



Temperance Department.

## THE STORY OF A FLOWER.

Some years ago, before the Charing Cross railway terminus was built, there used to be in Scotland Yard a tavern that was a house of call for coalheavers. Near this place a widow rented a front room, and by making gimp trimmings maintained herself and a sick child, who was well enough to help her mother to knot the fringes that gained their bread. But often she watched the coalheavers as they went in and out of the public-house. It was not a pleasant sight to little Jane. She had once been a Sabbath scholar, and had learned two important things—that God is angry with the wicked every day, and yet that He sent His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, into the world, that the wicked might not perish, but through trusting in Him might have pardon here, and hereafter everlasting life. At that time Mrs. Davis had been advised to take Jane as an out-patient to Westminster Hospital, and she borrowed a child's hand-carriage to draw her there.

One sultry summer afternoon, just as she turned out of Parliament street to go home, a wheel came off the little old waggon, and the mother was at her wits' end to know how she should manage to get her home. Just then there came by a man in whose coalheaver's hat was a bit of geranium and a sprig of southern-wood. "Why, missus," he said, "cheer up, this spill might a-been worse. I'll carry the little maid. Don't be afeared, my dear, I've got a baby of my own at home. I won't hurt ye," and so he lifted the sick child tenderly in his strong arms, and walked by the side of the poor mother as she managed to drag the useless vehicle home. He laid little Jane on her couch by the window, saying, "Be you the little maid as I've seen a-looking out of the window?—why, to be sure, I thought I know'd you." The mother and child joined to thank him, and away he went; but in going, as he saw the child look at the flowers in his hat, he took out the two sprigs, and gave them to her.

The sprigs of geranium and the southern-wood were put into water, and in due time planted. Little Jane had great pleasure in watching their growth, for they both took root under her care. For some time Jane got better, but when the winter came she declined, and the kind doctor at the hospital could do no more for her.

The winter passed, and the spring brought new life to the earth. Once more little Jane's couch was taken to the window, and her plants were put outside. She looked out on the first warm day for Dick the coalheaver.

"Mother, I should like to show him what care I have taken of his gift, and how the slips have grown into fine plants."

That day as she looked she saw Dick with some companions, and they had been drinking, and Mrs. Davis shut down her window, so that Jane might not hear their words. The child was sad, but she mentioned Dick's name in her simple prayer that night.

Two days after that, as Jane looked out of the window, Dick passed very close and quite alone.

Jane could not raise herself to lean out, but her mother went out to him and said— "Will you please step up and see my little girl?"

Accepting the invitation, Dick entered the house. Mrs. Davis said, "Jane is no better, and she wants to speak to you." Dick at once walked across the room to the side of the child's couch. With a bright smile little Jane said—

"Look at the flowers you gave me, Mr. Dick."

"The flowers I give you?" said Dick in great surprise.

"Yes, I planted the two little bits that you gave me that day when you were so kind as to carry me home, Mr. Dick. I would like to give them to you to take home."

"Them fine flowers!" exclaimed Dick, looking at the bright scarlet blooms coming gaily out on the geranium. "I've three young'uns at home, but I can't say as I ever took 'em a plant. Mine, I'm a-thinking, wouldn't care for them only to tear 'em to

bits, and I can't exactly afford money for flowers."

"Can't you? why, they're not so dear to buy as"—the child stopped; she was about to add, "as beer," but felt afraid of offending.

"Don't be afeared, you means. Ah, well I knows that," said Dick.

"Nothing is so dear as strong drink," said Mrs. Davis. "It costs money, and time, and comfort, and health, and salva—" she paused on the word, but the child finished it—"salvation."

"Come, that's going it a bit too far," murmured Dick.

"It's the Bible says, 'Nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God,'" whispered little Jane, her voice failing and a great pallor spreading over her face.

"You are tired my dear?" said the mother.

"Yes. But I'm glad I have seen you and thanked you for the flowers," she added to Dick, who took her hand in his big grasp, and, unable to speak, went on his way.

Dick did not go into the public-house, and as he was returning to his home he passed a barrow with flowers for sale, and with the price of a few pots of beer he bought two plants in bloom, and took them home.

From the very first those flowers were blessings, for Dick in his rough way told his wife and his children about little Jane, adding to his story, "And the kind little maid lies a-dying."

It was too true—little Jane's hours were numbered. The child, two nights after she had thanked Dick for the flowers, suddenly sat up and said quite cheerfully, "Mother, dear, I ain better; I think I shall perhaps be able to go to grandfather's. Her breath was catching as she spoke, and as her mother gently laid her down and kissed her, Jane closed her eyes as if in sleep—it was the solemn stillness of death.

