

restrained by wholesome laws! What can we think of a traffic which so petrifies the heart, and benumbs the conscience, and muzzles every sense of moral responsibility, that those engaged in it triumph whilst they trample on the laws and rights of the people! But their discreditable assertions have no foundation in truth. If they sell more liquor now than formerly, why do not temperance men condemn the excess law, and petition to have it repealed? Why are they so well pleased with it?—they send streams of remonstrances to Albany against the repeal of the law. Why do they bring the question to the ballot-box again in those towns that went in favour of *license* last year? On the other hand, if the rum-sellers sell, and the rum-suckers use more liquor now than they ever did before in the same space of time, why are they not satisfied with the law as it is? Why do they toil day and night in order to secure its repeal? When they are brought up before the bar of justice, why do they instruct their witnesses to swear that they sell but very little, not any to be used as a beverage, only a very little for medicinal purposes. Out of their own mouths we condemn them. If their word be good for any thing at all, it is worth something when they are under a solemn oath. Under oath they swear, or instruct their witnesses to swear, they sell but very little.

They remind me of the man who had an India rubber yard stick. When he purchased goods he stretched it to its utmost extent, when he sold them he allowed it to contract to its natural length. When the rummers are behind their own bars they swear they sell more than ever. When they are brought up to the bar of justice they swear they sell but very little. Their business makes their consciences so elastic that a lie will not strangle them; though it were black as Erebus, it would not make them black.

To the Editor of the Temperance Advocate.

Sir,—In a recent number of the *Montreal Transcript* our attention is called to a fearful illustration of the evil of intemperance as lately exhibited on board the steamer *St. Louis*. A man, waking from a state of intoxication, uttered some profane expression, for which he was reproved by a fellow passenger, who inquired, "Have you no love to God?" to which he replied—"You shall see my love to God," and immediately plunged into the river, and thus closed a life no doubt rendered miserable by intemperance. A crime is thus committed, not only of the deep dye, in itself considered, but rendered peculiarly fearful, from the circumstance that it ushers its perpetrator immediately into the presence of God.

I have thought of this case in connection with the extenuating circumstance, if indeed any exist which can be properly so termed. It belongs to God to determine the amount of guilt contracted by erring creatures, and to us to shun even the appearance of guilt. I will, however, say that to me it appears probable that his responsibility to the Author of life is grounded not so much upon the closing act by which his crime was consummated, as upon the pursuit, probably for years, of a course tending to that end. He was seeking employment, and as he awoke from his guilty slumbers, probably the condition of a destitute family, tendered so by his own conduct, rushed upon his mind; and I can easily conceive that the kind reproof of his fellow passenger, presenting such an elevated sentiment, might at that moment produce, by contrast, a deep and despairing sense of his moral, as well as physical and social degradation. He seems to have thought that he had no friends—a consideration perhaps too well sustained by the general treatment he has received; for such unfortunate be-

ings are generally regarded, even by the professedly benevolent, with all the indifference of the Priest and Levite. Life became a burden, and he rushed unbidden into the presence of his God.

But let not the man who indulges himself in this well ascertainment of poison, in any of its forms, suppose that he alone, who thus, in a violent manner, puts an end to his life, is guilty. Reflection would awaken the keen accusations of his own conscience of the same crime—a crime in the process of consummation more rapid, possibly, than he is aware of. This incident will undoubtedly produce a sensation of horror in most persons who may chance to read it; yet how few, comparatively, will suffer it to awaken appropriate reflections upon the general character and results of intemperance. How few will consider that this case, fearful as it is, does not, as far as the principle is concerned, differ materially from what is exhibited every day, though under circumstances less calculated to excite general attention. May it not be well to inquire, what, in a moral point of view, is the difference between the man who, in a fit of intoxication, suddenly closes his own life, and those whose bloodshot eyes, and bloated and carbuncled visages, furnish indisputable indications of the extensive and destructive influence of the alcoholic poison, by which they are gradually accomplishing the same end. Yet the former case finds its way into the papers, and excites general attention, while the latter are daily passing silently into eternity, scarcely noticed, and not at all in connection with the evil by which they have as certainly shortened life as though, in the delirium of intoxication, they had closed life by their own hands. The absence of deliberate intention is no excuse for intelligent beings. Carelessness and recklessness are themselves crimes, and cannot be pleaded in excuse for their consequences.

The writer in the *Transcript* evinces a commendable anxiety to arouse the generosity of the benevolent, and excite them to proper efforts for the suppression of this alarming evil. And what can excise the apathy so generally prevalent in relation to it? The evil is acknowledged—its magnitude is immense, and we cannot plead lack of encouragement. The practicability of combating it on an extensive scale, and in the most efficient manner, is no longer problematical; experiment has already resulted in demonstration. There is hope for the drunkard, and what is of equal interest, hope also for the rising generation, a large proportion of whom, if the present apathy shall prevail, will be inevitably engulfed by this moral maelstrom. Nothing can exceed in simplicity and directness of application the leading principles of the temperance reformation. The philanthropic men who originated the mode of operation by which so much has been accomplished, like true philosophers, considered the cause of the evil, and directed their efforts at its foundation. They considered that the love of strong drinks is in all cases contracted, and as mainly conducing to this they noticed the prevalence of the erroneous opinion of their utility, and of the custom of strangely regarding their use as an expression of sociality and friendship. The remedy sought to be applied corresponds with this state of things.

1. The correction of the error referred to by the general diffusion of information, demonstrating not only their uselessness, but decidedly injurious tendency, in all cases, to persons in health.

2. By the formation of associations pledged to total abstinence to counteract, and, if possible, abolish the senseless custom of using them on social principles.

These are the simple means which have proved to be of a character so potent as to influence communities, states, and even nations, to an extent astonishing to all. Is there anything objectionable in point of principle in any of the features of this plan?