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## Wine at the Board.—A Sketch.

BY EDLA.

I saw him when youth first crowned him with her verdant wreath. His form was erect—his eye bright, and his lofty forehead gave evidence of no common order of intellect.

I watched him with interest as he climbed the hill of science, and reached with eager hands for the rich clusters on the tree of knowledge. I saw him as he stood by the fireside, his young heart freighted with warm affections, and bounding with hope, the brightest jewel in the casket of home. But, even as I looked, my heart sank within me, and I trembled with undefined forebodings: for at the board I saw the wine-cup circling, and, as the ruddy liquid sparkled, I could not but see, following in its wake, all the fearful train of self-inflicted miseries, which ends for this life, in the Drunkard's grave, and the Drunkard's doom of unspeakable anguish in the life to come.

I ventured to remonstrate with the father, who, for the sake of *custom*, could place such a temptation in the way of an only son: but I was told that my fears were groundless—that there was no danger. His was an *old family*, and though for generations the choicest wines had sparkled at the family board, no one had disgraced the noble name he bore.

I saw that words were unavailing; but I did not the less tremble for the result. As I looked on, my fears did, indeed, seem groundless.

Young H— entered College, and, at the end of his course, graduated with the highest honors of his class.

Now, life seemed to open to him a vast field, and his restless spirit went forth in its manly strength to explore and occupy.

Science spread out her broad expanse before him, and he wandered over it, gathering for himself rich laurels, and feasting his noble intellect on her choicest treasures. Still he was unsatisfied. He longed to stand in the *ranks*, and fight the great battle of life, side by side with his fellows.

The arena of politics stood invitingly open, and through the long vista of alluring fascinations which cluster round a political career, he set himself high on the ladder of

fame, the admiration of the cringing multitude. For him Senate Halls glittered, and banners waved over battle-fields. Ambition beckoned him onward, and Hope sang her syren song in his ears. He was courted and flattered in the circles of fashionable society, where the beaming smile, and the ruddy wine went hand in hand.

Now, indeed, thought I, if he falls not, there will be little cause for fear.

Time passed on, and he led to the altar a fair and gentle being, and I heard the solemn vows which bound him to cherish, and protect her till death. Marriage vows! Words of deathless import! Yet how often spoken lightly, and broken with impunity! How many a heart, full of earnest affection, finds, in the bridal veil, a weight more crushing than the heavy folds of the pall and shroud!

About this time, circumstances changed my residence, and for a time I lost sight of the gifted H— and his lovely bride.

Now and then, rumors reached me of his brilliant career. He was rapidly rising in honor; but with these rumors were coupled vague hints of unnatural excitement, which I could not help tracing back to the fatal wine-cup.

Years rolled away, and I was spending some months in a distant city. It was late in the Autumn.—The leaves had already fallen from the trees, which here and there stood like sentinels before the rich man's door; and the bleak whistling wind was now whirling them up in little heaps, and anon sweeping them around the corners in wild commotion. It was just such a day as makes one appreciate the comforts of a bright fire, and an interesting book; and as neither business nor pleasure called me out, I had spent the day on the sofa with a book for my companion. As the day wore on, I grew weary of this, and sitting down by the window, gazed out at the tide of life which went ebbing and flowing past.

As I looked, I could not help thinking how many a heart, freighted with sorrow, mingled with the crowd. Now and then some elegant equipage rolled by, whose gay occupants seemed to give the lie to my sad fancies.

Among the crowd, my eye singled out a female figure, which, though clothed in the unmistakable garb