Poor widowed mother! weeping over her only child! how could she have borne her grief but for the sweet assurance that her darling had been gathered by a loving, pitying Saviour into the heavenly garner.

Little Jane's wish to give the plants was faithfully remembered, and fulfilled by her mother. She took a little slip off the cherished geranium to rear as a memorial of her child, and then took both to the children of her humble friend Dick. He was at first very unwilling to deprive her of them, but, remembering the child's words, he took them gratefully, and from that time, by God's blessing he was a changed man.

The year after Dick took the flowers to his home, a relation at the gold diggings sent home word that if Dick could get a minister of the Gospel to sign a certificate that he was a strictly sober man, there was money ready to be advanced to take him and his family out to Australia; and Dick could get plenty of testimonials now that he had as he said, "given the drink the go-by." Ever since he and his learned to love flowers, they have learned to love Him, who made the flowers, and loving Him they learned to hate evil.—*Clara Lucas Balfour.*

## A STAFFORDSHIRE FREEHOLDER.

I was standing one day in July of last year, talking to an upholsterer, in Worcester Street, Birmingham, when a covered waggon that was being driven down the street suddenly stopped, and the driver came up to me, and politely said, "My best respects to you sir; is not your name the Rev. James Downes? Were you not some years ago doing duty in Walsall?"

"Yes, but it was some twenty-eight years ago."

"I thought I was not wrong, sir, although you do not recognize me. I was in your class in the Sunday-school. You frequently used to give books to the boys, most of which are now read by my children. Do you recollect, sir, giving to some of those you considered the best boys in the class some money prizes of 5s. or 10s. each, one Christmas?"

"It is very likely, for I always liked to encourage young folks in such duties."

"But do you remember, sir, telling us that, as the prizes were our own, earned, as you said, by our own good conduct, what a nice thing it would be to put them in the Savings' Bank, of which you were then one of the managers, as the commencement of future provident habits?"

"Perhaps I might; for I have always been

an advocate for young people putting by something against a rainy day."

"Well, sir, I always wished to follow out your advice for our good; and I went to the Savings' Bank to deposit my mite, and felt not a little pleased as I walked out of the room with my bank-book. Many a time have I been astonished what that first small sum did for me. It increased and increased, year after year, with my fresh deposits, until it amounted to the incredible sum of £200! Then the directors told me one day that they could take no more. I then consulted a friend what I had better do with it; and found that there was a plot of land to be sold, with a neat well-built cottage upon it. So, after due precaution and enquiries, I purchased it, sir, and am now one of the Freeholders of the County of Stafford."

I told him I was much delighted to hear of his prudent forethought; and said how different was his present position to many a nightly sot, who spent every penny at those detestable beer-houses, leaving wives and children half-clad and half-starved. When he said—

"Please, sir, I have not done yet." "Go on, my old school-boy; I am delighted to hear of the blessings that have attended your thrift."

"I have let the cottage, sir, to a respectable tenant, who pays his rent regularly every week; and this sum I now deposit in the same Savings' Bank. You always impressed upon us the importance of being steady and industrious, and when we went to service, to endeavor, by diligence and respect to our employers, to keep our situations; and this advice, sir, I think you will own I have pretty well carried out, for I have had but two situations since you left, eight-and-twenty years ago. So you see, sir, if it should please God that anything should happen to cause me to be laid by, I have a little of something in store; and, should I be permitted to live to an old age, I have a home of my own to go to when no longer able to work; and something to leave my family should they survive me. I have always instilled into the minds of my children, sir, that I owe my present position to attending strictly to the advice and counsel of my beloved minister when I was a boy at the Sunday-school."

With a hearty shake of the hand, and a "God speed," I parted with my friend.—*J. Downes, Stonnall Parsonage, near Walsall.*

## THE OLD WOMAN'S APPEAL.

The inhabitants of a thriving town having assembled, as was their custom, to decide what number (if any) of spirit licenses the town should petition from the County Court there was a very full attendance. One of the magistrates presided and upon the platform were seated among others, the pastor of the village, one of his deacons, and the physician.

