

The Mon-Trap at Ashdale.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Footsteps were heard-a form darkened the door-some one entered-but Mrs. Pratt did not look up, nor pause in her work. The sun had gone down, and twilight was gathering dimly. Mrs. Pratt leaned closer to the window that she might eatch the fading ays, and a little while longer contime her work.

" Sarah!" " Well?"

Mrs. Pratt did not turn nor look towards the speaker. Her voice was a low, sad murmur.

. Sarah !" The hand of the speaker now rested lightly on her shoulder.

With a quick movement, and with some surprise in her manner, Mrs. Pratt turned herself from the window. " O Edward !"

Her voice choked and her eyes filled with tears.

" Sarah." And Mr. Pratt seated himself beside his wife, placing his hand gently on hers as he did so, and looking earnestly and tenderly in her face. "Sarab, I have a little good ews for you; if good news can come in just such a shape. Old Killigrew i. dead." "Dead !"

Light and shadow were blended on Las face of Mrs. Pratt. Death is an awful thing, come in almost any shape it will; and in the case of a man like Silligrew it was awful in the extreme. Yet, the intelligence caused a throb of pleasure in the heart of Mrs. Pratt.

"Yes; he fell dead about two hours | as merry as a fiddler." ago, while standing behind his bar. hand, and a glass of liquor before him. I wouldn't like to go into eternity with all the sins against humanity that lie on his conscience. The very thought makes me shiver."

And Mr. Pratt shuddered as he spoke.

" Is the tavern to be closed ?" asked Mrs. Pratt, hope and anxiety blending In her voice. "I saw Parker, old Killigrew's son-

in-law, as I came along, and he told me that not another drop of liquor should be sold there while he lived. He means to farm the place himself. It's first-rate land, though neglected and run down."

"Will he keep his word ?" "Parker! Yes indeed. If he says

a thing, you may depend on his doing n. He has always been opposed to

the old man's keeping bar." "And what a curse to Ashdale that bar has been, G Edward !" No wonder Mrs. Fort was over-come by her feelings; no wooder she said that the bar had been a curse. Ten years before, as she stood beside her young husband, she had the proudest, happiest heart in Ashdale. Since then

the other side of Jerico!" he mutever comes of this rum-selling and rum-drinking ? As to the harm, one needn't go far to look for that."

At dinner time, both in coming home and returning to the store, he succeed- consequences. ed in getting past old Killigrew's "man-trap" without being hailed by the watchful landlord. But his good resolutions were not proof against the

young men who always stopped to had escaped them but it was not so, tears. They were in the tavern porch as he

cue from the landlord, who was keensighted enough to see what had been passing in the mind of Pratt, and came home with a serious countenance feared to lose a customer, assailed him and a dejected air. His wife noticed stronger than usual, completed the

overthrow of his reason. Could those thoughtless young men have seen the ashen, agonizing face of the waiting, anxious wife, when her tring he said to her, speaking abrupthu band came staggering in that evening, they would not have boasted so his voice that the sound cau ed a thrill gleefully of having "sent Pratt home

From that time the weak young man stopped almost daily at the tavern to drink. The temptation was in his way, he had not sufficient strength of purpose to resist its allurements. This was continued for months, nutil under the gentle, yet often tearful solicitations of his wife, he again resolved to stand up firmly against the pressure of a current that was too steadily bearing him onward to the sea of destruction. And he did stand up firmly for a time. But, in this contest, the odds were against him. Old Killigrew saw the struggle that was going on in his mind, and took a wicked pleasure, apart from his love of gain, in assailing the young man's good resolutions on every occasion that was

They had no power to do so, we

" The law !"

"Preposterous!"

sadiy true !

presented. Sometimes, after allur-ing him into his bar either through personal influences, or by means of gay young men who frequented his house, Killigrew could not induce him to take anything but a glass of water. Oftener, however, he gained his pur-pose more fully, and maddened the young man's brain with his flery po-

And so the work went on. There cannot go anywhere and be free from spi

The promise of that hour did not tered, as soon as he was fairly beyond prove vain. The tavern was closed, Swift was walking on the Phoenix the sphere of its dangerous attrac- and Edward Pratt went daily to his road, Dublin, when a thunder shower tions ; " or that I didn't have to pass business and returned home at evening came on, and he took shelter mader a it three or four times every day. If a soler man. If, as was often the tree, where a party were sheltering it three or four times every day. If a soler man, it, is was often the tree, where a party were sheltering old Killigrew lays hold of me after this fashion, I'm afraid my good reso-lutions are not going to be worth much. O dear ! I wonder what good around which soon waved fields of learned that it was their welding day; ripening grain-the ground had run to they were on their way to church, and waste before-he felt a desire to enter. now her white clothes were wet, and Musing thus, Pratt went on his way. At dinner time, both in coming home the store, he succeed-

