with a slight shadow of concern in her face; for she had learned to know the signs of a coming hour of darkness, when the powers of hell renew their diabolical assaults upon my soul. Du, she answered; and I went.

I found Mr. L.— in his library, but not alone. Mr. E.—, the banker, had called in to have a talk with the minister about a college for theological students, in which both felt considerable interest. Funds were wanted in order to give the Institution the required efficiency; and the ways and means of getting funds were earnestly discussed by Mr. L.— and the capitalist. After an hour's talk, and the arrangement of a plan for securing the object in view, Mr. E.— rang a bell. To the servant who came in, he said something in a low voice, that I did not hear. The servant retired, but came back in a few minutes, bearing, to my surprise and momentary consternation, a tray with wine and glasses.

I saw a pleased light in the banker's eyes, as they rested on the amber-colored wine.

Some fine old sherry, said Mr. L.—, sent me by a friend abroad. I want you to taste it. And he filled the three glasses that were on the tray, handing one to his guest and another to me. In myself—my poor weak self—I was not strong enough to refuse. If I had looked up to God, instantly, and prayed for strength to do the right, strength would, I know, have come. But I did not. I took the glass, not meaning to drink, but to gain time for thought. To have refused, would have been, I then felt, to set myself up as a rebuker of these men; and that I had not the courage to do. No, I did not mean to taste the wine; but, as they lifted their glasses, drank and praised the fruity juice, I, in a kind of mesmeric lapse of rational self-control, raised my glass also, and sipped. A wild, fierce thirst possessed me instantly, and I drained the glass to the bottom!

A sudden terror and great darkness fell upon me. I saw the awful glow on whose brink I stood. I will go home, I said to myself; and rising, I bade the two men an abrupt good night and left them. But I did not go directly home, alas for me! I there were too many enticements by the way. Indeed, I don't know how or when I got home.

Of the shame, the anguish, the despair of this morning, I cannot speak. You don't know what it means—have no plummet by which to sound its depths of bitterness. I left home for my office, feebly resolved to keep away from temptation; how feebly you know!

If the good Lord who is trying to save me, had not sent you to my rescue, I would now be—oh, I cannot speak the frightful words!

"He never leaves us nor forsakes us," I answered. He is always going out upon the bleak mountains, to the hot desert, and into the wilderness of wild beasts, seeking his lost and wandering sheep. If they hear his voice, and follow him, he will bring them into his fold, where is peace and safety.

Good Shepherd of souls, my friend said audibly, lifting upward his eyes, that were full of tears, save me from the wolves! They wait for me in all my paths; they spring upon me in all my unguarded moments; they beset me everywhere! Good Shepherd! I have no help but in thee.

Breaking the deep, impressive silence that followed, I said—

"In him alone is safety. So long as you hear his voice, and follow him, so will he keep you from his murderous teeth. But if you go out of his sheep fold, and trust in your own strength to overcome the wild beasts that crowd the wilderness of this world, destruction is sure."

A few years have passed since then, and Martin still holds, in divine strength, the mastery of appetite. The vile second nature he had formed unto himself, and which bore him down, for a time, in his steady current, grew weaker and weaker, as the new life, born from above, gained strength. In the degree that he resisted and denied the old desires, did they grow weaker; and in their place, God gave him purer and healthier desires, so that he became, as it were, a new man.

ANECDOTES OF CARLYLE.—The curious and "troublesome" style of Carlyle is said to be quite in contrast with his simple, straightforward way of talking. Hatred of sham is one of his notable characteristics. One evening, at a small literary gathering, a lady, famous for her "muslin theology," was bewailing the wickedness of the Jews in not receiving our Saviour, and ended her diatribe by expressing regret that he had not appeared in our own time. "How delighted," said she, "we should all be to throw our doors open to Him, and listen to His divine precepts! Don't you think so, Mr. Carlyle?"

The sturdy philosopher, thus appealed to, said, in his broad Scotch, "No, madam, I don't think that, had he come very fashionably dressed, with plenty of money, and preaching doctrines palatable to the higher orders, I might have had the honor of receiving from you a card of invitation, on the back of which would be written, 'TO MEET OUR SAVIOUR'; but if he had come uttering His sublime precepts, and denouncing the Pharisees, and associating with the Publicans and lower orders, as he did, you would have treated Him much as the Jews did, and have cried out, 'Take Him to Newgate and hang him!'"

