

## CORRESPONDENCE.

We trust that the civil authorities in Dartmouth will speedily direct their attention to the matter complained of and justly reprobated in the following communication. We believe that the evil is clamant, and, both for the interest of religion and morality, demands immediate interference. We shall be glad to hear from any friends of the Sabbath throughout the Province, as to any species of Sabbath desecration that may exist in their neighbourhood.

To the Editor of the Sabbath Observer.

We have a friendly word of warning to speak to a class with whom we by no means agree as respects their views of Sabbath observance, although we have no motive to wish for them anything but good. We allude to those who permit their children and dependents to wander about the suburbs on the Sabbath in search of pleasure.

Hundreds of these young persons resort to Dartmouth where, we are sorry to say, the Sabbath is openly and systematically desecrated by the sale of intoxicating liquors. We cannot conceive what the Magistrates, the temperance folk, or the public are about, to allow such an intolerable nuisance to exist in the place, in all the impudence of unblushing notoriety,—without either the semblance of primacy, the appearance of decency, or the shadow of control.

The consequence of this state of affairs is, that many steady soakers who are prevented, by the vigilance of the city authorities, from spending their Sabbaths in taverns in the city, now resort to Dartmouth, where they come into injurious contact with the young men of respectable families who are strolling and idling about. But this is not all. Many of the most infamous of our population who are prevented by the police from carrying on their nefarious occupations in the city, resort on the Sabbath to Dartmouth where they prowl about the streets to entrap the unwary young men and boys whom they find reeling in a state of semi-intoxication out of the Sunday Tavern. Some of the young persons belong to respectable families, and their parents fondly imagine them to be enjoying what they consider to be an innocent stroll in the woods, while they are in fact becoming the victims of the ungodly and vicious. Others are clerks, whose employers would be startled to observe the manner in which the earnings of the week are spent by them on Sabbath afternoons, and the associations which they form on that sacred day.

The evil which we now notice is too monstrous to evade public indignation much longer. Measures must be taken by somebody to have the Sabbath Liquor

traffic abolished in Dartmouth, or else the improvement in the city arising from the commendable vigilance of the city authorities will be rendered almost entirely nugatory by the increase of facilities for Sabbath dissipation and vice on the other side of the harbor.

## SABBATH INTEMPERANCE AND TRAFFIC IN INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

In one of the dark closes of the Canongate of Edinburgh once dwelt a family of eight souls—a father, and mother, and six children. A missionary, on one of his errands of mercy to the heathen of that section of our Scottish metropolis, visited them on the 29th of December 1847. Miserable was the single room which they inhabited! No table, no chair, no bed! The only article to be seen, was a broken coffee-pot. In a corner, upon a bundle of shavings, and covered with a small piece of carpet, lay four of the children; while on a stone before a few dying embers sat the mother. A single fact accounted for all the wretchedness of that family—the love of whisky. The unhappy woman said, that her husband made twenty-eight shillings a-week, but ‘he liked the drink.’ They both drank; and she confessed—“*We spend the Sabbath in drinking*”

The missionary soon called again, but that house was closed. Fever and death had been there. Within a fortnight from his former visit, the father, mother, and three children, had passed into eternity; two others have since followed, and the eldest, a boy, ten years of age, alone remains, an inmate, for the present, of the Infirmary, but soon to become a burden upon the public. Can the records of depravity supply a more awful illustration of the habits of thousands of our population than this? and yet, strange to say, because it is so common, it produces but a momentary thrill of horror. *It is so common!* “Drunkenness is, in truth, one of the most prevalent, formidable, and destructive vices of our times. It is beggaring and sweeping into hell thousands of our city population. Of its frightful ravages every one has heard; but we are not yet affected as we ought to be by its wide extent and desolating power.”—*Edinburgh City Mission Report, 1848.* Is it not high time that a question like this, connected as it is with the social, moral, and religious condition of the people, should be investigated by those in authority? The intemperate habits of great masses of the people have led to results of the most appalling character—meeting the minister of the gospel, the physician, the magistrate, the political economist, at every turn—neutralizing and overwhelming with resistless power every scheme for the improvement of the poorer classes. This is not an overcharged picture; and among the important domestic questions which claim the attention of Government, there is not a graver one than that which regards the present licensing system—a system which virtually amounts to neither more nor less than an authorized corruption of public morals. Those who are invested with power to grant licenses, and to regulate the conduct of publicans, too often overlook the responsibility connected with their office; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, anxious for a flourishing revenue, promotes the consumption of gin and whisky, not reflecting,

perhaps, that the interests of morality and religion are at stake. It has been pithily remarked by an American writer, that Governments are apt to be quite above religious scruples, and that real Christianity is generally long in growing up so tall. Its richest flowers and fruits commonly grow nearer the ground. Still, Governments do feel from time to time the power of public sentiment; and in regard to the present question, it rests very much with the respectable sections of the people themselves, whether the enormous evils of the present licensing system shall be remedied, and, above all, whether publicans shall be privileged beyond the dealers in the necessaries of life, and be allowed to continue to traffic in intoxicating liquors on the Lord’s day.

This is not the place to enter upon certain questions connected with the intemperate habits of a large portion of the poorer classes in this country—subjects, however, which imperatively call for official investigation from any Government professing to care for the real interests of the people; such, for example, as whether the consumption of ardent spirits in any shape should be encouraged as an article of diet, seeing that, in every country where they have been so used, drunkenness on a large scale has invariably followed; seeing, also, that above 1200 of the highest medical authorities in the kingdom have pronounced them to be deleterious to the human constitution; and seeing that, after keeping an account of some thousands of cases of disease in the London Hospital, Dr. Gordon found 75 per cent. to be referrible to the use of ardent spirits. These and similar topics are, however, more nearly connected with the immediate subject of this Tract than appears at first sight. It is one of the special objects of the Sabbath Alliance to endeavour to put down the shameless desecration of the Sabbath, now so prevalent, in the public-houses; but it cannot be blind to the fact, that the present system of unlimited temptation during six days of the week, leads inevitably to wide-spread demoralization, one of the first symptoms of which is the breaking of the Sabbath-law.—Take, as an illustration, the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, on one side of which two-thirds of the shops sell spirits. “There”, says the author of the Plea for Ragged Schools, “the sheep are near the slaughter-house—the victims are in the neighbourhood of the altars”. But where is it otherwise? What a history of infidelity, immorality, crime, pauperism, disease, and death, would the MILLION A-YEAR said to be spent in Glasgow on ardent spirits unfold, could it be exposed in its hideous nakedness to the public gaze! Surely all who love religion and social order must grieve over the miserable condition of our poor people, environed as they are with snares laid for their destruction. If it be true, as it undoubtedly is, that intemperance is followed by a decay of piety, and that contempt for the Lord’s day is the open festering of the sore, what a melancholy conclusion must we draw from another fact, that between 1842 and 1846, there was an increase in the home consumption of ardent spirits, to the amount of 6,325,543 imperial gallons!

The following sums have been received in aid of the publication of the “Sabbath Observer”:

Anonymous	£1 0 0
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