

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM JOHN DOUGALL, ESQ.

Chairman Executive Committee Lower Canada T. A. Society,
TO THE EDITOR OF THE CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE.

BROCKVILLE, December 23, 1837.

SIR,—Having business in this part of the country, I have endeavoured to combine with it the duties of a Temperance Agent. I therefore send you a slight sketch of my proceedings.

I left Montreal on Monday morning the 18th inst., in company with a wholesale merchant, an Upper Canada Quaker, the Rev. Mr. Osgood, and three or four strangers.

The Temperance Society came in for a considerable share of discussion in the course of travelling, and an animated controversy was maintained with great good humour. The wholesale merchant asserted that all temperance men took a sly drink behind the door, and that a rumseller's conscience was just as good and as easy as that of a teetotaller. Mr. Osgood remarked with great simplicity, that he should not wish his conscience to be in the keeping of a rumseller for any length of time, for fear of getting it back considerably damaged. The Quaker said his conscience had never been easy whilst he sold liquor.

From the instances recounted by the gentlemen present, and from facts which I have since learned, I fear it must be admitted that a great many who sign the temperance pledge continue to indulge more or less in the use of liquor, when they think themselves safe from exposure. Are not these men traitors to the great and glorious cause which they pretend to espouse, and hypocrites of the most contemptible class?

If we made no converts, we had the satisfaction of seeing that very little liquor was used along the road; indeed, a temperance discussion has usually the good effect of stopping drinking for the time. I found it awkward some years ago to remunerate tavern-keepers for the use of their fire and rooms; for, when I offered them money, without having drunk any of their liquors, they would generally refuse to accept it. I find, however, that they now understand the matter better; and the temperance traveller may with propriety lay down the same amount for his accommodation, that others are spending for liquor.

At Prescott, where there is no Temperance Inn, I put up at the Stage-house, and was happy to see that not one of the boarders or guests, with the exception of the Montreal merchant before alluded to, used any intoxicating liquors at dinner, although a bottle of brandy was placed on the table. I was afterwards informed by the landlord, that his boarders had unanimously requested him to discontinue supplying liquor at table.

Prescott appears to have improved in sobriety very much within the last few years, chiefly through the praiseworthy exertions of a few individuals who organized a Temperance Society, first upon the old pledge, and subsequently on both pledges.

Arrangements were made by the officers of the

Society to hold a Temperance meeting, which was addressed by the Rev. Mr. Osgood, the Rev. W. H. Rice, (formerly of Montreal, now of Ogdensburgh, N. Y.) and myself. We all advocated teetotalism, of course; and at the close of the meeting thirteen names were added to the pledge of total abstinence, making the whole number of teetotallers in Prescott, 29. A good number of Subscribers were also obtained for the Temperance Advocate.

There had been a large Society here upon the old pledge; but its insufficiency to produce the result desired was strikingly illustrated by the inconsistency of a great majority of the members. They have now commenced on the right plan, and their progress will be sure.

A melancholy instance of the ruinous effects of alcohol happened whilst I was there. A man in a state of intoxication had been climbing over a fence in the evening, when a sash or belt which he wore round his body was caught by a stake; and he actually hung *till he froze to death!* He was found in the morning, a shocking spectacle, with his head down, and his tongue hanging out; yet, strange to tell, the occurrence made very little noise. If he had been found with his throat cut, the whole country would have been up in arms to discover the murderers; but as he was only killed by alcohol, no one made any enquiries. Yet the one death was as painful, and overtook the victim as ill prepared as the other could have done.

I visited Ogdensburgh, in the State of New York, where I found the temperance reformation in a very unsatisfactory state. There is no Total Abstinence Society there, although there are excellent materials for forming one, as soon as the extreme regard to the opinions of the majority, which appears to prevail, shall in some measure give way. Many of the most valuable citizens are teetotallers in practice as well as precept.

At Brockville, I found a very efficient Total Abstinence Society, supported not only by the influence of several zealous and consistent officers, but by the greater part of the ministers of the gospel. In this respect, Brockville is more highly favoured than the greater part of places with which I am acquainted. The Brockville Society takes fifty copies of the Advocate; and they are making preparations to take fifty more.

There is a Temperance house here, upon the total abstinence principle. It is clean, comfortable, and well furnished; and I would recommend all travellers who do not wish to be disturbed by bar-room sights and sounds, and who are willing to live in a plain way, to make their home with Mr. Houghton, while they reside in Brockville. He has good accommodations of yard, stabling, &c. for those who travel by private conveyance. I am very sorry that we have not such an establishment in Montreal. There was a meeting held in this village, which was addressed by the Rev. Mr. Osgood, one of the ministers of the place, and myself, and four names obtained to the total abstinence pledge, making in all fifty teetotallers in Brockville. The old and new pledges are here quite distinct; and I have no doubt the latter will be eminently successful.