

WHAT WATKINS SAW.

My friend Watkins was never what you could call a drunkard, I can say that much for him at any rate. Still he took his glass of stout and his bottle of port at dinner; he was always ready for a tumbler of negus with his friends on an evening; and one or two of those who knew him best used to say that Watkins was getting rather fond of his glass. Well on the 9th of February last—I have the date before me here—Watkins was spending the evening with his cousin Bickerstone of the Insurance Company. They had a very merry evening of it together, and had some fun over a queer story that Bickerstone had heard the night before, about a man that had an attack of the blue devils. Bickerstone had just got in some whisky on trial, from Loban's vaults, and Watkins and he had a tumbler or two of toddy before they parted for the night. Watkins' usual drink was port—he rarely felt disposed for anything stronger; but this whisky of Bickerstone's was the finest flavoured thing of the kind he had ever tasted; and he said to himself, as he tramped away out of town towards his own house, "I'll order some of it from Loban."

By this time Watkins was fairly out upon the dark, lonely road. The night wind was blowing in heavy gusts, making strange noises in the air. There was one unoccupied house standing back from the road, and surrounded by high gloomy trees; and the wind was howling and shrieking so fearfully through them, that Watkins felt uncomfortable, and quickened his pace to get by.

Watkins reached his own house at last, and had to let himself in, for it was rather far in the night now. He locked the door behind him, left his boots at the foot of the stairs, and felt his way up to his own solitary room. Feeling a little lonely and out of sorts, he lighted his candle and poured out a glass of wine for himself. As he sat at his table, cutting some tobacco for his pipe, he thought of Bickerstone's whisky, and, as his desk was beside him, he had no sooner got his pipe filled and lit, than he took out a sheet of paper, and, by way of occupying his time, he leisurely and at intervals wrote an order to Loban for a few bottles of the same sort of whisky he had sent to Bickerstone.

The fire beside him was so low, that Watkins, after finishing the note, took his candle and went into his bedroom, where a cheery fire was burning in the little grate. The bedroom opened from the sitting-room, so that Watkins, sitting by his bedroom fire, could see away back into the sitting room by merely turning his head. He sat there smoking silently, and listening to the wind howling diabolically outside. Watkins doesn't know how long he sat; but the fire burnt down, and the wick of the candle grew so long that the room became almost dark.

I don't vouch for what follows. I have it only on Watkins' own authority; but Watkins solemnly declares that it is true.—Well, as I was saying, Watkins was sitting by the bedroom fire, half dozing, when suddenly he became conscious of a light in the sitting-room. He turned his head, and looking through the half-open door, what should he see but a tall column of faint blue smoke rising out of the wine-decanter that he had left upon the table. But that wasn't all: for just beside the table there stood a dusky figure, as of a human form, muffled from head to foot in a dark cloak.

Watkins felt his hair begin to stir on his head. He tried to rise but seemed to have lost the power. He now saw the dim figure move to his desk, where he had left the note

lying. It stopped there, and letting the mantle drop back from its head, what should Watkins see emerge from the folds, instead of a human head, but a skull and a thin neck-bone. The figure bent down over Watkins' note as if to read it by the faint ghostly light that rose from the mouth of the decanter; and there it remained for some time bent over the note as if counting it carefully. Watkins sat watching it in speechless horror.

By and by the hideous spectre put forth a long skeleton arm and drawing its mantle up in front of its hard grinning face, said in a strange unearthly voice, "Whiskey-demon!"

This it repeated three times, pausing between.

Presently something that thrilled through Watkins like a voice from the dead, was heard crying, "Who calls?"

"Your brother—the wine-demon," answered the spectre.

"The sign?"

"Abracadabra."

The word was scarcely uttered when, like a flash of lightning, there appeared on the other side of the faint upward stream of light, and visible as it were through it, another spectre so frightful in its appearance that Watkins felt the blood curdling in his veins. It looked like a fiend, and was wrapt in a long trailing shroud, stained here and there by splashes of blood. Its face was thin, sharp, and ghastly; two monstrous eyes protruding from their sockets glared wildly; and its long hair streamed upwards like sulphurous flames.

"My work is at an end here," said the first spectre, in a low voice.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the other with a wild, ghostly laugh, "is he dead?"