Thus it went on for three years. In and there married them, their witthat time not a drop of anything in- nesses being present. To make the toxicating had passed the lips of Ed-ward Pratt. How striking the change his pocket-book, and with his pencil influences that assailed him in the in all around him ! Worn out furnievening. Later than usual he linger- ture was renewed ; abundance of good ed at the store, in order to avoid, by clothing for children as well as parents, lows:

so doing, the company of one or two gave an air of thrift and comfort. "Under a tree in stormy weather. Cheerfal, happy faces were seen, where drink at Killigrew's. He thought he before was sadness, pallor, want and

Three years of sober industry! How came along, and having taken their in that short time, had the wilderness been made to blossom as the rose! One day about this time, Mr. Pratt

with influences that he had not the change, but said nothing at firststrength of mind to resist. Just to waiting until her husband should speak "satisfy" them, as he said, he consent- of what troubled him. He seemed to and scramble through as well as we ed todrink a single glass. But that recover a little at the tea table, and can,-Rer. Sylney Smith. did not satisfy either them or the tay- talked pleasantly, but, after supper, cra-keeper. A second glass was al- withdrew to himself, and sat most of most forced upon bim; then follow- the evening in deep thought, with his ed a third, which, purposely made head resting on his bosom. Several stronger than usual, completed the times his wife, whose anxious altenlife. tion was removed from him scarcely

ly and with something so strange in to run along her nerves :

" Park sold his place last week." " He did! To whom ?"

" Mrs. Pratt spoke in a startling manner. "Tc a man from Brookville, who

is going to open the tavern again." If a heavy blow had fallen on the poor woman she could not have sunk down more gloomily. If a death pang had entered her heart, the groan from

her lips could not have been more fraught with agony. " He opens to-morrow," said Pratt,

in a boding voice. " O Edward !"

The unhappy wife arose, and mov-ing to the side of her husband, flung her arms around him, saying as she did so : "Let us go from here. "Where ?" was responded, gloom-

"Oh, anywhere. Death and eternal destruction are opening at your Bent rims, shafts, poles, hickory axles, etc. feet. Come ! come ! Let us flee ! for

"I have thought it over. Sarah,"

replied the poor victim, sadily. "We

was a pltfall in Pratt's way, and ever the curse. The law sanctions the evil,



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alas ! none was so humbled and griefstricken ; for in that bar her loved and honored husband had trailed his manhood in the dust of a debasing sensual-

ity. Then, Edward Pratt a kinder-hearted man could not be found. But he had neither a decided will nor strength of purpose. The current in which his life-boat happened to be usually bore him along; and even when conscious that it was gliding towards a dangerous sea, he opposed to it only a slight resistance.

Very soon after their marriage, Mrs. Why did they not remove this man-Pratt discovered in her husband a fondtrap?" is asked in a tone of surprise. Less for stimulating drinks. A prompt yet gentle and loving remon-strance accomplished all she had hoped answer. to gain-the dangerous tempter was banished from their house. All would have been well, from that time forth, law on his side. had not the tavern of old Killigrew. the only in Ashdale, stood directly on the way along which Mr. Pratt daily went to the store where he was employed as a clerk.

Often, in returning home, he would be in company with young men who never passed Killigrew's without a word with the companionable land-lord, and a taste of his well-mixed liquor. It was not in the amiable and compliant Mr. Pratt to say "no" on these occasions.

Soon his wife became aware of the temptation that was in his way, and of his almost daily yieldings to its en-ticements. She talked with him soberly, yet gently and lovingly as before. Her words aroused no impatience-no anger-no stubborn self-will. He loved her too well to pain her with even a frown.

" I'll not darken old Killigrew's door again if it troubles you, Sarah. I don't care for his liquor. As you say it does me no good." "I shall be so happy !" sobbed Mrs. Pratt, hiding her tearful face on the

breast of her husband. "There is nothing else in life to trouble me."

On the next morning, as Mr. Pratt was passing the tavern, old Killi-grew-who, if not behind the bar mixing up his tempting compounds, was sure to be at his door watching out for customers-called out :

"Hey! Neddy, my boy! What's your particular hurry ?" "I'm a little late," replied the

young man, evasively, keeping on his

"Stop, stop!" called the landlord. "Here! Why, my dear fellow, one would think you had the business of the world on your shoulders. A man should never be in too great a hurry to speak a word with an old friend. What's became of Phillips? I haven't

set my eyes on him for a week." "The truth is," said Pratt, who now paused, "it is the opinion of his iriends that he has been coming here too often."

