

is getting into its proper place in the attention of Christian men; and we feel assured that but a short time must pass ere there is a mighty stirring amongst every denomination. There seems something like presumption in some interpretations given of the voice of God in his Providence; but it is our duty to try to know what his dispensations mean, and in his putting forth his hand and touching, so as to wither, so large a portion of the food of man, he may desire to call our attention to the destruction of an immense amount of the bounties he so liberally bestows, and destruction, too, for the purpose of producing that which tends so much to the ruin of the happiness of man both here and hereafter. We can admit to the full extent the secondary cause of the loss of the potato crop, if that can be found out, without at all derogating from the honour and glory of Him, who, himself uncaused, is yet the First Great Cause. And while he has never left himself without a witness of his goodness in that he has given us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, he has also frequently testified of his justice and his hatred of sin, by sending on man judgments of famine and pestilence, in some cases where the second cause is seen, but often where it seems as if the angel of death and destruction, immediately commissioned by God, was present to destroy. However it be now, in the matter of the prevalent famine in Great Britain and Ireland as respects secondary causes, and while owning a first cause, we ought to look for the other; yet we do rejoice to see that this fearful judgment has led many to question the right of man so to alter the natural gifts of God's bounty, as to form from it something so pregnant with all evil as alcoholic liquors are. The idea has happily got into the minds of men, who, once alive to it, will not rest until they are themselves satisfied, and that satisfaction, we doubt not, will result in their urging on others also the truth which has convinced themselves. And we hope that the famine of 1846-7, arising from the loss of the potato crop, will be long remembered as an era in the history of Temperance Societies—as a time when the truths they endeavoured to inculcate received a mighty impetus. It does seem sad that while the destruction of much food in the breweries and distilleries is admitted by all, the impression of its improper conversion into that which causes crime and starvation, (while the very existence of this cause proves that much which might have relieved the want has been lost.) seems still to be so weak. We see this in the supposed necessity to introduce a substitute for the barley and other grains hitherto used in distillation; for apparently the first thought in the public mind with reference to the destruction of food in distilleries seems to have been, it is very true, that there is a great loss in this way, but we must be careful not to cause greater mischief by taking away the other necessities of life, porter, ale, whisky, &c., we must make provision for them. Accordingly, the distillers, brewers, &c., get permission to manufacture their wares out of sugar and molasses, and thus, as is supposed, several important ends are gained. Firstly, the drinkers of spirits, porter, and ales, are satisfied, since, come what will, they get their beverage, and are quite indifferent whether it come from barley or sugar. Secondly, the distillers are satisfied, because, notwithstanding the horror expressed by some London papers at the idea of the price of beer and porter being raised, they have advanced the price, and find that they can make themselves richer from molasses. Thirdly, the Government is pleased at the idea of the revenue being at least not diminished, and possibly considerably augmented, by this piece of legislation! Fourthly, something, called the West India interest, is in high glee, because there is likely to be a more lively market for their staple, which

is to be admitted at a low duty for the purpose of being transmuted into rum, or something similar, and quite as bad. Amid all these, it is left to a few to protest against the destruction, by distillation, of grain, which ought to be used as food, without ever thinking it necessary to provide a substitute; and, at the first view of the case, it would seem as if the cause of temperance had gained nothing by the exchange. Still, we hope it has not been in vain that attention has been called to the fact, that, in order to the production of that which causes ruin here and hereafter to thousands annually, so large an amount of the creatures of God, intended for the healthful sustenance of man, is destroyed. One thing is sure, that not much is to be hoped for from laws and lawmakers, until the community who appoint the latter are better informed on this point. If they are persuaded to listen to the cry, "Stop the distilleries," it will not be to put a complete stop to their working until after they have discovered a substitute. We must trust little to them, and very much to the urging every where, in season and out of season, what they may consider a nostrum, but what we hold as an undoubted truth, the principle of Total Abstinence.

### PRIZE ESSAYS.

The Committee of the Montreal Temperance Society, having resolved to publish and distribute, monthly, to every family in the city, a four-page Tract, to be entitled, "THE MONTREAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY'S MONTHLY VISITOR," do hereby propose the following subjects for Prize Essays, viz:—

1. "I never take any thing to hurt myself."
2. "There is as much harm done by eating as drinking."
3. "Do not the Scriptures countenance the use of intoxicating drinks?"
4. "To what extent should legislation be brought to bear on the traffic in intoxicating drinks?"

The first three subjects are the objections most commonly made to joining the Temperance Society, and the last is one which must necessarily soon engage the attention of this community. Any one who will fairly meet and expose the fallacies contained in the first three, will do much to induce men voluntarily to abstain from intoxicating drinks; and any one who will convince the public of the propriety of restraining the desolating traffic in them by law, will perhaps do much towards diminishing the temptations in the way of the weak and the unwary.

On account of the low state of their finances, and the large expenditure consequent upon the publication and distribution of the tracts, the Committee can only offer prizes of small value; and they think the most appropriate, and the most likely to engage ministers and others in this important service, will be a Sunday School Library, to the value of £2 in each case. The real prize, however, being—the hope of doing good.

The essays are to be short, in order to be within the compass of a four-page tract; distinctly written, in order that the judges may have a fair opportunity of judging of their merits; and they are to be sent in free of expense, on or before the first day of June next, to Mr. R. D. Wadsworth, Corresponding Secretary, No. 4, Exchange Court. The essays should be anonymous, but each be accompanied with a sealed note, containing the name and address of the author; and some word or motto must be chosen by each author, which is to be inscribed on the outside both of the essay and the accompanying note. Competent judges will be selected by the Society; and it is understood, that though only one essay on each subject shall receive the prize, yet the others will be at the disposal of the Montreal Temperance Society, to publish in the