

## Selections.

### THE EXPLODED DEVIL.

Men don't believe in a devil now, as their fathers used to do; They have opened the door of the widest creed to let his Majesty through, And there isn't a print of his cloven foot, nor a fiery dart from his bow, To be found in earth or air to-day, for the world has voted it so.

But who is mixing the terrible draught that palsies the heart and brain? Who loads the bier of each passing year with ten hundred thousand slain? Who blights the bloom of the earth to-day with the fiery breath of hell? If the devil isn't and never was, won't somebody rise and tell?

Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint? Who digs the pits for his feet? Who sows the tares in the fields of time wherever God sows the wheat? The devil is voted not to be, and of course the thing is true.

But who is doing the terrible work which the devil alone should do? We're told that he does not go about like a roaring lion now, But whom shall we hold responsible for the everlasting row To be heard in Church and State to-day, to earth's remotest bound, If the devil by unanimous vote is nowhere to be found?

Won't somebody step to the front forthwith, and make his bow and show How the frauds and crimes of a single day spring up? We'd like to know. The devil is voted not to be, and of course the devil's gone. But simple people would like to know who carries his business on.

—C. E. in N. Y. Tribune.

### THE BROKEN SCHOOL.

#### A TERRIBLE WARNING.

The story that I am about to tell you, reader, is absolutely true in essence and in fact, save for the discretionary substitution of names of persons and places; and, if it should meet the eyes of any young man or woman who is just launching on the trying, troublous, tempting waters of this life, and who is wavering as to whether to join the ranks of the total abstainers or the moderates (membership of the drunkards' brigade being acquired through evolution of the latter), I trust its terrible teachings may lead he or she to one firm decision only. Nay, I cannot imagine, in the face of its ghastly tragedies, any free-will novitiate hesitating for a moment between the right course and the wrong.

When in my quiet, contemplative moments I look back on that broken school, of which I was at one time a prominent member, when I think of my jovial, generous, kind-hearted colleagues, and the fate that ultimately befell them; when I realize my own narrow escape from a prison cell, a suicide's grave, or the direst poverty, then do I wince, and shudder, and almost cry aloud with a fear that still inexplicably haunts me, although I know my danger's past. I grieve in the memory of the men I once loved, and in whose fascinating company I spent many, many pleasant, but sadly wasted, hours. They were witty, happy, careless fellows, with ne'er a thought of the morrow; but where are they to-day? Listen, and you shall know.

A good many years ago I was resident in a large provincial town. I had a good business of my own, the nature of which gave me considerable leisure time, cared I to accept it, instead of directing my energy into paths of further profit.

I was a young man with a light heart and a great love for merry company. A dear friend, the man I liked best of all my acquaintances, a well-educated, well-read, sterling fellow, whose friendship I regarded as an honour, and whom I thought the very soul of integrity and uprightness, one morning invited me into a tavern for a nip, saying, "Come, and I'll introduce you to a few of the best fellows you ever met in your life."

At this time I was, I suppose, what you would call a moderate drinker.

We descended into a sort of wine cellar, a quiet, cosy, alluring place, where there were assembled some half dozen young fellows, to whom I was introduced. They were all fairly well-to-do men, none of them earning less

than £300 a year, while one had a salary of £800 and another £500. The majority represented big London firms. Then there were one or two professional men, practising for themselves, and others in very good positions.

It was their custom to meet every morning (save Sunday), at this rendezvous, to have a drink and a chat; and, also, at other intervals during the day. I was very soon a full-fledged and popular member of the school, and a very regular pupil, too. I had never met a jollier lot of chaps in my life. I can hear the walls of that veritable little hell now, echoing our peals of merry laughter, our jokes, our witticisms.

Whiskey and soda was the general order of the day, but instead of having one drink, and then returning to our respective avocations, we found our own company so fascinating that it seemed we could not sever ourselves quickly; consequently it became the custom to seldom separate until we had consumed at least three or four drinks; and, furthermore, some of us invariably arranged, as our engagements permitted, to meet again in the afternoon. There was a little ante-room adjacent to the bar, that our school practically monopolized, so frequent became our visits to it.

Were I to tell you the number of drinks that I myself could, and did, consume every day during my connection with these fellows (and I was perhaps the most temperate of the lot), I fear you would hardly credit the statement. For nearly twelve months I continued this daily drinking, until the time arrived when I realized that, if I did not leave the town altogether, and so cut the cord that was binding me tighter and tighter to the stake of downfall, degradation, and damnation, I was a doomed man; I knew it would be utterly futile to remain in the district, even though I renounced intoxicating drink; so great would be the temptation to resume the life that had, I must admit, the greatest fascinations for me.