On another occasion, when Ernest Jones, a well known Chartist leader, was haranguing in his violent manner, against the established authorities, Carlyle shook his head, and told him that, had the Chartists been living in the days of Christ, he would sent the unclean spirits into them, instead of into the swine of the Gergesenes, and so we should have happily got rid of them.

This delicate allusion to the suicide of the pigs so astonished the respectable representative of the numerous family of the Joneses that he said nothing more about Chartist that night.—[Editor's Drawer, in Harpers Magazine for Novr.

Mazzini has been excluded from amnesty.

[From the Pall Mall Gazette.] The Power of Declaring War.

It scarcely requires argument to prove that anything by which a nation is made to reflect before it engages in war, is of inestimable value to itself and to humanity. It is extremely remarkable, however, that although nearly all European States have now written constitutions, not one of them makes express provision in its fundamental law for securing to the people, or even to the Legislature, a voice in declarations of hostilities. Each of these constitutions adopts, as if it were a first principle or ordinance of nature, the rule that the war-making and peace-making powers belong as of right to executive rulers. We think it quite clear that this rule tends, and will continue to tend, to multiply and facilitate wars.—It is true that wars would not always be prevented by compelling executive rulers to take by some means or other the opinion of the Legislature or of the citizens. The people do not always suffer because the kings go mad together; and, with all deference to M. Louis Blanc, we must say we cannot acquit the French nation of complicity in the contest which is ending so disastrously. All the organs of opinion of which a foreigner can take notice—the executive chief, the Senate of nominees, the Chamber elected by universal suffrage, the press, and the mob of Paris—promoted or connived at the precipitate attack on Germany; and though no doubt exertions must be made from the weight to be attached to some of these formal representatives of opinion, which is quite incapable of verification, though it is unpopular with large classes of Frenchmen. But the Mexican war and the war against Austria in 1859 were unquestionably begun by the Emperor Napoleon without the smallest reason for supposing that his subjects wished for them; and in one case it is certain that the French people would have prevented the war if it had had the power; in the other, it is at least doubtful whether they would have consented to it. The Prussians are free from all shadow of blame for the commencement of the present conflict; but the war of Sadowa would never have been waged if the war-making power had not been exclusively in the hands of King William.—We are not speaking of the moral justification of any of these wars or of their political result. We merely say that in on the whole plain for the interest of the world that wars should not be waged, or that, if waged, they should be engaged in with the minimum of irreflexion and with the maximum of deliberation. Any constitutional rule which fails to satisfy these conditions is at once placed on its defence and can only be justified by the most cogent reasoning.

Is there really anything to be said for committing the power of making peace and war exclusively to the executive? In the first place, it contravenes the principle upon which written constitutions are founded. The main object of these constitutions on the Continent is not to give the nation a share in the law-making power, for in communities which have once placed their laws in order by means of codes the power of amending them is of no great importance, and is but infrequently exercised. We merely say that in on the whole once submitted to a constitution is well aware that he has surrendered much of the control of executive policy, and, to some extent, the selection of the men by whom it is to be carried out. But in the case before us the national act upon which the happiness, the comfort, the morality, and the lives of the people are more directly staked than on any other is more than any other removed from the control of the popular representation. So extraordinary an anomaly merits every sort of attention. We need not hesitate to assert that a rule which has nothing to recommend it on grounds of reason has its origin in literal and irrational imitation of the British Constitution. It is a case in which Great Britain the "mother of Parliaments," has propagated a mischievous error through the fictions which enumber parliamentary system. The one part of it which foreigners of more than average ability fail to understand is the relation of the Cabinet to the Legislature. The common continental notion is that Parliament dictates its policy to the Crown through its power over the taxes. This no doubt is the formal way of stating the constitutional doctrine even in England; but, though for some reason for other we do not often state the whole truth, we all of us know that only half of it is expressed in the constitutional common places. Mr. Hagebot was, we believe, the first writer who laid down in distinct and uncompromising language that the Executive Government of England is a committee of the two Houses of Parliament. The process of appointing this committee is perfectly well understood by every educated Englishman. The House of Commons, by a declaration of rule, a rule as clear as a vote after a division, nominates a Minister, and this Minister selects the rest of the Executive Government from the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The rule is not found stated in any law book,