"No, not dead, but changing masters," said the wine-demon pointing to the note that lay upon the desk. "He is ordering some of the stronger spirit in. It is well. The way is shorter. The work will be sooner done."

"What were thy plans?" said the other.

The wine-demon made no answer; but putting his long skeleton finger for a moment into the stream of sulphurous flame that rose from the mouth of the wine-decanter, it drew a circle with it in the air. Watkins watched the circle of light as it floated slowly away from the finger of the demon; and lo, within it, as in a mirror, he saw a vivid picture of himself, changing every moment. First he saw himself just as he was; then gradually, but with astonishing rapidity, he changed into an old, peevish-looking man with a great red pimply nose, and his leg swathed in flannel as if he were racked with gout. Suddenly the chair in which he saw himself sitting changed into a bed, and a doctor and sick nurse were standing beside it. These in turn melted almost imperceptibly into a hearse and two carriages, which floated away, circle and all, and disappeared in the gloom. The spectres stood watching.

"Such was my plan," said the wine-demon.

The other spectre rolled its eyes wildly, and uttered a hollow, ghostly laugh.

"This shall be mine," it said; and putting its finger in the blue flame for a moment it swept it round in the air. In an instant, within the new circle of light that seemed to come floating towards him, Watkins saw himself with Bickerstone and a number of others, all of whom he knew, drinking glass after glass of spirits that seemed to be all afire with blue flames. Suddenly the scene changed, and he saw himself in the ward of what seemed a madhouse, his eyes glaring wildly, beads of perspiration standing on his brow, his whole face distorted frightfully, and three men trying with all their might to hold him down upon

his bed. Watkins gazed in speechless horror. Suddenly a shriek of mortal agony seemed to reach his ears, mingling with a weirdlike "Ha-ha! ha-ha!" from the two demons.

Watkins sprang to his feet, and in an instant the picture had vanished into darkness. The wind was whistling loudly outside.—Watkins looked fearfully into the sitting-room; but the demons were gone; the blue flame was gone; there was nothing there but the wine decanter, dimly visible upon the table in the flickering light of the dying embers.

Watkins began to breathe freely once more; but he had got a terrible fright. He could not sleep till he had gone and thrust the note he had written to Loban into the fire, and poured every drop of wine that was in the decanter out at the window, and made a vow that never a drop of liquor should enter his house again.

When Watkins told me this story a few days after, I said, "You must have been dreaming."

Watkins shook his head.

"Depend upon it," I said again, "you were dreaming. You fell asleep, sitting by the bedroom fire; and the whisky you had drunk, and Bickerstone's story about the man and the blue devils, made you dream about those two demons."

No; Watkins would not be convinced.—"Besides," he said, "I heard that shriek as distinctly as I hear your voice now."

"It must have been the wind whistling outside," I said. But still Watkins shook his head; and to this day he believes that it was all as real as real could be. At any rate he has kept his vow. Not a drop of drink will he admit into his house; not a drop will he taste anywhere else. And I am glad to say that Watkins is, in consequence, a happier and a better man. "It is my turn to 'ha! ha!' now," he says, "and when I do come to die, thank God, it won't be in the clutches of drink-demons." May we all be able to say the same!—*The Adviser.*

CAUSE OF FAILURE IN THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

Another cause of failure in the temperance movement of the present day, is the low and narrow range of motives which is brought to bear against the evil. The motives are drawn too exclusively from this life, and not sufficiently in reference to the spiritual interests, and the life to come. The temporal evils of intemperance are vividly portrayed, and this is well; but the great argument of the Bible is set aside, and often utterly repudiated. The chief elements of power in man are of a moral and religious nature. He cannot be mightily moved by appeals to his temporal interests. He has an immortal nature, with reason, conscience, and deep moral instinct pointing him to the moral law as the rule of right, to his accountability to God, to the day of judgment, and to eternal retributions. He must be made to feel deeply that intemperance is not only a great temporal evil, but a fearful sin and crime; not only a sin and crime against his body, but against his immortal soul; not only a sin and crime against himself and society, but against God and his law and government, a sin and a crime of the deepest turpitude, for the commission of which God says he will send the fearful retribution of eternal damnation.

The Holy Scripture, together with the tem-