Prior to this decision I had heard certain rumours concerning at least two members of the school. They had been sadly neglecting their businesses, and much worse. But you shall hear all.

I sold my business at a great loss. I threw away excellent commercial prospects (I would not have remained in that town for £5,000 a year), and I went to London to live.

My great friend, whom I shall call Harry Hudson, he who, quite innocently, had been my introducer to the fatal school, promised to keep me posted in all interesting local news. Harry was a far-seeing, comparatively careful fellow, who knew where to draw the line, so that I feared not for him.

Some two months after my departure, I heard that one of the youngest members, who had been in receipt of £300 a year, plus a liberal allowance for expenses, had been discharged from his berth for embezzlement, neglect of work, and drinking. Poor Lionel!

My next information, but a few months afterwards, was to the effect that Charley James, a married man, with several young children, had lost his situation through having been found in his office by one of the governors, who had gone down from London specially to see him on important business, hopelessly intoxicated at mid-day. His salary had been £500 per annum.

The next news I read in a local newspaper that was sent me.

Tom Smithers, by far the wittiest member of that dreadful school, and a brilliantly educated fellow, with a truly great professional career before him, a man of 24 years of age, surrounded by influential friends, had been sent to seven years' penal servitude for the committal, while intoxicated, of an offence the nature of which I would prefer not to reveal in these columns. Poor Tom, he could no more have perpetrated such a vile deed in his sober moments than he could have flown. I do not know which of the two cases, viz., that which I have just related or the following, upset me most.

When you realize, reader, that I have been so closely related to these poor fellows, having been in their merry company almost daily for twelve months, you may be able to partially conceive the shock I received on hearing the news of these terrible tragedies that o'ertook them.

Again the local press told me a horrid tale. Twelve months had not expired, mark you, since I took my leave of

these fatal friends. Jim Holt, a handsome young fellow, with a charming voice that he knew well how to use when singing, and a splendid physique, had been found dead in bed, he having committed suicide by taking poison, when under the influence of drink. Embezzlement had also doubtless been a potent factor in prompting the taking of his own life.

The school was now rapidly breaking up, although there were still a few of the original frequenters left, viz., my dear, cautious friend, Harry Hudson, Philip Watson, and one or two others.

The next to collapse was Philip. He was the man in receipt of £800 a year, as representative of a large London firm. He had a fine suit of offices and a big staff of clerks; but the demon drink had got a firm hold of him, and one day he was politely informed that unless he cleared out of the country within a very short time, he would be arrested for misappropriation of money.

He quietly fled, and the last I heard of him was that he was a common messenger in one of the colonies.

You will remember the first case I cited, reader, of Lionel, the young fellow whose salary had been £300 a year. Well, I should further tell you, in reference to him, that, through great influence, another excellent appointment, worth, I believe, £200 per annum, was secured for him abroad. He had been a teetotaler since his narrow escape from prosecution, and had faithfully promised his friends to remain one all his future life.

He sailed for foreign shores, to take up his splendid new berth, with the best of wishes from his relations and numerous friends. He was full of hope and promise, but on the voyage he broke his pledge, and drank and drank to such an extent that, on arriving at his port of disembarkation, he was nearly insane, and had to be sent back home by the first returning vessel.

God only knows what eventually became of him.

Harry Hudson was the last prominent representative of that broken school; and so dejected and sorrow-stricken did he become when he reviewed the awful catastrophe that had overtaken our friends, that he decided to leave the town, and, like me, go to London, and try his fortune there.

He duly advised me of his decision, and, when he arrived in town, I immediately called on him at his hotel.

I can see Harry now, as I saw him on that lovely summer morning walking down the grand stairway to greet me. He looked the picture of health; he was faultlessly dressed, as indeed was his wont, and he wore a pleasant, hopeful smile.

Well, he settled in town, and eventually secured an appointment. We remained staunch friends, and many were the occasions on which we recalled the pleasant days that were once, and their dreadful, saddening sequel. I was practically an abstainer now, but Harry continued drinking, much to my dislike. He said he found it necessary to drown the thoughts of the broken school. As I have previously stated, he was a cautious man, and a fairly moderate drinker; but reader, believe me when I tell you that this so-called moderation in the consumption of intoxicating liquor is a misnomer, a snare, an *ignis fatuus*, a very devil in disguise. Beware of it! Shun it as you would the plague. Have none on't.

