

Selections.

THE PRESENT CRISIS.

[This sublime and heart stirring appeal was uttered by James Russell in 1845. It had reference to the great anti-slavery agitation in the United States, a movement that was not then as promising as the prohibition reform is in Canada to-day. Nearly every word of this great poem suits our present position.—EDITOR CAMP FIRE].

When a deed is done for Freedom,
Through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic,
Trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers,
Feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood,
As the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed
On the thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace
Shoots the instantaneous throe,
When the travail of the Ages
Wrings earth's systems to and fro:
At the birth of each new Era,
With a recognizing start,
Nation wildly looks at nation,
Standing with mute lips apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child
Leaps beneath the Future's heart.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth,
With a terror and a chill,
Under continent to continent,
The sense of coming ill,
And the slave, where'er he cowers,
Feels his sympathies with God
In hot tear drops ebbing eastward,
To be drunk up by the sod,
Till a corpse crawls round unburied,
Delving in the nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit,
And an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle,
The swift flush of right or wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious,
Yet Humanity's vast frame
Through its ocean sundered fibres
Feels the gush of joy or shame—
In the gain or loss of one race
All the rest have equal claim.

Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood,
For the good or evil to do;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah,
Offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand,
And the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever
'Tixt that darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people,
In whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals
Shakes the dust against our land?
Though the cause of Evil prosper,
Yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
And though she wander outcast now,
I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels,
To enshroud her from all wrong.

Backward look across the ages
And the beacon-moments see.
That, like peaks of some sunk continent,
Just through Oblivion's sea;
Not an ear in court or market
For the low foreboding cry
Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers,
From whose feet earth's chaff must fly;
Never shows the choice momentous
Till the judgment hath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger;
History's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness
'Tixt old systems and the World;
Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold ways the Future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own.

We see dimly in the Present
What is small and what is great,
Slow of faith, how weak an arm
May turn the iron helm of fate,
But the soul is still oracular;
Amid the market's din,
List the ominous stern whisper
From the Delphic cave within,—
"They enslave the children's children
Who make compromise with sin."

Slavery, the earthborn Cyclops,
Fellest of the giant brood,
Sons of brutish Force and Darkness,
Who have drenched the earth with blood,
Famished in his self-made desert,
Blinded by our purer day,
Gropes in yet unblasted regions
For his miserable prey;—
Shall we guide his gory fingers
Where our helpless children play?

Then to side with Truth is noble
When we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
And 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses,
While the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit,
Till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue
Of the faith they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes,—
They were souls that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for
Hurled the contumelious stone,
Stood serene, and down the future,
Saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice,
Mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood
And to God's supreme design.

By the light of burning heretics
Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever
With the cross that turns not back,
And these mounts of anguish number
How each generation learned
One new word of that grand Creed,
Which in prophet-hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood, God conquered,
With his face to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward:
Where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas
With the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready
And the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday
In silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes
Into History's golden urn.

'Tis as easy to be heroes
As to sit the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue
Carved upon our father's graves,
Worshippers of light ancestral
Make the present light a crime;—
Was the Mayflower launched by cowards,
Steered by men behind their time?
Turn those tracks towards Past or Future,
That make Plymouth rock sublime?

They were men of present valor,
Stalwart old iconoclasts,
Unconvinced by axe or gibbet
That all virtue was the Past's;
But we make their truth our falsehood,
Thinking that hath made us free,
Hoarding it in moldy parchments,
While our tender spirits flee
The rude grasp of that great Impulse
Which drove them across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain
them;
We are traitors to our sires,
Smothering in their holy ashes
Freedom's new lit altar fires;
Shall we make their creed our jailer?
Shall we, in our haste to slay,
From the tombs of the old prophets
Steal the funeral lamps away
To light up the martyr-fagots
Round the prophets of to-day?

New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth
They must upward still, and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires!
We ourselves must pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly
Through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the future's portals
With the past's blood-rusted key.

TOO LATE.

By ISABEL MAUD HAMILL.

Mrs. Ellerston was a beautiful woman, tall, well made, full of life and animation, and whenever she entered a room people turned to look at her. Her guests were unanimous in thinking they had never seen her look more lovely than on the occasion of a garden party she gave for the benefit of the society to help crippled children. She had none of her own, and this was the one sorrow in her hitherto cloudless married life.

What a gay scene it was! The pretty dresses, the exquisite flowers, the music of the band, and the happy laughter and clatter of those present. Claret cup, iced champagne, and various other refreshments, were served, regardless of expense, and many young girls left the garden with a flushed face and an excited manner. Amongst the guests was a lady upon whose sweet face when in repose there was a sad look. She was talking earnestly to a man whose appearance denoted him to be a clergyman.

"Yes there are more cripples made by drink than anyone here imagines. It has made me quite sad, since I have made enquiries on the subject, to find out how many young lives have been ruined, as far as this world is concerned, through no other agent."

"I don't quite understand you, Mrs. Graham. How can drink make children cripples?"

She smiled at him incredulously.

"Is it possible that you, the clergyman of a parish in England, ask such a question?"

He appeared ill at ease under her gaze, and replied apologetically:—

"Ah, well, you see, mine is a country parish, and we see very little drinking."

"Thank God for that! During the last three months I have myself discovered more than twelve children who have been made cripples, owing to the father's or mother's drunken habits. One woman let her little baby fall from her arms when returning home late from a public-house, and so injured its spine that the doctor says she will never be able to walk any distance as long as she lives. A father threw a brick at his boy of three years old, when mad with drink, and fractured the poor little fellow's foot so horribly that the surgeon said that the only chance for his life was to amputate above the ankle, and that had he to limp through life on crutches as best he can. Oh! it is heartrending. These are only two of scores of cases that I could name."

