Comrades, Fill No Glass For Me

It would have been well for Stephen Foster if he himself had heedful the advice he gave in this song. In 1855, when he wrote it, the habit of drink had probably not yet taken hold of him seriously. He was a convivial companion to his friends, and is known to have enjoyed boisterous gatherings, but he could still look objectively on the tragic consequences of alcoholism, and not realize how accurately he was describing himself as he would be a few years later.

"Temperance" songs were in great demand, and Stephen was probably merely writing a song for a highly profitable market.

The Hutchisons and the other "singing families" who toured throughout the country in mid-century were as fanatically devoted to the Temperance cause as they were to Abolition. Their repertoire included many songs depicting the evils of drink.

"Comrades, Fill No Glass for Me" was published November 23, 1855, by Miller and Beacham, of Baltimore. Unfortunately, Foster left no record of the royalties he may have received from this firm, so we cannot gauge how popular it was in its day.
To need my care, I know a hearth that once was bright, But blighted fortune, health and fame. Yet, though I long to drooping hopes have nestled there. Then while the tear drops quail the strife That passion holds against my life, Still, nightly steal From wond'red hearts that I should heal. Though boon companions ye may be— But comrades, fill no boon companions may ye be, But comrades, fill no

When I was young I felt the tide Of aspirations unfulfilled, But manhood's years have wronged the pride My parents centered in their child. Then, by a mother's sacred tear, By all that memory should revere, Though boon companions ye may be— Oh! comrades, fill no glass for me.