

Canada Temperance Advocate.

MONTREAL, OCTOBER 15, 1849.

A VOICE FROM GLASGOW.

We have just received a pamphlet, of a very interesting nature, entitled "The Moral Statistics of Glasgow;" the object of which will be evident from the analysis of its contents:—Intemperance and Disease; Intemperance and Mental Derangement; Intemperance and Pauperism; Intemperance and Crime; Intemperance and Female Prostitution; Intemperance and Juvenile Delinquency; Intemperance and Industrial Schools; Intemperance and Sabbath Profanation; Intemperance and Missions; Estimated Cost of the Drinking System in Glasgow.

The intelligent editor, Mr. Legin, has collected the opinions of a number of gentlemen, occupying public, official stations, which afford them peculiar opportunities of observing the moral state of the city, and the causes that affect it, and has done little more than arrange them, and present them to the public. We think he has acted wisely and well; wisely, in abstaining from comments of his own, which would have given opponents a pretext for throwing his book aside, as the special pleading of a teetotaler; and well, in presenting a mass of evidence which cannot be gainsaid, and which, we think, cannot fail to make a deep impression on the mind of every reader. Each successive chapter discloses the pernicious influence which the *drinking system* exerts upon the state of morals in a community; and makes us feel, that, as the friends of morality, we ought to set our face against it. And this is done, not by professed advocates of the temperance cause, but by neutral, competent judges; the managers and overseers of public institutions, some of whom stand aloof from the Temperance movement, and one of whom, at least, enters his dissent from Temperance doctrine. All of them concur in testifying that Intemperance is the principal cause of the offences against morals which come under their observation.

We design to make copious extracts from this publication; it is a well charged battery of facts and arguments against the prevailing habits of society. In the meantime, we present to our readers, the evidence which it furnishes, on the connexion between *Intemperance and disease*; and would request for it the special attention of those members of the medical profession, who are so fond of prescribing brandy in cases of cholera; and of those members of the community at large, who are so fond of following such a prescription.

From John C. Steele, M.D., Superintendent of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

Glasgow Royal Infirmary, 22d March, 1849.

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 9th instant, addressed to me as superintendent of the Infirmary, requesting answers to some queries regarding the connection of intemperance and disease, which I proceed to answer, in consideration of the important and highly philanthropic endeavors of the society from which they may emanate:—

With respect to the first question—"Is intemperance a cause of disease?" I believe that no reasonable individual, either medical or otherwise, will hesitate in at once replying in the affirmative. The immoderate use of ardent spirits has been always recognised among medical men as a cause of disease, and is considered to be either predisposing or exciting in its character, in proportion as its effects upon the system are attended with depression of the vital energies, the consequence of exhausting excitement, or as these effects are immediately followed by symptoms referrible to the introduction of a poison into the system.

The second query—"To what extent is intemperance a cause

of disease?" is a problem more difficult of solution; for among the many sources from which disease is said to arise, it is nearly impossible to assign to each its due share in the production. Moreover, many of these causes act conjointly, as we daily witness in cases of destitution and intemperance; and with the exception, perhaps, of the influence of contagion, there are no circumstances tending more to the diffusion of disease than those now mentioned. The aptitude which a constitution, previously debilitated by intemperance, exhibits in contracting disease and the no less serious evil which the physician has to combat in the treatment of such a case, are facts fully established by hundreds of instances occurring annually in the practice of our hospitals. In tracing these effects to their true causes, we meet with a difficulty at the very outset, by the patients, in most instances, refusing to acknowledge their addiction to ardent spirits: a favorite though somewhat equivocal answer—"That they can take a glass like their neighbors," being nearly the sum and substance of the information they are willing to give. With a view of obviating this difficulty, and of obtaining accurate data concerning the previous habits of the patients who suffered from the recent epidemic of cholera I caused an individual on whose judgment I could confide, to visit the houses from which the sick were taken, and to report the results of his own observations. These are set forth in the following table, comprehending 190 cases of the malady:—

Previous habits of cholera patients.	Total Cases.	Cured.		Died.	
		Mal.	Fo.	Mal.	Fo.
Temperate, and in Moderate Circumstances,	60	19	21	12	8
Temperate, but in Distitution,	75	16	14	24	21
Destitute and Dissipated.	40	1	6	22	11
In Moderate Circumstances, but Dissipated	15	2	3	6	4
Total,	190	33	44	64	44

To draw a legitimate conclusion from these returns, we would require, in the first place, to deduce from a given mass of the population the relative proportions of dissipated and temperate who are in the habit of applying for medical attendance in an hospital. The above table, however, though limited in its application, is sufficiently comprehensive to exhibit the striking difference in the mortality of the different classes, comprising the lower orders of the population. And if there is one fact connected with medical police better established than another, it is this, "That no circumstances in the condition of a community assist so materially in increasing the mortality, than the destitution which pervades the inhabitants." Destitution has also its causes which may be divided into unavodable and remediable, and among the latter we must assign the chief place to the vice of intemperance, not that we consider it the "Pandora's Box," from which all vices and diseases spring, but because it occupies a prominent, though anomalous, position, which it is in the power of a well-regulated community to subvert. However important and necessary the introduction of legislative enactments and sanatory regulations are to the well-being of society, these measures must remain comparatively futile so long as the individuals for whose benefit they are intended continue in a state of moral and physical degradation. The remedy we apprehend lies with the working classes themselves.

The following is an extract from p 169 of "Observations on the Causes of Disease, and the means of Promoting Health," by Dr. A. M. Adams:—"Habitual drunkenness may be ranked among the causes which modify disease and the action of medicines, and which require to be known and attended to in prescribing for this class of patients. There is a manner—an aspect—in the inebriate, even when sober, which stamps him unequivocally. He has lost the ease, steadiness, and elasticity of health in his motions; his eyes and eyelids have become red; his face bloated, sallow, blotched; his nose red, and his breath offensive; his muscles and skin are flaccid; his bowels and renal organs disordered, and hands tremulous. If no particular organic disease supervene to cut him off suddenly, he wastes in flesh, and