

Canada Temperance Advocate.

MONTREAL, DECEMBER 1, 1849.

A VICTIM.

Yesterday we announced the death of John B. Lesperance, a name familiar to every old member of the community, but at the time we were not aware that the last three or four months of his life were spent at the county poor-house, and that he died a maniac pauper. Such, however, was the case, and it affords but another evidence of the cold-heartedness and selfishness of this world, and the value that should be attached to worldly friendship.

John B. Lesperance came to this city at an early day from Canada, a young man of talent, that bade fair to do well in the world. For some years he attended strictly to business, and everything prospered under his guidance and control. He became attached to the American Fur Company, and soon amassed a small fortune, married into one of the oldest and most respectable French families, and settled down for life. His addition to St. Louis was one of the most valuable ever made, and if managed properly, would have yielded an almost inexhaustible revenue; but the flowing bowl and fashionable life have many allurements to win the virtuous and prosperous from the even tenor of their ways, and Lesperance became a worldly man.

His fortune, acquired by years of industry and hard labor, was spent in less time than he was employed in making it; his old friends and associates, as soon as his property was gone, became tired of his society; his wife was snatched from him by the hand of death, and even his relatives, to whom he had before looked for support, now forsook and even shunned him. Houseless, friendless, and bankrupt in purse, he rambled the city for some year or more, gaining a scanty subsistence from the cold hand of charity, until at last, as an act of kindness, he was sent to the county farm as a common pauper.

Here he remained for some time, until at last his bodily infirmities and the knowledge of his wrongs dethroned reason, and death put an end to the further miseries of the maniac pauper. He died and was buried, but of all his former friends and associates, of all who had in years of prosperity enjoyed his friendship and shared his bounty, only three could be found willing to attend his body to its last resting place. Thus lived, died, and was buried, the warm hearted Lesperance, whose dissipated life and miserable end should serve as a warning to all young men—*New-York Journal of Commerce*.

ANOTHER VICTIM.—EXECUTION OF SMITH.

At a very early hour yesterday morning, large groups of people were to be seen making their way towards the New Jail, the place appointed for the execution of Smith, a soldier of the Rifle Brigade, for shooting Eastwood, a private in the same regiment. The number of persons assembled to witness the fearful scene must have been over 3000, a large portion, we are ashamed to say, being women and children.

A few minutes before 10 o'clock, the prisoner was led from the cells to the scaffold, preceded by the Sheriff, and other officers of justice. The unhappy man was attended during his last moments by the Rev. Messrs. Grassett and Mitchell, Ministers of the Church of England. The prisoner mounted the scaffold with a firm step, and seemed to survey the multitude around him with much composure of mind, but he did not speak. He then knelt down upon the drop, and the rope having been adjusted by the executioner, a prayer was read by Mr. Grassett, in which the prisoner seemed to join with feeling. After having engaged for a few moments in devotion, the signal was given by the Sheriff, the drop fell and the unhappy man was launched into eternity.

We are assured that Smith, for some days previous to his execution, gave strong evidence of deep and sincere repentance for the crime which he committed; he freely acknowledged the justice of the punishment awarded to him for his crime, and seemed to regret that he did not plead guilty at the Bar of Justice. He stated to the minister who attended him, that he would not have committed the murder had he not been under the influence of strong drink at the time, a fact which was not striven at his trial. It appears that he had taken three glasses of L andy, and some

beer, a few minutes before he committed the fearful deed. He seems to have been a man of strong and easily excited passions, and when under the influence of strong drink, to have lost all control over them—*Toronto Globe*.

On this, the *Pilot*, of Montreal, makes the following remarks:—

We will say nothing at present on the policy or impolicy of capital punishment. There will be more hangings soon, and we may then deem it expedient to write on the subject. But we wish to direct the attention of our readers to the statement made by the wretched man whose life was taken from him last week. According to his own confession he committed the dreadful deed under the influence of intoxicating liquors. He had taken "three glasses of brandy and some beer" a few minutes before. Under the excitement of the mad and ungovernable passions became uncontrollable. The murder of his comrade was his next act, and that was followed by his own disgraceful death.

Now, look at our own Police Reports for the last week. Forty-six persons were brought before the Magistrates: twenty-six of them were "drunk and disorderly," and summarily dealt with accordingly.

Drunkenness is not on the decline in Montreal. We are informed, on the other hand, that many persons who have taken the pledge within the last twelve months, have returned to their old habits. Vigorous efforts should now be made by the friends of temperance. We learn from the *Temperance Advocate* that the subject is under consideration in the proper quarter.

We present these facts to the serious consideration of every well-wisher to his country, whether connected with the Temperance Society or not. Two other victims have been offered up to the dem in Intemperance. The plague is raging. It is doing its deadly work, in every corner of our land, every day, and every hour. Multitudes are swept away in its devastating progress; and amongst them are to be found some of the most gifted and promising of our citizens, whose talents and accomplishments rendered them the charm of every circle, and fitted them to take the lead in every public, philanthropic movement. The two instances mentioned in the preceding extracts, are only a sample of the evil that is done; they are only two of the wrecks that have been discovered floating down the stream of intemperance, but there are thousands besides that drift past, and escape observation. What is to be done to put a stop to it?

Let us be moderate, some are replying. But this is precisely what we have been doing, or trying to do, for many years. We must give the advocates of moderation full credit for sincerity, and admit that they have been faithfully endeavoring to practise moderation themselves, and inculcate it upon others. Yet, under this very system, the evil has grown up, and reached its present appalling magnitude. A few may tamper with intoxicating drink, in the daily use of it, without being hurt thereby; but the generality will not do so; and the custom be still kept up, it is obvious that multitudes will be ensnared. We maintain, there is no safety for the public, short of total abstinence; and even there, the safety is not absolute but only comparative. The drinking usages of society sow the seed out of which intemperance grows. When two individuals begin to fight, for diversion, there is great danger that they will soon fight in earnest; and when two individuals resort to the wine cup, or the punch bowl, for fashion, or for frolic, there is a similar danger that they will soon do so from the love of it.

With respect to the increase of intemperance in this city, alluded to by a contemporary in a preceding extract, we hope that this statement should be accompanied with some qualification. There is not so much intemperance now, as in former years, but we must confess it has been on the increase since the appearance of the cholera in July last. The discontinuance of