Harry was but human. Why, then, with all his caution, his moderation, his superior education, his refinement, should he be proof against the insidious fiend, the hell-hound, the murderer?

He was not. No, poor soul; he was not. He fell, and fell, and fell.

I could do nothing but look on and mourn. Advice he cast to the winds. The devil had him now firm in his grip, as firm as though he were within the jaws of a vice.

He lost his appointment; he sank, and sank, down, down he went, until within eighteen months of his arrival in London he was walking the streets like a beggar.

I and other friends helped him, so far as our means would permit. But he was too far gone. All he wanted now was drink, drink.

Think of it, reader, ponder o'er it. Picture the contrast.

A well-dressed, handsome, refined gentleman, walking down the grand stairway of one of London's best hotels—an interval of less than one year and a half—and then a drink-sodden, ragged, abandoned outcast. Great God! And this is what drink does for those who will not heed a timely warning.

Harry Hudson, the last member of that broken school, had to find shelter in a refuge for homeless, hopeless, penniless paupers. After a time he left this charity institute, and drifted eastwards, with the stream on which floats life's flotsam and jetsam. I know not what eventually came of him, but I found out afterwards that a writ had been issued for his arrest for fraud and forgery. Now, my friends, I have told you a true story of the wreck, the complete ruin, the awful catastrophes that o'ertook these personal friends of my own. 'Tis no fiction you've read, but bare, painful, stubborn facts, the memory of which clings to me with fearful persistency. I marvel at my own miraculous escape. The words "intoxicating drink," believe me, are but a synonym for hell.

Waver not, then, on the brink. Be strong, be determined, be teetotal.

Accept a grave warning from the tale of "The Broken School."

—The Alliance News.

### A CHRISTMAS TEMPERANCE SERMON.

"Will you please tell me where the 'Red Lion' public house is?" asked a woman of a gentleman walking along sharply over the snow-covered pavement of one of the smaller streets of London, on Christmas Eve. He was hustling home, laden with presents for his expectant wife and little ones.

She was meanly clad, and wet with the melting snow, which had quickly penetrated her threadbare garments; her face was haggard from want and sorrow; but her lips were set with determination, though now and then a tremour ran over them, whether from hunger, or grief, or physical weakness, or womanly timidity, could only be conjectured.

She was not going after drink, the gentleman thought. Despair had evidently nerved her to some desperate course repulsive to her nature. So he kindly pointed the way, and followed at a distance to see what came of it.

She passed on hurriedly, as if anxious to get through her task, or urged by some pressing need. Entering the public house, she called the person in attendance from his bar, and the gentleman who had followed her drew near and heard revealed one of the saddest phases of the accursed liquor traffic, but one, alas! too common in all our towns and cities.

Her husband is a working man, and, like the rest of his class, makes at least but scanty provision for his family in the winter months, when work is slack. He had drawn his pittance a day or two before, and, in the recklessness of desperation, or in the heartless selfishness of a debased appetite, he had spent it all in a public house, and been sent home penniless and drunk! And now, on this Christmas Eve, when neighbours and friends were preparing for their little festivals, there was not a crumb of bread in the house for the famishing little ones, and she was unable to appease their piteous cry for food! Surely, at such a season as this, he would give her a little of what her husband had spent at his bar, to satisfy the hunger of her children. It was an appeal to move a heart of flint, and the mute anguish in look and attitude was as eloquent as the sad, sad story that fell in broken sentences from her trembling lips.

The fellow laughed in her face! O, God! where were the lightnings of Thy wrath? All Thy ways are just, but sometimes they are past finding out.

For a moment the woman gazed with wild, startled eyes into the mocking face before her. There was no mercy there! Her nerves had been strung to the ordeal, but her last hope was cruelly shattered, and, bursting into an agony of tears, she turned and fled from the place.

Whither? To her desolate home and famishing children? or, through the blinding snow and piercing wintry blast, to the dark rolling river, in whose murky tide so much of human misery has found rest! If the latter, who is responsible for the drowning of the soul in the flood of privation, and wretchedness, and desolation, and blasted hopes that swept over that miserable home? Answer, ye who deal out the slow, but sure, destruction of the bowl!—Good Templar Watchword.