

LITERATURE.

Moral Renovation. A Temperance Prize Essay. By the Rev. JOHN KNOX. Royal 32mo. Charlottetown: Cooper & Bremner. 1841.

At a General Meeting of the Charlottetown Temperance Society, held in the Spring of last year, it was resolved to offer a Prize for the best Essay on "The Traffic in Ardent Spirits, as bearing on the Physical, Moral and Civil Interests of this Colony." The necessary steps were accordingly taken, and several Essays obtained. In January last, the Judges (the Rev. L. C. Jenkins, Rector of Charlottetown; Rev. Jas. Waddell, one of the Masters of the Central Academy; and Daniel Hodgson, Esq., Coroner, &c.) pronounced their decision, and awarded the Prize to the Rev. John Knox, the author of the Essay now in course of publication. The subject is one intimately connected with the well-being of every community, large or small; and we do most sincerely trust, that the laudable spirit manifested by the Charlottetown Auxiliary Temperance Society, in taking upon themselves the sole responsibility of the publication of this work, will be met by a corresponding degree of liberality on the part of the public generally, for whose benefit the work is intended, and which the extreme importance of the subject warrants them confidently to expect will be cheerfully awarded. Of the merits of the work itself, it is not our intention to speak at present. We shall, therefore, content ourselves on the present occasion with merely making some extracts from the first part of the work—leaving our readers at full liberty to form their own judgment thereon.

It is admitted by all correct observers of men and things, that the influence of objects and events upon the great mass of mankind is regulated by the extent of their duration and the frequency of their occurrence. When the recruit is first introduced into the camp, the glittering of weapons, the martial sound of the music, the neighing and prancing of horses, the clashing of arms, and the distant thundering of artillery, awaken emotions in his bosom to which he has hitherto been a stranger. But habituate him to the unceasing activity and danger of the military life, and, as "familiarity produces neglect," so war shall be deprived of its horrors—at least, they will be greatly modified, or appear so to him—the recruit shall become a veteran, and fear shall give place to indifference. Take a youth who has been favoured with what is termed a moral education, and place him in the midst of immorality and vice, and his soul, detesting such an unhallowed procedure, will shrink back at the first commission of crime; but if he be the daily or hourly spectator of such vile and unjustifiable transactions, his aversion to them will be gradually diminished, his conscience will become less susceptible of impression, and its warning voice being ultimately unheeded, he will regard them with indifference, and, perhaps, become hardened in crime.

But, to apply these remarks to the present subject—with intemperance we have all, to a greater or less degree, become familiar. From our infancy, we have seen this scourge of the human race spreading his sweeping devastation over the length and breadth of the civilized world, without encountering any opponent, competent to dispute his ground, or obstacles sufficient to obstruct or impede his progress; but, on the contrary, countenanced and promoted, either directly or indirectly, by all classes of men in the land: the effect naturally produced on our minds is, a criminal indifference to, and, in many cases, a palliation of, this monstrous evil, unless when it presents itself in its most aggravated form.

But we are intelligent and reflecting beings. Place vividly before our minds the awful nature of the evil—expose its native deformity—point out the enormity of the guilt, the miserable degradation, the perpetual remorse, and the numerous and aggravated woes which it entails on all who are the subjects of its influence—and you will change the opinions which we have hitherto entertained respecting it; and by a removal from the scene of temptation, there will be effected on the character and conduct a thorough and salutary reform. The intemperate will be staggered in his career of folly—shrink back with horror from that gulf into which it precipitates its victims—and, if the remedy be promptly applied, saved from those evils which he so justly dreads. The moderate drinker will be startled at the discovery of his enlarged participation in the drunkard's guilt, whose crime he encouraged, and whose ruin he hastened by his example—will be impressed with a deep sense of his consequent responsibility, and vow henceforth to touch not the ensnaring cup—to avoid a weight he is so unable to bear, and ultimately to abstain from even the "appearance of evil."

But these impressions may be gradually effaced—the continued presence of the evil may cause us to regard its deformity with indifference, and, according to the principle with which we set out, we may again be entrained by its withering influence. In this, as in every other matter, we are anxious to deal with our fellow men as intelligent and reflecting beings. We are anxious that their actions should proceed from principle, not from impulse—that they should be the result of true and enlightened conviction; and as our impressions are effected by knowledge, it is of the utmost importance that it be real and sufficiently extended; for if our knowledge be defective, our impressions or convictions will be proportionately imperfect. To create, increase and perpetuate enlightened convictions, by presenting the subject in its multiplied diversity of aspect—by repeated appeals from the pulpit, the platform and the press—by exposing the drinking customs which are the sources and pillars of intemperance—and thus lead to the entire abandonment of the pernicious principle, is the grand aim of that cause for the support and promotion of which Temperance and Total Abstinence Associations have been instituted—a cause which demands the attention of individuals and communities—of the patriot, the philosopher and the christian—and which it is alike their duty and their interest to maintain and extend.

