

516/1/1/6

CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE.

TEMPERANCE IS THE MODERATE USE OF THINGS BENEFICIAL, AND ABSTINENCE FROM THINGS HURTFUL.

No. I.

MONTREAL, MAY, 1836.

VOL. II.

Selected Articles.

Reformation in the Province of Ulster.

From the British and Foreign Temperance Advocate and Herald.

As the dissemination of intelligence respecting the necessity and progress of the great Temperance Reformation, now so happily going forward, is an important part of that union of influence by which it is to be accomplished, I beg, through you, to communicate a few facts regarding the province of Ulster, in Ireland.

The melancholy situation of Ulster, previously to the establishment of Temperance Societies, furnished undeniable proof, that no temperance or safety can be expected for a community while distilled spirits are used as a customary beverage. While Ulster was in the full enjoyment of all the benefits derived from her pulpit and her press; from her Bible, and Tract, and Education Societies, and all her benevolent institutions; her state, in reference to aggravated and increasing drunkenness, was such as to exceed belief. The use of distilled spirits had become associated with almost all mercantile, and social, and even with much religious intercourse.

A *dry bargain* was a term of reproach; and not only have multitudes of the poor fallen by *trading* with distilled spirits at markets and fairs; but many too of the rich, by a spirit giving hospitality, for bribing good customers. To few trades was there any admittance, in towns at least, except through footings, drunk in whiskey. Four guineas, two, or one, were no extraordinary sums consumed on such occasions, at the expence of some poor man, putting one of his sons to a trade.

At wakes and funerals, the custom was all but universal, of distributing distilled spirits,—two glasses commonly to each individual; and he would have considered himself miserable indeed, who had not some spirits in his house, to present in hospitality to each of his visitors. It would be difficult to find throughout Ulster, a house of worship of any considerable size, without a whiskey shop in its immediate vicinity; and the session house (vestry) of each congregation would have been esteemed miserably

furnished without a little cupboard, and in the little cupboard a jar, or whiskey bottle. Ministers of the gospel, who visited their people, were exposed to destructive temptation; for not only on all occasions of baptisms, marriages, &c. was spirituous liquors poured forth long and copiously, but in each house, even in religious visitation, it was pressed upon them with such importunity, that several ministers, desirous of escaping from the ruin which such hospitality produces, were obliged to proclaim from their pulpits, that in the visitation of their people, they had resolved to abstain from distilled spirits.

Some idea may be formed of the extent and inveteracy of such a practice, from facts like the following. An elder told me, that in every one of the thirteen houses in his district, visited in a single day by him and his minister, a full glass of spirituous liquor was pressed upon each of them with such earnestness, that, without having been considered guilty of a wide breach of hospitality, they could not refuse, at least, to taste.

Some time since, a minister, lately ordained, called on an elder. The old patriarch expressed extreme regret that he had unfortunately no whiskey in the house: again and again, during the minister's visit he recurred to the subject; and at parting he said, with sincere feeling,—“Well, well; I am now above seventy years of age, and the like of this never happened to me before,—that a gospel minister should leave my house without having tasted a single drop of whiskey!”

Such being the universal demand for spirituous liquor, the fact is not surprising, that spirit shops, in the towns throughout Ulster, average 16, 18, and even 30, to one baker's shop; and that in some villages every shop is a spirit shop. In one town containing 800 houses, there are 88 spirit shops.

The fruit of all this exhibited itself every where, in the destruction of property, and peace, and health, and life, and happiness; in the increase of crime, the injury of the best interests of individuals, families, and of the whole community.

Public sentiment had become so depraved, as not merely to paralyze the general exercise of church discipline in regard to drunkenness, but, in many cases, to set at

defiance all efforts for removing the flagrant drunkard, even from the office of the holy ministry; so that cases have at different times occurred, where a number of men, holding office in the church, and esteemed respectable and religious, being abjured before a large assembly, to state the whole truth respecting their minister, have replied that his character was suitable to his office, when to their own certain knowledge, his habitual drunkenness was as clear and notorious as sunshine.

Of the havoc created by spirituous liquor, even in the office of the holy ministry, I could furnish melancholy illustration; but having no desire unnecessarily to expose the depravity of frail human nature in any profession, much less in my own, I give only two cases:

At college, three young men, two, if not all of whom occupied the same lodging. They were talented, well educated, of most engaging manners, of the most interesting, gentlemanlike appearance; and beloved by all who knew them. They entered the sacred ministry, were very popular, and obtained large congregations. One of them, after having become a bloated drunkard, was drowned before his own door; another, after having been degraded for drunkenness, was drowned in a well in his own garden; the third, after having been confined in a mad-house, died in early life, a wretched victim of drunkenness. Not one of them, I believe, reached his thirty-fifth year.—When it is stated, that more than twenty congregations could be named, nearly all contiguous, in one of the most moral districts of Ulster, all of whose late ministers lost their situations, and many of them their lives by drunkenness; can any man, who seriously reflects what must have been the people, when such were their ministers, and especially while spirit drinking,—the bane by which Satan did all this work of death,—was hourly and immensely on the increase; can any man, however opposed to Temperance Societies, who loves the cause of humanity, or the cause of God, refuse, with such facts before him, to acknowledge, that some united and powerfully effective system of reformation should have been immediately put in operation?