or manual of parliamentary practice, or formal analysis of the British Constitution; but it is thoroughly established, and if were violated in any particular—if, for instance, the Queen were to give the Princeship to Mr. Cardwell instead of Mr. Gladstone, or to Mr. Hardy instead of Mr. Disraeli—the press, by a curious inversion of legal language, would instantly denounce the selection as grossly unconstitutional, and the House of Commons would show its resentment by stopping the supplies.

Our perfectly conscious but unquarred conviction that we shall always be governed exclusively by a committee of Parliament has led to many important results. One consequence is our neglect, perfectly intelligible when the reason is seen, to draw any clear or careful distinction between executive and legislative power. We allow text writers to lay down principles which imply that the Queen might undertake to govern, to establish the Imperial dynasty in France, and to rule to it the Isle of Wight. According to their theory the sole remedy of Parliament would be stopping the supplies in the first case, and the impeachment of the Ministers in the second. But so comfortably secure do we feel against any such madman of our Sovereigns that, on the whole, we prefer to exaggerate than otherwise the inalienable prerogatives of the Crown. Such exaggeration is occasionally found extremely convenient by Parliament. Some things it likes to do by direct action, but others it has an unconquerable reluctance to undertaking, and greatly prefers handing them over to the executive committee of Ministers working under its supervision and removable at its pleasure. How startling is the contradiction between the language and the truth may be gathered from the unquestionable fact that Parliament has handed over to the Executive the whole power and duty of originating laws—a duty, it may be observed, under which the Executive is plainly breaking down.

But these fictions, which are sport to us, are death to the copyists of our institutions.—With all the skill and sagacity of many of the statesmen from whom the written constitutions of Europe have proceeded, they have a great deal to often taken English constitutional writers at their word. Thus it comes that they have reserved to the Executive the exclusive control over war and peace. With such a reservation in front of the smallest consequence, nor would it be to the smallest of them if they were to have a version, before them of our Constitution exactly as it works, they would probably regard it as a very extreme solution of the question between king and people: the Sovereign would certainly take this view of it, and the citizens would probably think it simpler and cheaper to have a republic at once. As then, there is a present very little chance of European countries coming to be governed by Governments as completely the creatures of the legislature as is the English Cabinet, there is all the more reason why they should moderate by express provisions that disastrous liberty of the Executive which under the true English system is no liberty at all. The Americans, the only people who borrowed English institutions with a real knowledge of their working, did in fact attempt to limit the war-making power. We cannot say that the attempt has been specially successful, but the same influences which in the United States has all but swept away all checks, the irresistible growth of democracy, would rather tend to strengthen them in Europe. At all events the experiment is worth trying and worth recommending in order that it may be tried. These irrational immunities have led to at least two wars; and wars in Europe propagate their kind with a miserable fertility.

A CURIOUS CUSTOM.—It was a custom in Babylon five hundred years before the Christian era, to have an annual auction of the unmarried ladies. In every year on a certain day, each district assembled all its virgins of marriageable age. The most beautiful were set up first, and the man who paid the highest gained possession of her.

The second in personal charms followed her, and so on, that the bidders might gratify themselves with handsome wives according to the length of their purses. When all the comely ones were sold, the crier ordered the most deformed one to stand up, and after demanding who would marry her for a small sum, she was adjudged to him who was satisfied with the least; and thus the money raised from the sale of the handsome served as a portion to those who were either of disagreeable looks, or had any other imperfection.

A gentleman hearing of the death of another, "I thought (said he to a person in a Spanish) you told me that Tom Wilson's fever was gone off?" Yes, replied the latter, "I did so, but I forgot to mention that he was 'gone off' along with it."

Why do wild foal go under water? For divers reasons. Why do they come to the surface again? For sundry purposes.