

The Rum-seller's Vision.

Mr. James Farley has been a wholesale rum selling grocer for some thirty years; and while multitudes of those who have drank his rum have come to beggary—and, what is worse, to misery and death—he has from their rum accumulated a large property. Of the sad results of his business, he has often been told; nay, more, he has seen them with his own eyes, and his ears have heard the cries of woe that his rum have occasioned. Though he has never been with the philanthropist, to the hovels of the intemperate, to see and relieve the distresses of their miserable families, and has never read any of the tales of woe which have now and then obtruded themselves on his notice, in the papers of the day, but has studiously avoided them, still the results of his business have some times unavoidably stared him in the face, and then he has for the moment quailed. The home-thrust arguments of some faithful temperance man have sometimes too exceedingly troubled him. Yet he has gone on, year after year, heaping up wealth, knowing—yes, I say *knowing*—that it is at the fearful expense of the beggary, the woe, the ruin of his fellow-men. Wealth, and the honour that wealth brings, have so engrossed his heart that he goes on in spite of all the evil which he sees that he is scattering over the community.

It is true that he is not like the retailer—the *direct* agent in producing the evils of intemperance. He sometimes partially satisfies his conscience by this fact, and affects to despise the business of the retailer. But he knows that he supplies the retailer, and makes money by doing so; and he knows that he is accessory to all the woe produced by all the retailers to whom he sells.

One of the retailers who buys rum of Mr. Farley is Jim Galt. He is called Jim Galt, and not Mr. James Galt, because he is one of the despised dram-sellers, and not one of the wealthy and honourable wholesale dealers, like Mr. James Farley. So much for the difference between selling by the dram and by the hog-head. Among Jim Galt's customers once, was poor John Foster—a man, who, from being a respectable thriving mechanic, had become a miserable drunkard. His family consisted of a wife and six children. They lived in a dilapidated old house, hard by the splendid mansion of Mr. Farley. Mrs. Foster was in her childhood a school-mate of Mr. Farley. Betsey Case, for that was her name, was a universal favourite, and none was more fond of her than James Farley; and this fondness continued till riper years. And if she had so chosen she might have been the wife of the wealthy rum-seller, and the mistress of his mansion, instead of being the wife of the poor drunkard, (the victim of that rum-sellers business,) and the drudge, the slave, that tenanted his miserable hovel. But of the rival lovers, John Foster was the successful one. Years rolled on and brought to the happy pair all those joys which cluster around the virtuous fireside. But at length the spoiler came, and one of the agents in his ruin was he who so fondly gambolled with her in his childhood, and so warmly loved her in his youth; her misery was now uniting with the misery of a multitude of others to fill up his coffers.

One cold, stormy winter's night, Mr. Farley was sitting as usual in his cushioned chair before a cheerful fire, with all the comforts and luxuries of wealth about him. He had rolled out that day many hog-heads of 'liquid fire,' as he had done in the many days of the many years in which he had followed this lucrative but wretched business, deaf, to all the cries and groans of its victims. As he sat there thinking over, not the results of his business, (the rum-seller shuts these out of his thoughts as much as he can,) but his ill-gotten gains, Mrs. Foster appeared before him. She was by no means a welcome visitor, for as he knew that Foster bought rum principally of one of his customers, he felt guilty and ashamed in her presence. Here stood before him a palpable instance of the deadly evils of his business, and that, too, in the person of one whom he ardently loved, and he could not help feeling a little uncomfortable.

'Well, Betsey,' said he, turning his head a little one side to look at her, but not deigning to ask her to sit down, 'what do you want, to-night?'

'I came to ask your advice as a neighbor, Mr. Farley. My husband has just had another dreadful time of drinking, and I don't know what to do.' And she went on to tell one of those tales of woe which have been told by so many broken-hearted women wherever rum has been sold.

'Well, Betsey,' said he after hearing her through, 'I don't know what you can do better than to have him sent to the work-house.'

'That has been tried, Mr. Farley, and it did no good. He came out worse than he went in.'

'Can't the Washingtonians do any thing with your husband?' said he, hitching very uneasily in his chair.

'Jim Galt and his crew,' said she, 'have more influence with him than they have. The Washingtonians got him to sign the pledge once, but these worthless men tempted him to drink, and it was all over with him. If these dram-shops could be shut up, Mr. Farley, I believe my poor husband could be reformed.'

'Humph, thought he, if they *should* all be shut up it would spoil my business, its clear. And so many a wholesale rum-seller has thought, without saying so.

'These groggeries are bad places, it is true,' said he, 'but they will sell, and people must learn not to buy and drink—that's all.'

'But cannot these dram sellers be *learned* not to sell rum, just as the lottery dealers have been learned not to sell lottery tickets? Though I am but a plain woman, this, it seems to me, Mr. Farley, would be the best thing that can be done. And if the wives of the drunkards could have their way it would be done.'

'A little too fast, a little too fast Betsey. You must take things as they are,' replied the cold hearted rum-seller. 'You had better have your husband sent to the work-house that's the best way,' assuming an air of condescension. 'If you'll step into the kitchen, Betsey, Mrs. Farley will give you some cold bits for yourself and your children.' Mr. Farley now yawned and put himself into an attitude, as if for sleep. The disconsolate woman, seeing plainly that he wished her to retire, did so, and received the cold bits from the hand of the rum-sellers wife. Cold bits! cold indeed! And this is all that the cold-hearted rum-seller can give of comfort or aid to one whom his business has ruined! He has despoiled that happy home of its plenty and peace and joy, and sent there penury and woe. He has done there a demon's desolating work; and now he adds to all this injury the insult of his cold and pitiful charity! Verily the tender mercies of a rum-seller are cruel.

She went to her cheerless home—such a home as many a drunkard's family inhabits. A few flickering embers lay upon the hearth; all the wood she had was there. She threw herself upon her bed to await her husband's return—for whom she offered up, as was her wont, an earnest prayer for his present safety and his ultimate reformation. Composed by this renewal of her trust in God, this casting of her cares on Him whom she knew cared for her, though the purse-proud rum-seller did not, she fell asleep and dreamed the pleasing dream of her husband's reformation, which has since, through the efforts of the Washingtonians, proved a reality.

The rum-seller also fell asleep, in his cushioned chair, before his comfortable fire and dreamed. It was not however, like the dream of the poor despoiled woman—it was a painful *horrid* dream. He saw spread before him his ill-gotten gains—deeds, certificates of stock, notes &c. On all of these, as he took them up, one after another, were inscribed tales of woe, of every sort, showing the results of the rum that he had sold. 'Look them over'—said a voice, at which he trembled from head to foot—'Look them over. There you will find six murders, twelve suicides, fifty deaths by delirium tremens, more than two hundred by apoplexy, convulsions, fevers, consumption, &c., multitudes of cases of crime and pauperism, and misery of every variety—all the results of that horrid busi-