There are many, we doubt not, who look upon this subject with very different, and, if may be, with opposite feelings; who regard temperance and total abstinence associations as feeble, inefficient, uncalled-for, and, it may be, unscriptural institutions—their promoters as misguided enthusiasts and fanatics—as well-intentioned toward their fellow beings, yet miserably weak in the mind, and widely mistaken in their calculations of the means to be adopted for the removal of the evil—who may possibly regard them as the teachers of another Gospel—as the disseminators of discord—as the enemies of the pleasures and as innovators on the privileges and comforts of man. Universal experience proves, that every attempt to effect a change upon the opinions and customs of a people, will meet with opposition, even when that change is supported by the strongest arguments, and represented as productive of the most bene-

ficial and demonstrable results. Its opponents may belong to very different classes, and resist the proposed change for very different reasons. Some, without examining the nature of the change—without weighing its arguments or considering the extent and importance of the blessings it proposes to secure, reject it, simply on the ground of its being a deviation from the "good old way" of their fathers—depriving them of the enjoyment of those supposed comforts and customs in which they have been reared, and to which they are warmly and fondly, though blindly and criminally, attached. Others may be induced to oppose a change pregnant with benefits to their fellows, because it would dry up the source from which their own wealth is derived. It would be well, however, for such to remember, that that which they will not do, enlightened public opinion can. Such persons may oppose us themselves by turning their influence against us, and attempting to prejudice the public mind, and thus retard the progress of those principles whose operations alone can effect the change. They may work upon the ignorance and prejudice of those dependent upon them—of those who are enslaved by the evil, or who are unable rightly to think for themselves; and may stimulate such to turn their blinded zeal against those institutions which would terminate their ruinous and degrading traffic, by enlightening the eyes of their blinded devotees, and leading them to abandon a course so debasing in itself, and so pernicious in its present and perpetually increasing consequences. Another class may oppose us on what they consider grounds of religious consistency. They maintain that the Gospel alone is able to save us from intemperance and its attendant evils, and regard Temperance Societies as a sort of rivals to Christianity—as putting forth pretensions that they are unable to support, and as professing to accomplish that which they can never possibly perform. They think, that to become members of a temperance society, is to cast a stigma on the religion of the Saviour, by a tacit acknowledgment that these associations can do more for them than the religion of the Bible. We can only recommend to such a consideration of the subject, which cannot fail to prove the groundlessness of their objections; to open up to them the path of duty, and to furnish them with such motives as shall constrain them to devote some part, at least, of their influence to the advancement of these important and benevolent institutions.

I remark, at the outset, that intemperance is a mighty evil, as seen from the nature of the substance by which it is produced, and from the numerous evils which are the result of its influence. It is not a natural substance—that is, not the product of creation; but is generated by the decomposition and corruption of vegetable matter. It has been branded a virulent poison for centuries, by the most eminent chemists and toxicologists. It increases the sensibility and quickens the circulation of the parts to which it is applied. When taken inwardly, it imparts heat to the stomach; thickens the fluids; passes through the whole system; excites the brain; unfolds the passions; weakens and impedes the operation of the reasoning powers; deprives of physical energy; produces unconsciousness or profound insensibility; induces palsy, apoplexy, and other diseases; and ultimately degrades and destroys the man.

