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## THE FIRST AND LAST CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF INTEMPERANCE.

"It was a misty morning in the summer of —, and I was making the best of my way to Tower-stairs, opposite to which the *Camilla* steamer was moored. She was about to go down the river, and I intended to be one of her passengers. The shops in general were still closed; but those haunts of vice, the gin palaces, had already opened, and a considerable number of morning dram-drinkers were seen going and returning. As I passed one of these buildings, a miserable looking woman came out, with an infant in her arms; both were dirty, and pallid, and exhibited the most obvious tokens of poverty and ill health. The mother was apparently too much accustomed to the poison which she had just been drinking, for it to produce any effect upon her; but the infant, evidently half intoxicated, was screaming and clapping its hands with unnatural glee. 'And this,' said I, as they passed me, 'is the first chapter in the history of intemperance.'

I was on board the steamer in good time; and so had the opportunity, as I stood on the after part of the quarter-deck, of observing the passengers as they came on board, — the bustle of shipping and stowing away goods, the leave-takings, and all those other incidents common to such scenes. The superintendence of the whole seemed to devolve on the mate, a smart and active seaman; for the captain had not yet made his appearance upon deck. This circumstance was explained by a remark of one of the passengers: 'Captain Franklin was in his cups last night, and has not yet turned out.' At length, when our time for starting had nearly arrived, he came out of the cabin. He was a stout robust man, of about fifty years of age; and, alas! at one glance, seemed to show a confirmed drunkard. The bloated countenance; the livid complexion; the vacant expression; the nose swollen and purple; the eyes red and watery; the shaking hand; the unsteady gait; were witnesses that could not be mistaken. He had not kept off the effects of his last night's debauch; and to the amazement then going forward, he had just sense enough to perceive that he should be a hinderance rather than a help. He took his stand, therefore, by the starboard gangway, and looked stupidly upon the bustle, till the steam was put on, and the vessel began to move; he then gave a few scarcely intelligible directions, and clambering upon one of the paddle-boxes, managed, with a sort of sailor's instinct, and by the aid of the mate, to give the necessary orders.

My companions were of a more motley character than the ordinary company even of a steamer. One group consisted of a Lisbon merchant and his family, who were trying the effect of travelling by water upon an interesting male, evidently in the last stage of a consumption. There was Lieutenant O'Flannigan, of the —th West India regiment, as he took great care to inform us. There were naval officers, and men of science, about to proceed on a voyage of observation, which would occupy them for three or four years, who were going to take leave of their friends, and to make their final arrangements for their long absence. And above all, as the most noisy and obtrusive of the party, was the mayor of —, accompanied by a

large number of 'the worthy and independent burghesses' of the same borough, who had come to town to give evidence on an election question; and who were now returning to their homes, unspeakably delighted at finding that members of parliament wore 'no better hats than themselves,' and that they might get as drunk as they chose at the cost of the member in whose interest they appeared. These, with a number of other individuals who attracted less notice, formed the society in which I was now to pass two days.

There was much that was absurd, but far more that was melancholy and disgusting, in this assemblage. In the course of our voyage, we had illustrations of the various periods in the progress of drunkenness; from that of 'His Worship,' who was only tipsy enough to talk obscenely, down to the beastly intemperance of his scarcely more vulgar companions, who speedily succeeded in reducing themselves to a condition in which they could just stand, by holding on; curse their political opponents; and vociferate their party cry, which happened to be, 'Orange for ever!' The more noisy, by a few additional glasses and a seawell, were eventually quieted; but the veteran toppers were not so easily disposed of. They drank, smoked, swore, broke indecent jests, and roared in shameless and boisterous laughter at their own coarseness; till the respectable passengers, finding expostulation useless, withdrew as far as possible from all association with them.

Meantime the captain, unlike the generally respectable officers in such situations, appeared particularly pleased at finding himself surrounded with people in many respects so like himself. Soon after breakfast he began to drink, and as the liquor operated, seemed to lose a degree of his stupidity, and exhibited a little more energy, till, towards noon, he was able to take the efficient command of his vessel. He continued to take glass after glass, till, by the arrival of the evening, he was thoroughly intoxicated, and only able to reel to his berth. We saw nothing more of him until late the following morning. The management of the ship was in the meantime committed to the mate, who, happily for us, was a sober and an experienced seaman. The weather continued very hazy, and our course was one well known for its shoals; so that the better informed of the passengers did not hesitate to express their apprehensions of the consequences of the intemperance of our captain. By God's merciful providence, however, we met with no serious accident.

Upon the second day matters mended a little. The drunkards of the previous evening were sick and sober. There were many complaints of headache, of the motion of the vessel, and the weather. Little disposition seemed to be left them to annoy their companions with filthy conversation, and even oaths were less common than before. About noon the captain had managed to get rid, in part, of the stupefying effects of his drunkenness the preceding evening; not, however, without repeated applications to the brandy bottle. As we expected to arrive at our port in the course of the day, he did not indulge quite so freely. It was late before we got moored; and, as I slipped from the ship's side, I felt thankful that I had escaped dangers so serious as those to which we had been exposed, and that I was quitting society on the whole so disagreeable. The last that I saw of the captain was at this moment. He was