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THE GLASS OF LEMONADE!

OR, THE VICTIM OF A JOKE!

(From the Teetotal Times.)

"I shall return at an early hour," said Edward Lee, as he left his home to attend the funeral of a relative. "How happy am I," thought Ellen, as she stood at the window with her children, "watching papa," till he was lost in the distance; "he is the same kind, attentive creature that he was when first I knew him; how much, under God, has teetotalism done for us!"

Edward Lee was naturally amiable and intelligent; he had received a superior education, and he gave promise of becoming eminent in the medical profession. In early life he wedded Ellen Baker, who never gave him reason to repent his choice. For some time after their marriage, prosperity and happiness dwelt with this affectionate pair.— Alas! Edward L., not having his very affable disposition under proper control, was, by degrees, led into company and intemperate habits, which proved his ruin, and he was at length thrown into gaol. However, on his liberation from prison, he assiduously endeavoured to retrieve his character and fortune, and, in some measure, succeeded. But he did not entirely abandon the cause of his fall, and, therefore, it was still his bane; and, notwithstanding his love for his family, the rebukes of his friends, and his own vows and prayers, he again became a drunkard! When the deepest misery was, the second time, staring this unfortunate family in the face, teetotalism was introduced into the town of B., and Edward and his wife were induced to take the pledge.

When sober, Edward Lee was ever persevering and clever, and now that his great stumbling-block was taken out of the way, he became increasingly diligent in the exercise of his profession, comforts, and even elegancies were flowing into his home. On the Sabbath he led his wife and children to the house of worship, and the joys of other days were returning. Such was the happy condition of this family when the scene with which our sketch opens, occurred.

Edward found a number of friends assembled to pay the

last tokens of respect to one departed. Solomon says, "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart." But in this our Christian country, mourning and feasting are often so blended together, that death produces a very different effect. Though the hue of death may yet be hanging over the spot so lately made cheerful and bright by the voice and smile of the deceased who shall be known there no more for ever; and the minister hath just said, to the rattling of the clods on the coffin-lid, "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," and hath admonished survivors of the frailty of humanity, and the dread realities of an eternal world; and, although it is reasonably to be expected that the mind is subdued and filled with serious thoughts, yet, sometimes, even among Christians, does the frivolity of the evening form a perfect contrast to the solemn engagements of the day.

On the evening in question, the wine went briskly round, as it would have done had it been a more joyful occasion.— Edward Lee was the only teetotaler present, and he was much rated for holding such anti-social views. His sisters, among others, tried hard to overcome his "absurd prejudices." After the conversation had assumed a different character, and Edward was earnestly discussing, with a gentleman, an interesting point, his elder sister approached him, and, handing him a glass, said, "If you will persist in teetotalism, taste some lemonade: knowing you were a teetotaler, we had it made; but, perhaps," added she, in order to make her motive still less apparent, "perhaps you may not take lemonade." "Oh, yes! I thank you," said Edward, "I should be glad of a little," and, taking the glass, swallowed its contents. It was the work of a moment—and he immediately discovered the cheat—it was an intoxicating liquor. The ladies tittered, and some laughed outright. They laughed, and so did the fiends of hell, who were narrowly watching them, and enjoying their sport.

"Poh! poh!" exclaims one, "this is making a serious matter of a good joke!" A good joke! to endanger the present and everlasting welfare of a fellow-creature! Surely you know what wretchedness intemperance had brought upon Edward Lee and his family—how dangerous a thing it was for your victim to taste the poison—how he had, ever so long as he tampered with the glass, been unable to conquer his ruling passion! Edward possessed a sensitive mind; he could not help feeling that he had been insulted, and that he was the laughing-stock of the company; but, unfortunately, he gave way to foolish feelings, instead of lifting his heart to the only Source of Strength. He left the party at an early hour, but he returned not home that evening.

Ellen sat in the comfortable parlour, her attention divided between a pious volume and a lovely babe that slumbered in the cot beside her: she had thought much, during the evening, of present and anticipated happiness, and all seemed brighter by contrast with the chequered past. Time flew, but her husband came not, and Ellen, supposing that he was detained by some one who required medical assistance, and her maid favourably conjecturing as to her master's absence, retired to rest. But morning came, and the day stole away,