"Pooh! Nonsense! Too often! 1 been drinking too much. It's ridic-nlous! And he is silly enough to mind them? Well, well! If he thinks he's years. Broadcast had he sown the ''I wonder where the in danger he'd better stay away. He seeds of anguish and desolation ; and in her heart and home had many of

Killigrew spoke contemptuously. Pratt feit the laudlord's sneering man-ner almost as much as if it had been Killigrew spoke contemptiously. Pratt feit the laudlord's sneering manner almost as much as if it had been soplied to himself. It cost him no light effort to say "Good morning," and passed on without taking a druk at the har.

and under the protection of law it id anon he stumbled therein. Ah ! if the pitfall could only have been re- throws out its allurements everywhere. Wh moved. It served to no use whatever; Oh, that I was strong enough to resist. gave nothing to the common good; Heaven knows how earnestly I have sought to overcome this fatal desire ; was a constant source of annoyance, injury, and loss to the people, of Ash-dale. It had been digged by Killi-of the accursed tempter my whole but the moment I come within sight grew, and was always kept deep and being is inflamed. Reason is abscurdangerous by him, in order that he ed-restraint grows weaker-and 1 might profit by the weakness and in- full under the luring gaze of a serjuries of those who weakly or unwari- pent."

"Why did not the people of Ash-dale cause the pitfall to be closed up? Would fail to cover with the dust of **Re** forgetfulness! Morning dawned at length. To one condemned to die it scarcely had broken more drearily. BR

"No power!" You may look surprised, but it is Pratt, as he pressed the hand of his

even as we say. Killigrew had the wife and parted from her at the door. G " Pray for me." Tears were in his eyes as he turned

Yes, for all you seem so incredulous. away; and her cheeks were wet. The The law of the State in which Ash- voice of Pratt was not confident. He dale was situated, provided, by spe-cial enactment, for the digging of just such man-traps as the one maintained spoke rather to assure his wife than his own heart. He felt that he was too weak for his enemies.

by Killigrew. And any person, not having the love of man nor the fear of God before his eyes, could, by the payment of a few dollars into the State treasury, obtain the right to make for himself such a pitfall in any his poor wife stood pale, tearless and heart-broken above the grave! He fell so low that he made no effort to you highway or street, in any village, town, or city in the Commonwealth. rise again—and died in drunkenness obt and despair.

It is true-alas! too sadly true. The poor widow was not long from wa Ore offi tion Witness the crowded jails, almshouses his side; and now his children's home is the almshouse. The "man-trap" in Ashdale is open still. And for the and insane asylums ; witness the crime, destitution and squalid misery that destitution and squalid misery that Ashdale is open still. And for the most rests like black clouds over all parts of privilege of scattering ruin and death ing that State where population clusters around him the new owner pays the Ye that State where population clusters thickly—and those licensed man-traps are to be found by the score in every neighborhood. It is true, alas! too a good one.

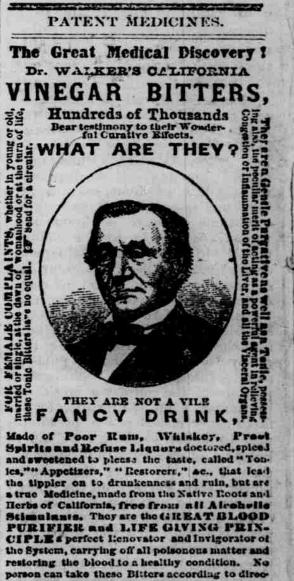
But for this pitfall in his way all Mrs. Jane Swishelm is in favor of night have been well with Pratt ; but men as cooks, and by way of illustrahis feet were ever stumbling on its tion relates the following; "I never knew the significance of the impulse fatal brink. Steadily, for nearly ten years, had he been going down, down, which leads all boys to want to bake down ; and at the period when he griddle cakes until I saw a French halt-breed from Selkirk, beside his ironcame home sober ; for the first time came home sober; for the first time in many months, and announced to his wife the death of Killigrew, he was almost helplessly in the power of his adversary. All manly strength was gone when the temptation was be-fore him. It was in vain that he went less cart on the open prairie. prepar-ing his evening meal. He had a large fish boiling on the coals without any fish boiling on the coals without any intervention of a gridiron. His bat-ter and his 'flapjacks' were in a buck-et. He heated and greased a long handled sheet-iron frying pan, poured in enough batter to cover the bottom. set it over the fire, kept on serenely attended to other matters, as though no 'flapjacks' were in danger of be-ing burned, as it would have been if any woman had set it to bake: but inst out in the morning strong in his purpose to keep sober through the day; the sight of Killigrew's tavern fired his appetite to a degree that left him no power of resistance. It was in vain that he started homeward in the evening, promising himself that he would meet his wife and children withany woman had set it to bake; but just at the right moment he came up, tak at the right moment he came up, looked in the pan, took hold of the handle, shook it gently, then with a sudden jerk, sent the cake spinning into the air caught it as it came down, A out a stain on his lips. Alas ! he could not bear onward against the whiripool of desire that instantly en-compassed him when he came within fatal proximity to Killigrew's. square in the centre, witht he other side

Well might his sorrowing. despair-ing wife feel a thrill of pleasure in man could have turned it, and with an never saw him when I thought he'd every heart-fibre at the announcement | ease which showed that the man was

> "I wonder where those clouds are going?" sighed Flora pensively, as she pointed with her thin, delicate finger to the heavy funeral masses that Will floated lazily in the sky. "I think van they are going to thunder," said her brother.

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