After the meeting had been called to order, one of the most respectable citizens rose, and after a short speech, moved that the meeting petition for the usual number of licences for the ensuing year. He thought it was not best to get up an excitement by refusing to grant licenses. They had better license good men, and let them sell. The proposition seemed to meet with almost universal favor. The president was about to put the question to the meeting, when an object rose in a distant part of the building, and all eyes were instantly turned in that direction. It was an old woman, poorly clad, and whose care-worn countenance was the painful index of no light sufferings. And yet there was something in the flash of her bright eye that told she had once been what she then was not. She addressed the president, and said she had come because she had heard that they were to decide the license question. "You," said she, "all know who I am. You once knew me mistress of one of the best estates in the borough. I once had a husband and five sons, and woman never had a kinder husband, mother never had five better or more affectionate sons. But where are they now? Doctor, I ask where are they now?"

"In yonder burying ground there are six graves, filled by that husband and those five sons, and oh! they are all drunkards' graves!"

"Doctor, how came they to be drunkards? You would come and drink with them, and you told them that temperate drinking would do them no harm."

"And you too, sir, (addressing the parson), would come and drink with my husband, and my sons thought they might drink with safety, and follow your religious ex-ample."

"Deacon, you sold them rum, which made them drunkards. You have now got my farm and all my property, and you got it all by the drink."

"And now (she said) I have done my errand. I go back to the poor-house, for that is my home. You, Rev. Sir,—you, doctor, and you, deacon, I shall never meet again until I meet you at the bar of God, where you, too, will meet my ruined husband and those five sons, who, through your means and influences, fill the drunkard's graves."

The old woman sat down. Perfect silence prevailed, until broken by the president, who rose to put the question to the meeting—"Shall we petition the court to issue licenses for the ensuing year?" and the one unbroken "No!" which made the very walls re-echo with the sound told the result of the old woman's appeal.

## WHO BEAR THE BURDEN.

A parallel to the Egyptian slavery—with the advantage on its side, though it was probably worse than the condition of the poor *fellahs* in that country to-day—is the modern servitude of the poor to the liquor-traffic. It makes their lives "bitter with hard bondage," and affords the most hateful illustration of the way the idle few live on the suffering and sweat of the many. The true character of this heavy oppression (the worst of which is that its direst victims rather love than hate it!) is forcibly brought out in the following dialogue between a liquor-dealer and the editor of the *Ohio Signal*.

Quoth the rum-seller, what "would become of the country if it wasn't for the money paid by the saloons? Ye'd all starve if it wasn't for us liquor men. We pay more taxes'n all 'o ye put together."

The editor replied: "Why, man, your accursed business makes all the paupers, and as to your taxes, a murder case is now going on in your own county, which has already cost two lives, and will cost \$5,000 before it is done with. The gallon of whiskey that caused the devilry paid ninety cents revenue. On which side is the balance of revenue in this case?"

"Well," said the rum-seller, "who would pay yer pensions to the soldiers if it wasn't for us? We pay every cent of it in taxes."

With a significant smile he replied—"The boot is on the other foot, my friend. You fellows get nearly all the pension money as soon as it is paid to the poor veterans; and if this country really depended on whiskey revenue for existence, then I should say, God pity the country."

"NEVER WHEN ON DUTY."—Riding over the Pennsylvania Central Railway recently in one of the elegant cars for which this route is celebrated, a young swell came aboard, with carpet-bag in hand, and took a seat near us in the car. He made very free with a "black bottle" which he carried in his bag, and when an employee of the road came along he showed his "hospitality" by offering him a glass of "first-class Bourbon." The conductor shook his head. "Don't you indulge?" asked the whiskey-tempter. "Never when on duty," was the prompt and ready answer. We felt a much greater degree of safety as well as satisfaction after that reply. The tempting of railway employees by a certain class of travellers who carry their bottles with them is a disgraceful practice; and deserves the severest condemnation, and we commend the answer and the practice of this railway official to all others under similar circumstances.—*National Temperance Advocate.*

EVIL HABITS.—A speaker in Fulton St. Prayer-meeting related the following:—"A poor woman in the north of Ireland experienced a change of heart in a time of revival. She had thus far made a living by selling whiskey, and that without a license. Her business had been illegal before God and man. She realized this and resolved that the change of heart must be followed by a change of life. On reaching her little shanty home, she brought out the huge demijohn in which she kept the poisonous compound, and in her own characteristic way she thus addressed it: 'Now jug, you and I have lived together for a great many years, but the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to live with me now, and you and He cannot get on together, so one of you must go; it must be you.' So saying she took the jug and dashed it to pieces on the stones in her yard. Let us learn to treat our evil habits thus, and God will guide and bless us."