

TO THE COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE MONTREAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,—Having to some extent acted as your Representative in the course of my recent journey, I consider it right to furnish you with some account of my proceedings.

The Voyage.

On the 26th of May last, I left Montreal with my family, in the good ship *Caledonia*, commanded by a Captain who never tastes intoxicating drinks, and whose unremitting attention to the welfare of all around him, is worthy of the highest praise. The crew were engaged upon Temperance principles, and nothing could be more harmonious and satisfactory than the way in which every thing was managed. Indeed I would, from experience, earnestly recommend all who have occasion to "go down to the sea in ships," to give Temperance ones the most decided preference.

Grog and profane swearing used to be considered necessary in regard to the management of a ship's crew. They are now proved to be not only unnecessary, but positively pernicious—every thing goes on much better without them; and if the change in a temporal point of view be desirable, how much more so must it be if we regard the sailor as an immortal being, and himself the chief medium of communication between the christian and heathen world. How can we expect success to attend efforts to evangelize the dark places of the earth, whilst Christian lands send them perhaps a hundred drunken, profane and licentious sailors for every missionary. But sailors are not necessarily drunken, profane or licentious. I am well convinced that with the same amount of privileges, they would compare favorably with almost any other portion of the community. It is the treatment they receive from society, which debases them—treatment which might destroy angels. They are trained to intemperance from their first apprenticeship, by a daily allowance of liquor; they are spoken to in the language of tyranny and blasphemy; they are held at an outside by the respectable portion of society wherever they go, and forced to associate with the worthless; and yet no class of men have a greater trust of life and property committed to their charge, and therefore none should be more habitually sober, moral, and trust-worthy. Is it not time that this treatment should be changed? Is it not time that the intellectual and moral improvement of sailors should be considered of fully as much importance as that of any other class of the community. I have spoken of the state of things that has prevailed, and which unhappily still prevails in the great majority of cases—a state which sets at defiance all regard for the precepts of morality and religion, and which necessarily brings its own punishment with it in the intemperance, quarrels, corporal punishments, mutinies, ship-wrecks, licentiousness, and shortness of life, which characterize to such an extent the seafaring portion of the human family. It is but fair to add, however, that there are now many exceptions to the dark picture I have drawn, and that on all hands, indications appear of a better state of things fast approaching.

I shall here briefly narrate some circumstances that came to my knowledge, to exhibit more clearly the evils arising from the use of intoxicating drinks on shipboard.

The common use of liquors on shipboard produces many bad consequences, the first of which may be considered the demoralization of seamen. Sailors as a class are proverbially intemperate, and there is not a doubt that their intemperance will con-

tinue, as long as the present system of supplying them regularly with liquor prevails. I was informed by the Captain that he, and those connected with him, were first induced to think of sailing their vessels on temperance principles by seeing their apprentices become drunkards. These apprentices were usually lads from respectable though poor families in the country, who, perhaps, had never drank a glass of spirits in their lives, and who for a week or two at first refused to taste their allowance; but, by and by, they took a half-glass in the day, then a whole glass, and probably, ere the first voyage was accomplished, drank as freely as the old hands. Thus these lads learned to be intemperate as quickly as they learned to be seamen, and when their time was out they were dismissed into the wide world with confirmed bad habits—in other words, utterly ruined. This result is by no means peculiar to the cases I have mentioned, but it is one that I am sure all good men would wish to avert. I have been assured by experienced shipmasters that the charge of the ship and cargo is not more than one-half of a captain's labours and anxieties; that the difficulties he meets with in managing his crew at sea and in port constitute the other half. Now, I can say from observation, what they have told me from experience, that there is no difficulty whatever with a crew on temperance principles, and, consequently, by this plan, one-half of a shipmaster's labours and anxieties are saved, and he has his whole time to attend to the other half, viz., the navigation and management of the ship. It has been a very common thing in the Canada trade for men to desert from their ships, and conceal themselves in dens of infamy and iniquity, called taverns, or sailors' boarding-houses; and whilst in this way the men squander their means and health, the masters are oftentimes reduced to great difficulties, and, perhaps, detained till they can ship a motley crew of deserters from other ships who have been reduced to the last stage of drunkenness and wretchedness, and whose wages are drawn in advance by the crimps who have fed their vices, and then sell them for the voyage like slaves. But drinking is the cause of all this. The men are, generally speaking, only induced to desert either when they are intoxicated, or after they have committed some fault through intoxication, or after they have been tyrannically used by a master who was under the influence of liquor. There is scarcely such a thing as desertion from a temperance ship. The master and crew are, frequently, like a family, living together in peace and contentment; and the vessels which sail to Canada on that principle rarely, I believe, lose a man. If we hope to see our sailors as a class, moral and respectable—if we wish to see them elevated in the scale of humanity, and a credit to their country wherever they go, instead of being as they have too generally been, a kind of moral pestilence,—if we hope for these results, I say, we must desire to abolish the present custom of training them to intemperance. Shipowners and captains who serve their men with liquor have no right to complain of the faults they commit in and through that liquor; and if Britain, as a nation, does not change the baneful practice, she will have no right to expect an improvement in the character of her seamen. Ships have been compared to bridges, which connect distant countries, and it has been forcibly remarked that it is the interest and duty of all countries to take every precaution for the security of these bridges. This would be the case were only property concerned, seeing that whatever is lost is just so much loss to mankind; and though covered by insurance, yet the premiums of insurance bear a direct proportion to the extent and frequency of the losses; but when the lives of seamen and passengers are at stake, it becomes of immense importance to make the communication as safe as possible,