The individual who is the subject of the influence of this degrading habit, is soon brought to poverty, arising not only from the waste of money expended in intoxicating drinks, but from the time lost while engaged in their consumption; the loss his business sustains by his neglect, and his consequent inability rightly to discharge his duties for some time after he has returned to them. He is exposed by it to many diseases and accidents; it brings apoplexy, fever, indigestion, derangement of the liver, and many other diseases. "It gives a claim to the pestilence, which it now overlooks." It degrades and debilitates the mind; clogs, weakens and impedes the memory and judgment; blunts his genius, and totally unfits him for intellectual exertion and enjoyment. It deprives him of the happiness and unfits him for the end of his existence, and renders him a stranger to those finer emotions of the heart which are essential to the constitution of true social enjoyment. It ruins the body, debases the mind, and renders its victim incapable of the friendship and unworthy the confidence of his brethren. His relations blush to recognize him; his children dread and shrink from his presence; and she, whom he ought to love, cherish and console, shudders at his approach. It desolates his home; deprives him of his substance; robs him of his character; renders him a prey to every vice; exposes him to every unhallowed influence, and makes him an object of pity or derision, as it may be, to his fellow men. It renders him dead to a sense of his responsibilities, to the love of virtue, or the abhorrence of vice. It breaks down every barrier of moral obligation; hardens his heart to trample the laws of his Maker under foot, and prepares him for every species of enormity and crime. It quenches every noble and virtuous feeling; deadens every pure and generous principle; stimulates every vile and unhallowed desire; rouses into active and fearful energy the wilder passions, and abandons him to the unrestrained fury of the violent corruptions of his nature.

The misery a drunkard inflicts on himself is very insignificant, when compared with that which he imposes on those with whom he is connected. The closer the relation, the more numerous and aggravated are the evils resulting from it. His character and conduct have a lamentable influence over his family; they materially, though indirectly, affect their character and destiny. His wife and children, who are miserably fed and wretchedly clothed, are neglected at home, while he spends among dissolute companions the money which should be devoted to their comfort and happiness. The wife once thought that she had a husband, and the children that they had a father; but so far as the endearments of these relationships extend, or the discharge of the duties arising from them are concerned, of such they are now utterly destitute. They hear of domestic comfort and happiness; of tender-hearted, affectionate and indulgent fathers; but all their knowledge is by the "hearing of the ear," as such never visit their dwelling. They are habituated to scenes of riot and misery, and they grow up in ignorance, wretchedness and crime. They are destitute of a knowledge either of things or of thoughts, and their minds have had no cultivation but from iniquitous habits and examples, which are too readily formed and too eagerly imitated. They are hardened in crime, and regard and practise vice in its most glaring deformities, without fear or emotion. They have received from their parents a constitution entrained by disease; an impaired and unenlightened mind, poisoned by their conversation, example and neglect; and are left to grope their way through a selfish and designing world, without a friend to counsel and protect them—to pursue the same course of infamy, and with their expiring breath to implore a curse upon the authors of their wretchedness—the parents by whom they were ushered into the

world. The influence of the drunken husband is productive of the most mischievous consequences, when successfully exerted over the wife of his bosom; even when she is enabled to resist it, it is the cause of much sorrow and suffering. Many an amiable and interesting female has, through the influence of an intemperate husband, been turned from the path of rectitude, robbed of her character and her peace, and plunged in wretchedness and beggary.

Had we inclination, we might adduce instances of sons cursing and injuring their parents; of parents imploring the vengeance of Heaven upon the children whom they had brought into the world; of wives neglecting and rendering miserable their husbands; and of husbands even murdering the wives whom they loved, and with whom they never had quarrelled, till under the maddening influence of this most monstrous of all human infatuations.

The influence of the drunkard is not confined to the family circle—it extends to his companions, whom he seduces and ensnares in this destructive vice. Their constitutions may be undermined and their character blasted: their families may be neglected and brought to ruin; they, in their turn, may corrupt and seduce others by their society and example; and the influence of one drunkard may be extended throughout society, and perpetuated to the end of time. How alarming the reflection, that he is responsible for this incalculable mischief, being the certain, though remote, cause of it all!

When we glance at its effects on society, our impressions of its malignant tendency are not by any means diminished. We see one person starving from pinching poverty; another, fretting under pining sickness; a third, racked with dreadful pain; a fourth, grieved by the misconduct and thoughtlessness of a friend; and a fifth, mourning the loss of a near and dear relation. We see an alms-house, in which an unhappy multitude, many of whom were once prosperous and removed from want, and some of them even wealthy, are thrown together, and dependent for subsistence on the miserable pittance of public charity. We see an hospital, in which numbers of sick and disabled persons are collected: one burns with a fever; another shivers with an ague; a third is powerless with palsy; and a purple hue plays, as if in mockery, upon the cheek of a fourth, while his vitals are gnawed by the canker-worm of consumption. We see a prison, the abode of poverty and crime, in one part of which numbers of wretched mortals are doomed by their relentless creditors to waste a great part of their existence, while their families are left to wretchedness and beggary. In another part, numbers of miserable wretches receive the tedious reward of their crimes; and in that dreary, lightless, iron-cased cell, a condemned and chained felon trembles in terrible suspense—the feeble hope of a pardon, and the torturing expectation of a death-warrant, rising alternately in his bosom. We turn with horror from such receptacles of woe, and hasten for relief to that stately mansion, fitted by its adornments to delight the mind; and by its many conveniences and external beauty, to be the dwelling place of peace. But hark! what hideous yells, groans, weeping, gnashing of teeth, and screams of torture; what blasphemies and bitter scornful laughter are these that now salute our ears, and tear our heart-strings to their very centre? NINE-TENTHS OF ALL THESE HORRID WOES CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS THE PROGENY OF THIS ROYAL MONSTER—VILE INTEMPERANCE!

