

A VICTIM OF MOLOCH!

BY M.D.

OF all the opponents of drink, medical men ought to be the most earnest. The terrible ravages which this curse makes in our midst, are more frequently and fully brought under their observation, than under that of any other class of the community. Not only do they most plainly see its direct effects, but they are witnesses to what are sometimes even more serious, its indirect consequences; indeed these are occasionally of the most painful character.

One of my first cases on commencing practice was that of a beautiful little girl about eight years old. She was an only child, and her parents seemed almost to idolise her. Nor was this much to be wondered at. Her long flaxen tresses, blue eyes, symmetrical features, and rosy complexion were calculated to deeply interest all who looked upon her. That interest to me was of a painful nature. I was told that the child was naturally of a quick, lively disposition; but that for a few days she had been dull, heavy, and had complained of a rather severe headache, and that during the night she had been slightly delirious. I could get no further history of the case. The parents were, however, exceedingly anxious to know my opinion as to the child's state. I assured them that I considered it one of great gravity, so much so that I thought it would be well to have a second opinion. I asked a medical friend to see the case with me the next morning, as there was evidently impending inflammation of the membranes covering the brain. In the course of another day it was no longer doubtful how the case would end, the violence of the disease increased, convulsions supervened, and loss of consciousness followed. As gently as we could we informed the poor mother of what she might expect. Oh, the torrent of agony and distress which burst forth. Our efforts to calm her were met with anguished inquiries. "Can nothing more be done to save my darling child; oh, can nothing be done?" "No," was the painful reply; "we have tried everything we can think of. She is now beyond human power." A wild cry of distress and another outburst of grief was the response, and as we withdrew we could hear the cry of agony repeated again and again. In the evening I called, uncertain whether the fatal change had occurred or not. The poor child was *in extremis*, just breathing its last. The parents alone were present. They seemed to have no friends, or they seemed to want none. All they cared for was that child. As I approached the mother gave up the little hand, that I might try the pulse. Alas! there was none. The breathing consisted of fitful sighs, a longer period elapsing between each; at length there was a slight sob suddenly terminated, and all was over. I said very softly she's dead. "Dead," exclaimed the mother, "dead," as if unable to realise the possibility of death; "My child, my darling, my only one, dead," and she shook with emotion. Suddenly she stopped, her manner changed, the high flush left her cheek. She became deathly pale. "Doctor," she exclaimed, with terrible earnestness, "my child has been murdered." "Murdered," I exclaimed, thinking that she was raving. "Yes," was her wild reply, "and there stands the murderer," pointing with a venomous look at her husband. "There he stands. A fortnight since he came home drunk. My darling was always frightened of him when he was in that state. He seized her. She tried to get away, that enraged him; and as she struggled he took her up, and swung her round and round, and then threw her

down. I did not like to tell you. Oh, that I had, you might have saved her. 'Tis too late. She's dead, she's dead, and her own father is her murderer!" The man shrunk from her gaze, fell on his knees as if to implore pity, but he could only give vent to groans of agony, whilst the bereft mother relapsed into her outbursts of grief. I tried to soothe her, but in vain. I then went to her husband, asked him to follow me into another apartment, and after he had become a little calmer, I pointed out to him the cause of his misery, and of his great loss. Drink was the cause of all! I reasoned with him, and at length induced him to pledge himself never more to touch or handle that which had brought such misery and ruin to his home. Had I not already been an abstainer, had I not already been fully convinced that the drink was the greatest curse of my country, what I saw and felt that night would have sufficed to decide my conduct ever after.

TEMPERANCE AND THE FRANCHISE

most important bearing. Two of these have been prominently before us