

THE LAST SONATA.

ARGUMENT.

This poem is founded on fact. A middle-aged, intoxicated man wandered into a city mission, and seating himself at the organ, astonished the audience by his wonderful performance on the instrument. To the horror of all, the music suddenly ceased, the stranger falling from the bench—dead!

In the introduction it is hinted that the drunkard's wife committed suicide after murdering her babe; and the terrible effects of the drink habit, once having the ascendancy, are brought out in the simile of the serpents that slew Laocoon and his sons. The thread of the narrative being resumed, the Sonata form is adopted in the changes of the metrisation when the story of the drunkard's life is reached. Modulations and cadences are suggested by breaks in the metre.

It only remains to add that the *scherzo* movement was suggested by a personal experience with a very hard drinker, who, in a fit of delirium tremens, became very violent while laboring under the hallucination that the fiend was counting the money he had spent in drink, using his little daughter's coffin as a cash-box.