We now proceed to offer a few remarks on the influence of ardent spirits on the health, industry, character and prosperity of a community.

We are first to glance at the influence which these drinks exert over the health of a nation. As a community is made up of individuals, the only way by which we can estimate the effects of an article on the general health, is, by an attentive observation of the influence it exerts over the physical system of the individual inhabitant. The result of our investigation proves, that the use of intoxicating drinks

IMPAIRS DIGESTION.—The fact that spirit of wine is employed as a conservative for anatomical preparations, establishes the incontrovertible truth, that they retard the decomposition of the contents of the stomach. We see this confirmed by the experiment of the late Doctor Beddoes, of Bristol. He gave an equal quantity of the same meat to two young dogs of the same litter; and he poured down the throat of one of them, immediately after feeding, a small portion of spirit of wine and water. About five hours afterwards, both of them were killed, and the contents of their stomachs examined. The animal that had received the spirit, had the portions of meat but little altered in appearance; they were as angular as when cut by the knife, and quite as firm in their substance. The half of the meat in the stomach of the dog that had not received the spirit had entirely disappeared; and the remaining portion softened to a pulp, and all the angles rounded off. It is thus evident from reason, analogy, and the incontrovertible evidence of facts, that strong drink is a successful preventive of the digestive process; and we have the testimony of the most celebrated medical practitioners, that the most obstinate cases of indigestion have been produced by the habitual, though, perhaps, moderate use of these destructive substances.

Another circumstance may be mentioned, which will confirm what has just been stated. It is related of Miss Seward, that having once met with a family of poor children, whose pale faces and emaciated bodies had forcibly attracted her attention, she was told by the mother of the children, in answer to her inquiry how they were fed, that they did not eat much, and that what they did eat was not sufficient to nourish them without gin and water. After stating to the mother the pernicious effects likely to follow such a regimen, the lady advised her to purchase a little food with the money she expended on gin; on which the woman, with an unhappy application of her knowledge of the properties of spirituous liquors, answered, "If I do that, I shall not be able to satisfy their wants, for they were always hungry." The same effects are apparent in the habitual drinker of more mature years; his appetite is impaired, and his powers of digestion injured—effects produced by the frequent use of opium and other narcotic substances, as well as by that of intoxicating drinks. I proceed to remark, that it

EXPOSES TO DISEASE.—Though all enlightened Physiologists declare their conviction, that it is not safe to cept in some peculiar cases, yet individuals have not been wanting who have maintained, not only that they are serviceable in many diseases, but that they are an excellent preservative from contagion. The advocates made wise, are consulted as infallible oracles on every emergency, and cry up the merits of their sovereign remedy, partly from ignorance, and partly, if not in many

cases altogether, from their having no particular antipathy to the article in question. From this mistaken opinion has arisen the mischievous custom of presenting intoxicating drinks to persons employed in the sick chamber especially if the disease be infectious.

The mischief and absurdity of such a procedure cannot be better illustrated than by a reference to tropical countries, where the most dreadful epidemics prevail. The first victims to the ravages of disease are those who drink intoxicating liquors, probably under the mistaken idea that they are a preventive of infection; while those who abandon the use of these drugs escape the disorders altogether, or have them in a mitigated form. Professor Edgar, when addressing a public meeting, mentioned the case of a person who had been thirty years in the army, and in twenty-seven general engagements, having suffered every vicissitude of weather, and not unfortunately finding his companions dead by his side from the severity of the cold. Some years ago, he and one hundred and thirty others left England for active service abroad: of these, only five are now living; and they attribute their preservation to an entire abstinence from strong drinks. An officer in the East India Company's service, in addressing the same meeting, said, that he felt called upon to corroborate the statements that had just been made by Professor Edgar, by detailing the results of his own experience. He informed them, that he had served thirteen years in the hottest climates—that he had been exposed to the severe winters of Canada, and to the rapid changes of the American climate—that he had nine times crossed the Atlantic—and that he attributed his general state of sound health to entire abstinence from all intoxicating drinks.

