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THE
DEMON OF DRINK.

A POEM.

BY MAMIE LUKE.



Steaming punch one evening drinking, in my room, I fell to thinking
Of the tens of thousands sinking to the depths of dire disgrace;
To the depths of degradation, to the pit of ruination,
Through continued dissipation and its courses, which debase
Millions of the human race!

Sitting there, my punch neglected, its aroma scarce detected,
I most earnestly reflected, in the silence of my room,
On the appetite, unruly, swaying mortals so unduly—
On the ruling passion, truly, leading thousands to their doom,
Filling homes with grief and gloom!

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Oh, this liquor stimulating, ardent and intoxicating,
Ravishing and desolating, dragging thousands in the mire ;
Giving momentary gladness, bringing then regret and sadness,
Driving on to utter madness, with its demonizing fire,
Those who drink from keen desire.

Oh, this reckless imbibition! bringing down from proud position,
To a low and vile condition, men of brains, and heart and wit ;
Laying deep and sure foundation of disease and tribulation,
And insuring declination to the depths of ruin's pit ;
Drinkers, it is time to quit!

Thought I of some friends who, drinking freely, never dream, while
Glasses at the bar, of sinking to a level low and vile ; [clinking
But, who, business sore neglecting, from the rightful course deflecting,
Are most certainly connecting, as their moments they beguile,
With the downward train the while.

Thought of thousands now descending to a pitiable ending,
Health and time and money spending, which the wiser mortal saves ;
Thought of those who have departed, brilliant men and noble hearted,
Slain by RUM, and roughly carted o'er the stones to paupers' graves,
While for more the demon craves!

Thought I of the money squandered every day for liquor! pondered
I, and long, this theme, and wondered why men drank at such a cost—
At the cost of health and station, money and of reputation,
Peace of mind, and approbation of the people valued most,
And of time far worse than lost!

M. B. S. 15 York, 1922.

Then, my punch I sought, while sighing at the thought of thousands flying
To the doom of drunkards! dying day by day, and quickly, some;
Dying, soul and body, ever, plying they themselves the lever
Of destruction! fellows clever—many thousands yet to come—
Yielding to the demon, Rum!

As I sat, my nectar sipping, letting little draughts go slipping
Down my throat, my tonsils dripping with the palatable brew;
Suddenly was I astounded by a voice quite low, yet rounded,
Which, unquestionably, sounded right before me, closely, too,
And which thrilled me through and through.

“Heed thyself!” the voice said plainly, while I looked around, and vainly,
For the presence—no ungainly one, I felt, with voice so low;
“Know, young man, thou hast the failing thou in others art bewailing;
That thy coffin thou art nailing—sure thy work though passing slow—
And to ruin’s pit will go!

“Save thyself, then go save others, friends and strangers, all are brothers,
Most have loving wives or mothers praying that they may be saved;
Go and save, thyself first saving from that which will soon be craving,
Thy most precious soul enslaving, not as yet downright enslaved—
Check this habit so depraved!”

Hushed the voice which spoke the warning I was very far from scorning,
With the light upon me dawning, which, I pray, may dawn for all:
To reclaim the liquor-driven victims met with, I have striven
Late and early, and have riven chains asunder—saved from fall,
Some the demon held in thrall!

