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THE LAST GLASS.

How insatiate is the appetite for strong drink when once acquired! What powers can break it but the force of love, or the very jaws of death!

At a fashionable hotel in the city of Baltimore, stood two men, one far wasted with the consuming breath of alcohol, the other, much younger, and just becoming seasoned to its destructive effects. The decanters were paraded, and each helped himself *ad libitum*. The elder of the two was noisy and rude. "Come, George, old fellow, let's have another drink," said he.

"Oh, no! Powell, not yet," said George Gordon, the party first addressed; "wait awhile, I have enough."

Powell became exceedingly uneasy; the thirst was raging within like a demon. He approached the bar, and demanded another glass. He swallowed it, and was drunk. The liquor had hardly diffused itself through his system, ere he wanted another. The bar-keeper had gone far enough; the last glass was not paid for, and when a man forgets to pay, then it is thought he is too drunk to bear any more; it's the same if he happens to want the finances.

"You have had enough," said the bar-keeper with rather more bluntness than was his wont.

"Who made you a judge?" said the drunken man.

"But come, let us have a drink." He seized Gordon by the arm, and dragged him toward the bar; the decanters were set out, and both took another drink.

While they were drinking, a great commotion was heard at the door; the bar-keeper hastened to see what was the cause, leaving his liquors exposed. Powell seized one of the decanters, and drinking deeply, hastened to the scene of confusion.

A young man, who had left the bar but a few moments before, in passing out, had been stabbed by a foe secreted behind the door, and was now *expiring in his blood*.

Gordon and Powell approached the door, and as the latter,

who was very drunk, stepped out, he fell to the pavement, gave one struggle, and *was dead!* His neck was broken.

The hue and cry was raised, and every effort used to detect the assassin of Thomas Crawford, the young man who was stabbed; the jury found no difficulty in making a verdict of willful murder, and the suspected party was arrested and thrown into prison to await his trial.

But how of the other case? Was that murder? The same jury brought in a verdict of "*death by the visitation of God!*"—Strange conclusion! both men were dead; one fell by the dagger, the other by the last glass; the first was murder, the second the act of a holy God!

Where was the difference in the moral agents employed? One man gave the dagger, the other the fatal cup. One may have been swayed by momentary passion, the other was actuated by a settled, deliberate policy of avarice. It may be said that Crawford was killed against his will, and without his consent, while the other was eagerly seeking death. How great a mistake! Henry Powell had no will—he could give no consent; but would it have been less a murder, had Crawford begged the assassin to plunge the dagger into his heart? Would a compliance with the insane request have been thought a visitation of Divine Providence? Still shielded before his legal bulwark, the license-holder will go on defying God and man in his fatal traffic, while he who extinguished a life in an instant, and at a single blow, without years of torture and misery, will probably perish on the scaffold.

The dreadful tragedy was not without its effect upon George Gordon. He had paid for that last glass, and he felt conscious of having been accessory to the death of Henry Powell. He returned home to his family, and the pale face of his lovely wife lighted up with a glow of joy to see him return so early, and sober, for he had been a sad truant for many months past. He related to her the circumstances of the "double murder" as he termed it, accused himself bitterly of the part he had acted. "I shall never cease to regret it," said he, "as long as I live." "Do not deal too harshly with yourself, my love," said she, "Powell could not have lived much longer." "Tis no justification," returned Gordon, "he was my friend," and he sat with his face buried in his hands, absorbed in deep and painful reflection. He was aroused by the entrance of his child. "Is there not some brandy in the house, Ann?" he asked. His wife replied there was, and hastened to get it; she was far more willing that he should keep it in the house and drink it at home, than disgrace himself by grog-shop revels. She placed the liquor before him.

"Ann, witness what I resolve." He grasped the decanter by the neck and hurled it with crushing force into the street.

"I have taken my last glass," said he.—His wife threw her arms around his neck, and gave herself up to the flood of joy.—

"Come to your father, boy," said he to his little son; "your father has taken his last glass, never do you take the first."—"Oh, there is no danger, pa," said the ruddy little