Sir James Macgregor says, that the soldiers composing the English army never were so healthy as when they crossed the desert in 1801, when they had no spirits, and a medical gentleman, after twenty years' residence in India, declares, that the Sepoy regiments will work night and day, and drink nothing stronger than water, and that the English who confine themselves to the same wholesome beverage, are healthier and stronger than those who indulge even in the smallest quantity of intoxicating drink. Sir John Ross, who abstained from these liquors when in the Arctic regions, was always better able to bear fatigue than any of his men; and he found, after he had induced them to give them up also, that when he gave them to any of his crew, they became languid and faint, and unable to endure the severity of the cold. It is also worthy of remark, that the persons habituated to strong drink were the first victims of the Cholera, and that almost all those who recovered were temperate persons. In Albany, three hundred and fifty persons died of this disease, eight of whom were members of the Temperance Society, and only two of them belonged to the Total Abstinence Association. The death of one of the teetotallers is said to have been occasioned by a dread of the disease, and that of the other by eating too much fruit.

If we glance at nations, we shall find ample evidence of the truth of the preceding remarks, for the inhabitants of temperate nations are subject to fewer diseases than the people of those which are given to intoxicating drinks. The Chinese are more temperate, and less subject to disease than most nations; while in Russia—a spirit-drinking country—five-sixths of the males, between twenty and sixty years of age, die of inflammatory fever and consumption, occasioned by the use of these liquors. The Persians were deeply conscious of the injurious effects of the use of intoxicating drinks, when they enacted "that no pitchers or large wine vessels should be brought in at entertainments," as they were sensible that if they were kept from drinking much, their constitutions, both of body and mind, would suffer least. In Iceland, in 1834, the quantity of spirits consumed in the Island was at the rate of two bottles for each inhabitant, and that was drunk principally by foreigners, who visited the place for fishing and other purposes. In 1832, of 1,390 persons who died, 13 were above 90; 6 above 80; 79 above 70; and 116 above 60 years of age. In the West Indies, where the men live high and drink much, one wife will outlive three husbands. The great mortality among male slaves—being, on many estates, when compared with that of the females, as fast as of —is attributed to the use of intoxicating drinks. The use of intoxicating drinks shortens human life by numerous accidents—by stirring up one man to murder his fellow—and, in many cases, by impelling men to be their own executioners, and to rush unbidden into the presence of their God. In Berlin, in 1758, there was one suicide in 1,800 deaths; but in 1822, they had increased to ONE IN A HUNDRED. This alarming increase is attributed to the use of intoxicating drinks alone. In the Island, 37 out of 64 verdicts given at Inquests, during the last ten years, were—DIED BY EXCESS OF DRINKING.

From these remarks we see that the use of all intoxicating drinks impairs the health of the present generation, and transmits to those that are to succeed us a diseased constitution and a blighted form. I remark further, that the use of strong drinks is—

PRODUCTIVE OF IDLENESS.—Reason and observation prove, that no person can work efficiently when under their influence; and their effect, as proved by a late Parliamentary investigation, is—"the extinction of a disposition for practising any useful art or industrious occupation." The time consumed in drinking—the substance produced, cause a loss to England of £50,000,000 a year. There is, in addition to this, the loss sustained by the destruction of property by fire and sea, occasioned by neglect, resulting from the use of these drinks. It is worthy of notice, that the inhabitants of towns and countries, in different parts of the world, who indulge in these liquors, are always characterized by that poverty which is the certain effect and inseparable concomitant of sloth. The city of Tomsk, in Russian Tartary, has 11,000 inhabitants, who are much given to intemperance, poor; and I was informed by the late celebrated Missionary Williams, that the state of naked wretchedness and misery, mental and social, to which the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands were reduced, after the introduction of spirituous drinks, beggared description. Doctor Goldsmith remarks, that the inhabitants of the city of Antwerp, in which there were many houses for the sale of intoxicating drinks were poor, indolent and miserable; while those of Rotterdam, in which there were few of those establishments, were clean, active, and evidently in easy circumstances.

A celebrated physician in Dublin says, "If an end were put to the drinking of port, punch and porter, there would soon be an end of my worldly prosperity. Twenty years' experience has convinced me, that were ten young men, when of age, to continue to drink that quantity daily, the lives of eight of them would be abridged twelve or fifteen years."

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