

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A communication from J. B. Crow, Pelham, has been received, and will appear in our next.

Canada Temperance Advocate.

MONTREAL, JUNE 1, 1850.

AWFUL DEATH.

One of those tragic events has again occurred amongst us, which furnish a better commentary on the vice of intemperance, and the tendency of the License law, than the most eloquent pen could indite. We allude to the death of the late Mr. Alex. Nimmo. His sudden demise has been mentioned in the newspapers of the city, but the account which has been given of it, has been such as to leave the public in ignorance of its real nature and causes. We deem it necessary for the interests of morality, and from a desire to impress the warning which Providence seems to be uttering in the circumstances, to give a correct version; and as our information is derived from one who has the best means of knowing the truth, the following account may be relied on.

About twenty years ago, the late Mr. A. Nimmo held a place among the most respectable merchants in this city. He was, for some years, confidential clerk of the late A. L. Macnider, and subsequently opened a Dry Goods Store in St. Paul-street, which, along with Watkins' in its immediate neighborhood, was one of the most elegant, and best frequented in the city. He had such a run of business there, that he might soon have retired with an ample fortune; but he gradually gave way to habits of intemperance; as a consequence, his business was neglected, his wealth was wasted, and the whole was soon in the hands of his creditors. After this he fell very low; he struggled on for many years, earning a precarious subsistence without any regular employment, but giving himself up more and more to the giant power of intemperance. Latterly he was employed by our informant as a witness for the prosecution, in giving evidence against persons accused of selling spirituous liquors without license. His business, as such, was to go to all taverns, against the keepers of which proceedings were about to be instituted, and procure, at least, a glass of liquor, and pay for it; (for so this abominable law requires;) a very dangerous employment, it will be admitted, for a person of his habits. About a fortnight ago, our informant sent him to three suspected taverns to obtain evidence; two of them in the Quebec Suburb, and the other, at a short distance from the city. He fulfilled this satisfactorily; the evidence was obtained; and the cases were to be tried before the Court, on Wednesday, the 22nd inst. But one of the tavern-keepers in question, having ascertained that Nimmo was the only witness against him, sent a person to him on the evening of Tuesday, the 21st, to his place of residence, in St. Urbain-street, to endeavor to persuade him not to give evidence. This individual was of similar habits with Nimmo himself. Our informant states that, in the hearing of his wife, he offered him four dollars if he would not appear against him; two dollars to be paid before, and other two after the prosecution. He then took N. with him, as if to receive the first instalment from one of the accused parties in Quebec Suburb; but he went previously to another house in the same neighborhood, where he gave N. a half pint of what is called *one-to-one*, in the slang language of bar-waiters. He then brought him to said tavern in a state of complete intoxication, but instead of giving him two dollars, the tavern-keeper gave him other two glasses

of liquor, and then put him into a back room for the night. Next morning he was found dead!

On Wednesday morning, when the Court was about to assemble, inquiry was made for Nimmo, but he was no where to be found. Our informant went to his house, and made inquiry there. Mrs. N. informed him that the person above alluded to, had taken him away the preceding evening, and that he had never returned. Immediately suspecting that his witness had been tampered with, and that the prosecutions must necessarily fall to the ground, he returned to the Court-house, where he found it whispered about that Nimmo was lying dead in S——'s tavern, in Quebec Suburb. He immediately despatched a person to make inquiry, who soon returned with the information, that he was lying dead on the floor, in S——'s back room. The prosecutions were, of course, necessarily withdrawn, and the unlicensed venders of strong drink escaped, for the witness was effectually removed out of the way!

This, we believe, to be an unvarnished statement of the facts, out of which the Coroner's jury brought a verdict of "*Death by Apoplexy*,"—a sentence which makes us feel the deepest regret, that an institution of law, which is designed to expose crime, and bring it to punishment, should be so easily perverted into a means of concealing it.

But without dwelling upon this, we ask, what is to be thought of the tavern-keeper and his accomplice? In whatever light their conduct may be viewed by the law of the land, and of this we presume not to judge, yet, according to the law of God, which is spiritual and holy, will not the blood of poor Nimmo be found upon their skirts? What is to be said of the companions of Nimmo, who, in the days of his prosperity, received him at their tables, treated him to their "choicest wines and brandies," and cheered him on in the course of intemperance which he had just begun? If they had given him a friendly caution in time, perhaps he might have been saved. What is to be said of his minister or religious adviser, if he had any? Did he fulfil his holy vocation, to give the wicked warning? When a Temperance Society was formed in this city, did he advise him to join it, or did he prevent him, either by example or precept, from embracing the refuge which it presents to him? Or what shall be said of the law, which requires that before a person can give evidence against unlicensed retailers, he must personally procure liquor, and pay for it, in their dens of iniquity? This is to give the unlicensed vender the best possible chance of escaping, by confining the evidence against him to such persons, for the most part, as can be easily tampered with, and not only so, but to expose the life of the witness to the greatest jeopardy. For when an individual, with such habits as Nimmo's, is thereby placed in circumstances in which the offer of getting as much whisky as he can drink, is likely to be made to him, as a bribe to suppress his testimony, it is scarcely possible for him to resist it; though, with his habits, the swallowing of so much alcoholic liquor, is almost tantamount to the taking of so much poison. As it now stands, the law displays a criminal partiality towards the unlicensed vender, and an inhuman disregard to the morals, and even the life, of the witness, by exposing him unnecessarily to the most perilous temptations. Fellow citizens, is this law still to continue? Are more victims to be sacrificed? Are more of our honorable merchants to be dragged down from their places like Nimmo, and left to breathe their last sigh, unheeded and uncared for, on the floor of a grog-shop? No! Your religion, your humanity say No!—The system must be put a stop to! Then petition, petition, the Legislature for the alteration of the License Law!