"Very, very sad, indeed; heartrending as you say."

"Then, Mr. Warren, ought we not, as professed followers of Christ, to do all in our power, both by example as well as precept, to put a stop to such things?"

At this moment Mrs. Ellerston came up.

"Now Mrs. Graham," said she smilingly, "I know you are trying to convince Mr. Warren that he ought to be an abstainer, but you cannot make us see these things as you do; and as to people saying that many of these cripples are made so through drink, I simply don't believe it."

As she turned to speak to another guest, Mrs. Graham could not help thinking.

"Ah, if she had a child of her own, and an accident befel him through this curse, she would speak and think differently."

Four years passed away, and during that time Mrs. Ellerston's cup of joy had been filled to the brim, for she was now the mother of a beautiful baby boy. The christening day had been an eventful one, and friends from far and near had come to witness the ceremony. Champagne—in fact, wines and spirits of all sorts—were much in evidence; the servants, too, were not forgotten, and a liberal allowance of wine had been allowed them in honour of the event. Alas! the nurse was one of that numerous and increasing class of persons who from inherited tendencies must either be total abstainers or drunkards. Since entering Mrs. Ellerston's service she had not tasted intoxicants, but being unable to withstand the chaffing and teasing of the other servants on this occasion she had yielded. After taking the baby to the nursery she laid it down in its cradle, and went quietly to the pantry, ostensibly to get milk for the child, in reality to steal wine for herself. Greedily she drank of the insidious beverage, forgetting all about her little charge, until a cry made her realize that she had not undressed and put him to sleep for night. Rising hastily, she stumbled, and feeling dizzy she clutched at the cradle, pulling it over, and throwing the baby heavily on the floor. In her excitement, hardly knowing what she did, she took hold of him by the frock, and let him fall from her unsteady hands. This seemed to sober her; she loved the child, and soothed and comforted it to the best of her ability; but never by word or sign did she tell anyone of the fall. Three weeks after, Mrs. Ellerston dismissed her for drunkenness, saying that her child was too precious to leave in the hands of a woman who drank. Did she realize how

she was responsible for the "woman who drank?" Not in the least.

Months went by, when one day the nurse told Mrs. Ellerston that "she felt sure something was wrong with baby; he screams awful when I wash him, and seems tender like, as though he'd been hurt," she said.

The mother's heart sank as she hurried to the nursery and took upon her knee her fair haired, blue-eyed boy, the joy of her life. A medical man was sent for, who, after examination, looked very grave, and hesitatingly said he feared there had been an injury, but he would see what could be done. It is needless to enter into the father's and mother's agony when by degrees they realized that their only child would never be as other children.

Yes Howard Ellerston, heir to a large property and only son, was a cripple, through an injury to the spine caused by a fall. There are many sorrowful ones on this earth, but no more sorrowful or more deeply repentant woman than Gertrude Ellerston. From the day she knew how her child's injuries were caused—for the woman, stricken with remorse, came and confessed all—alcohol was banished from her table, and she took up the cause of total abstinence with a burning desire to save others from suffering; but when she sees her boy drawn about in his invalid chair her face contracts with pain, and she murmurs, "Too late, too late, for my own child, but God grant it may not be too late to save others!"—The Alliance News.

CONTINENTAL DRINKING.

As drinkers of beer, pre-eminence is claimed for Germans, although other northern nations with more catholic tastes may rank with them as hard drinkers. The German, however, has great powers of suction, as Tony Waeiler would say. Only the other day a German youth won a wager by drinking seventy-five large glasses of beer at a sitting. He at once became a bibber of distinction. Compared with his ancestors in medieval times, and their feats in eating and drinking, he can only be regarded as a poor creature of moderate capacity.

Hitherto it has been the fashion to regard the southron as a temperate wine drinker. It is no longer so, for a taste has grown up for whisky and other spirituous drinks besides which vin ordinaire must appear a sorry beverage. The French, or at any rate the Parisians, are now regarded as being more addicted to alcohol than either German, Dutch, or English.

The statement is supported by a recent report of a great Paris hospital. Out of 1,000 patients examined, 70 in the 100 amongst the men, and 31 in the 100 amongst women were hopeless "alcoholists." The whole of the thousands lived in Paris.

One of the number, the keeper of a Paris wine-shop, gave the following account of his normal life for each day:—"At 6-30 a.m. I rise. At 7 a.m. I take coffee and brandy. About 9 a.m. I drink three to four glasses of white wine, and perhaps, eat a little therewith. Between nine and 'dejeuner' I usually take three or four 'aperitifs'—bitter, Vermuth, or absinthe. For my second breakfast, I have one litre of wine, and then coffee and rum. During the afternoon I take various 'consummations.' Between 5 and 8 p.m. I take some more 'aperitifs,' on an average about three or four. At eight o'clock I have my dinner, or supper, with which I drink one litre of red wine. Between that and bed-time I consume a few glasses of brandy or liquor." And yet, we dare say, the poor man was astonished to find himself in hospital after living in this generous fashion.—Leeds Mercury.

AN UNHOLY BOND.

Liquor selling is universally acknowledged a curse, but not yet a felony. The saloon victim is a social outcast, but the saloon-keeper and the brewer and distiller are the companions of politicians and princes. And yet civilization is progressing, though with dragging steps, for hanging to her arm is the rum seller. He claims her company and her protection. They are united by bonds of self-interest. They married for money, and though civilization has nothing but loathing contempt for her life-companion, there seems as yet no arm brave enough or strong enough to break the unholy bond which unites them.—Ram's Horn.