

# Canada Temperance Advocate.

Temperance is the moderate use of things beneficial, and abstinence from things hurtful.

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## ABOUT DRINKING.

From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.

The people of Great Britain and Ireland form the most drunken nation in the world. No people consume such a large quantity of intoxicating fluids. The nations which rank next to them in regard to drinking, are the Germans, the Norwegians, the Dutch, and a few others in the north of Europe. Latterly, however, the Germans have greatly improved in habits of temperance, and they are now chiefly signalized for their offensive practice of smoking. If we come to comparisons at home, we find that intemperance is much more prevalent in Scotland than England, and that the small Scotch country towns are the worst. It is chiefly the very dregs of the English community who drink spirituous liquors in the form of drams; gin, an abominable compound of vitriol, turpentine, and coarse grain whiskey, is their tippie. Brandy—neat—is the coachman's solace; and in a mixed state, with hot water and sugar, it forms the circulating menstruum at the tables of the middle classes. But there is a large section of the English community, who do not habitually brandify, as it is called. These are of the workman order; they drink nothing worth speaking of except porter and ale, which they meet to soak or muzz over of an evening. Perhaps the term soak should not be used, for they do not generally drink above a pint or so—threepence or fourpence worth of heavy wet, for instance—and sip only a little now and then between intervals of smoking, when they are charging a new pipe, or throwing in a remark, in a sort of half grumble, by way of keeping up the conversation. This is called being sociable of an evening, or having a bit of friendly chat, and can therefore hardly be charged under the same category as intemperance.

In Scotland, whiskey, in all its forms and qualities, meets you at every corner. On every side you turn, you find a place for its disposal. Brandy, rum, gin, and so forth, are scarcely known except to those who have tolerably long purses. The universal tippie is whiskey. Those who have a refined taste, pride themselves on "keeping a good article." This means that they drink fine malt whiskey, which at the utmost costs eleven or twelve shillings a gallon—such whiskey as would bring above a guinea per gallon in England. The inferior order of consumers use a coarse burning stuff, made of grain, which is sold for about six or seven shillings a gallon, or probably threepence a gill. The miserable and ignorant beings who use the last-mentioned kind, most commonly take it in a raw state. Some of them are contented to toss off their glass at the counter, behind a sort of shutter or screen, which stands as a shelter from the accusing gaze of passengers. But these are of a humble grade; perhaps street beggars, porters, coal carters, and such like. The quantity of ardent spirits which some of these individuals consume, is immense. We have frequently, by accidental observation, seen a female meadican visit a whiskey shop nine times in the course of a day, betwixt morning and evening, at each time drinking at least a glass, or the third of a gill of raw whiskey. This series of drams could not have cost less than sixpence; and, therefore, to make no supposition of what was drunk after nightfall, this female must have spent sixpence a-day on whiskey, or about nine pounds a-year; a sum which would afford rather more than three pounds to the state in the shape of excise. This seems a great deal for a common beggar to spend, but we are convinced, from a thousand circumstances, that it is much below what is consumed daily by many individuals in a humble condition of life. We have been told of street porters—who are on the whole a respectable order of men—who seldom drink less than four or five gills in the day—that is, we should suppose, when their means will afford it; we lately heard of one who sometimes takes six gills. Of course, these quantities were not gulped down all at once, or even at twice or thrice. The whole is taken glass by glass, at intervals, when the

"bawbees" drop in as payment for jobs; and when there is a fortunate haul of "white siller," the potation will go the length of a whole gill. Some will think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be thankful that these persons possess such insatiable cravings for liquor; but it is "not all gold which glitters;" what the Chancellor receives in one way, he spends in another—look, for one thing, at the armed force necessary to preserve order, and look at the large and expensive machinery for judicial correction. Glancing over an English provincial paper the other day, the following met our eye in a charge to a grand jury at Salford:—"I am sorry, that comparing this year with former years, there has been upon the whole a considerable increase of crime. On looking at the cause, it always leads us to the same universal one of drunkenness, which seems to be the great evil of the day; and until some alterations take place in the temperance habits of the working classes, I am afraid we must expect crime to go on." We hope that the gentleman who delivered this address has not contented himself with simply lamenting the progress of intemperance and crime, but has already looked about for the means of producing the alterations from which he anticipates such advantages to flow.

We have adverted to the number of places for the sale of whiskey in Scotland. We may well call them Legion, for they are many. How such a preposterously large number should be tolerated, has always been to us a perfect mystery. In Glasgow, a few years ago, it was found that there was a public-house for every thirteen families of the whole population. There is one street in Edinburgh, in which two shops out of every three are spirit shops. That, however, is in a thickly populated and great dram-drinking quarter, and is not a fair criterion of the state of affairs. In the portions of the city occupied by the more affluent classes, there are many mean public-houses in the lower floors, which are much resorted to by female domestics, and prove of course most ruinous to their morals, and destructive of the comfort of their employers. It is also curious to observe that, whenever, in the same districts, there chances to be a pretty extensive workshop or factory, or a stable-lane, there a dram-shop is sure to rise, as if labour and intemperance were in this country inseparable.

Among the higher orders of society in Scotland, the practice of deep drinking was formerly very common. It was no unusual thing for a party of gentlemen met at dinner to sit all night, and only disperse when they should have been rising from their beds. A story is told of a Lord of Session in Edinburgh being seen showing a guest out at his own door with a lighted candle in his hand, at eleven o'clock of a Sunday morning, when the good folks were passing to church. Sometimes, in these days, the dinner or supper party were not suffered to have their own will in departing. The door was locked by the host, who, pointing with one hand to the bottles on the table, and with the other to shake-downs in the adjacent apartment, showed what he expected from his guests. These days are luckily gone, and punchbowls have gone with them. If the people be not better than their ancestors, they have certainly a greater sense of decorum. This remark applies to both English and Scotch, for deep drinking and late sitting were half a century ago as much in vogue in the south as in the northern parts of the kingdom. Mr. Walker, in his "Original," mentions, that some sixty or seventy years ago, certain hackney coachmen in London made a good deal of money by going with their vehicles through the streets during the night, in order to take home drunk gentlemen whom they saw staggering about, and who next day paid them liberally for their pains. All this is long since gone.

We are given to understand that there is now little drinking among the middle classes of society in the large Scotch towns, and that what drinking usages remain, are gradually disappearing from among them. When any drinking does take place, it is on a very limited scale in private houses, and this in itself forms a conspicuous