

*Letters to the Editor.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE.

SIR.—Having recently made a tour to the West, partly through Canada, and partly through the United States, I think a few paragraphs respecting the state of the Temperance Reformation in the places which I have visited, may not be uninteresting to your readers.

I left Montreal by the Upper Canada Stage Line in the forenoon and dined on board the steamboat which plies between Lachine and Cascades. The table was well supplied, not only with food, but with brandy, gin, and whiskey; and several of the gentlemen called, as is customary in Canada boats, for wine, porter, ale, &c. Some American gentlemen who were there, said it was the first public table they had seen for some years, upon which liquors were set down. Both in this boat, and the one from Coteau du Lac to Cornwall, the bar was well frequented. Indeed, I do not know where a person who feels the inclination for intoxicating liquors becoming too strong for him can flee for safety in this country. If he goes into the cities he will find hotels, taverns, grog-shops, and saloons, at every turning; he will see the poison that is tempting him to destruction in every third or fourth window; he will be continually assailed by the odour of alcohol; for if wisdom is not to be found at the corners of the streets as of old, alcohol is, in the most seductive and tempting forms that it can assume. If the person who wishes to escape from the allurements of alcohol goes to the houses of his private friends, he will find his enemy in their cellars and cupboards, on their sideboards and tables. If he take the swiftest packet or steamboat to flee away from it, lo! it is there with him. His enemy haunts him wherever he goes; his temptation is always before him, thrust in his face by the respectable owners of steamboats, packet ships, and hotels, as well as private friends. If he is utterly and irretrievably lost at last, how will the guilt be divided? One thing is clear, there is great guilt somewhere.

From Cornwall we proceeded to the head of the Long Sault. A canal is going on along this section, and a great number of labourers are of course employed. Now, would it be credited by any one not accustomed to things as they are among us, that although the drunkenness and disorderly character of many of these labourers is considered the greatest nuisance and curse to the place, yet every merchant there (excepting I believe one) is actively employed in supplying the instrument or means of this drunkenness, in brutifying and destroying the poor ignorant laborers with whiskey. A year or two ago, a respectable gentleman was murdered through mistake, by a number of these labourers, who were in a state of intoxication. Yet, although all acknowledged that whiskey was in reality the murderer, no one sold a pint the less for it. The poor man who struck the blow was hanged for it, if I recollect rightly; but no body said any thing against the store-keeper, or the tavern-keeper, who had put him into a fitting state, who had supplied him with that which inspired him to commit the murder. Nay, these very same store and tavern-keepers cry out about the drunken and disorderly population that surrounds them! Truly their complaints come with a good grace.

A similar state of things to that which I have described in Cornwall, exists, or did exist, at Bytown. And it is not wonderful that it should be so: for not one of the Magistrates, or Ministers, or principal men, will lift his voice in favor of Total Abstinence. Nay all, by their example, encourage the use of the drunkard's drink: and a Minister of the gospel has threatened, as I am informed, to preach against any one who would dare to come there, with a view to establish a Temperance Society. Truly, such men need not complain of the conduct of shiners. They are well worthy of such neighbours.

From the head of the Sault to Prescott, we proceeded by steamboat; and here, as every where else, drinking appeared to be prevalent. I had several discussions to maintain as we went, in which I stood alone against the rest of the company; but here I found that I had a staunch ally in a gentleman from Seneca, New York, who told several agreeable anecdotes of the progress of the cause in his neighbourhood, and bore unhesitating testimony in favor of total abstinence.

The scenery along the St. Lawrence is exceedingly beautiful.

The purity of the waters; the luxuriance and freshness of the vegetation on either shore, and the clear skies, and wholesome air, render a trip along this river delightful. And I could not help thinking, when I saw many, both of the cabin and steerage passengers, sunk into a sort of apathetic stupefaction, by frequent visits to the bar, and rendered totally unconscious of the beauties of nature which I had so much occasion to admire, that they were certainly not acting the part of rational, dignified, moral beings.

The St. Lawrence is one of the noblest and most majestic rivers in the world, and apparently designed, as it were, expressly for the happiness, prosperity, and comfort of the great nations which must inhabit its shores. What a pity its pure waters should be so much neglected for the polluting streams of the Brewery and Distillery! What a pity it should be made a canal for conveying the liquid poison from one part of the world to another. I trust the time is not far distant when its broad bosom will be crowded with Temperance vessels, and when its shores will cease to harbour the dram-shop, and be free from the reeling step of the drunkard. This great consummation has been nearly attained along much of the Southern Shore: may it speedily be carried to a successful issue on the Northern.

Along the whole route I distributed Temperance Tracts, as often as opportunity permitted, and on the cabin cables of the steamboats, I never failed to place a supply. These were very generally read, and the greater part of them were well received. In some instances, it is true, the fashionable young men or Canal Contractors, in the cabin, would say something offensive about them, which they evidently designed me to hear; but it does not do for one who is determined to labour in the Temperance Reformation to be too sensitive.

On the Lake boat which we took at Prescott, we proceeded to Kingston. Among the passengers who came with us, were a distinguished Doctor from New York, and a General from South Carolina. I was not surprised to see the latter drink wine at dinner; but I was disappointed, I must confess, to see the physician follow his example. The General remarked, that in a journey of 1500 miles, these were the first boats in which he had seen spirituous liquors set down on the table. I answered, that I had no hopes of seeing these liquors effectually banished any where, as long as gentlemen continued to drink wine. The General and the Doctor both declared, however, that wine was quite a different thing; and we entered into a long discussion, in which I was ably assisted by the gentleman from Seneca before-mentioned. One thing is certain, when the steward came round in the River boats, I had only 2s. 6d. to pay for dinner, while the General had 7s. 7½d. viz. dinner 2s. 6d., ale 2s., wine 3s. 1½d. Here I had 5s. 1½d. clear saving, to spend in Temperance tracts, or any other way that I chose; and I did not see that I enjoyed my meal less, or lost any of the beauties of the scenery, by letting the wine and ale alone. The fact really is, the water which I drank was a pure, wholesome, delicious beverage; whilst their's was—what fermented liquors always are—stimulating or stupefying, sometimes both at once. I thought how it would astonish a superior Being, who knew the qualities of the different drinks, but was ignorant of our customs, to see certain men condemned to swallow bitter, fermented, intoxicating and poisonous liquors; whilst others got good, pure, wholesome and refreshing water; and yet learn, that the former class had to pay dear, whilst the latter had to pay nothing.

At Kingston, a large number of emigrants who had come through the Rideau Canal, came on board; and many of them had their bottles and jars newly replenished. I made a plentiful distribution of tracts, especially to those that I saw with supplies of liquor; and it was interesting to see, in a large crowded steamboat, almost every individual either reading or listening to Temperance truths, for they gathered into groups, and one read for the benefit of the others. Steamboats are very favorable places for the distribution of Temperance documents; for, as the passengers find the time tedious, they read attentively any thing that is put into their hands.

I had an argument with one of these emigrants, a Scotch mechanic, who had resided a long time in Preston, England, who said that he knew Joseph Livesy well, and added, that "Joseph was always in one mania or another. First, he had the mania of taking care of the poor: next he got into the mania of education; and now he had got into the mania of Temperance, and friend Joseph was thriving so well in this mania, that it was to be expected he