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DEAR SIR,—As I perceive you have been generously induced to undertake, at your own risk, the publication of the waning "*Temperance Advocate*," for at least another year, allow me, as a sincere friend to "temperance in all things," though not a *pledge taker*, to send you, as a small offering for your first number, the accompanying admirable old sketch of "*The Last Hours of a Drunkard*," as more likely to produce lasting good effect upon many an unthinking victim of alcohol, than volumes of what we sometimes see marshalled in support of the Temperance cause. It has been in my possession above twenty years, and been read, and re-read I do not know how often, and never without tearful effect;—for surely cold and callous must be the heart of man or woman who could contemplate, even in fancy, so awfully appealing and harrowing a scene, without being moved.

With best wishes for your success, I remain, &c.,

A FRIEND.

Montreal, Dec. 25, 1848.

THE LAST HOURS OF A DRUNKARD.

Described by a Witness of the Scene.

There he sat—the fire within had dried up the juices of his body; his tongue and lips were swollen and blistered; his eyes, fixed motionless in their sockets, were staring wildly in all the unconsciousness of stupid and senseless apathy; his arms hung torpid by his side, while his once powerful and athletic, but now emaciated frame, shook like an aspen. There he sat, in the grey of a cold winter's morning, after his last debauch, and his wife and five miserable children were huddled together in an old flock bed in a corner of the room, without either food, or firing, or furniture. There he sat, suffering all the pains of internal misery, and external wretchedness, while Death was looking through the broken panes in the little casement, ready to lay his iron fingers upon him, and consign him to

the narrow house appointed for all living, and his soul, his immortal soul, about to be ushered into the presence of Him who has said that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

"I say, rouse thee, Mark Burton," said a little shrivelled and decrepit old woman who lived in the next room, and who had opened the door to me; "rouse thee, man; here is a gentleman come to see thee." The wife of the drunkard rose hastily, wrapped the tattered blanket round her sleeping children, and not having been undressed, she instantly came forward and inquired the object of my visit. "I have come," I replied, "because I have heard that your family is in great distress; and, if I am to judge from appearances, I have not come too soon."—"You are in time to save my starving children," she said, "but there is no cure for a broken heart; yet I bless you for the visit. These sleeping infants are the cords which bind me to this weary existence, and for them I am yet content to live."—"Mark Burton, rouse thee up, man," said the decrepit old woman: "speak 'o this gentleman." Mark Burton answered not,—he made not the slightest motion, nor gave any indication that he was conscious of what was going forward. "What ails your husband?" I said to the poor woman: "I have been informed that he is a drunkard, but something more than mere drunkenness appears to affect him at present."

"My husband," she replied, "was once a good husband to me, and he appeared for many years to be a good man; but he has fallen—fallen for ever—and *accursed drink has done it*. You see him in the same state in which he has been for the last twenty-four hours. I cannot arouse him. I have snatched but a few minutes' sleep during the night, and God only knows where my troubles will end. There is no cure for a broken heart. O my children! my poor starving, destitute children! I never expected it would come to this!"

"Rouse thee, Mark Burton—get up—speak, man—look about you," said the little shrivelled old woman, in a sharp, squeaking voice, and shaking him violently by the shoulders; "rouse thee up, man; there is, it may be, some bread for thy children." Mark heard not, or if he heard he answered not; so, turning to the little old woman, I gave her money, and desired her to get a fire and some breakfast for the family. "The blessing shall rest on you and yours; for the deeds of mercy, although forgotten on earth, are remembered in heaven," said the decrepit old woman as she hastily left the room.

I began to think I had got into strange company.