

SCHILLER'S "NADOWESSIERS TODTENLIED."

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—Mr. Kay, who has translated Schiller's "Nadowessiers Todtenlied," which appeared in THE WEEK of 28th January, inquires whence the poet derived the word *Nadowessier*.

By referring to Charlevoix's "Hist. de la Nouvelle France," vol. iii., p. 183, Mr. Kay will find that he gives as the proper name of the Sioux, *Nadouessieux*, or *Nadouessis*.

The nation is several times mentioned in the Relations of the Jesuits by names of somewhat similar sound, but with every variety of spelling.

Z.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—The translator of Schiller's "Nadowessische Todtenklage," in your last issue, has been misled by an erroneous title (*Nadowessiers Todtenlied*) into a belief that the Indian name represents that of a chief. It is taken from Carver's "Travels in North America," where it is applied to the people now known as the Dekotahs or Sioux, and was the term employed by the Algonquins, meaning "our enemies."

Carver's "Travels" were published in London in 1778, and a German translation was issued in Hamburg two years later. Schiller's poem was written in 1797 and published in the following year.

J. B.

Public Library, February 1, 1886.

CHRISTIANITY AND TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—Your correspondent, "B.," contends that Christ cannot have turned the water at Cana into intoxicating wine, because, if He had, instead of manifesting His glory, He would have brought shame upon His head. This, surely, is rather a perilous line of argument. Can "B." produce a single instance, out of the whole of the Greek literature, in which *oinos* means anything but a fermented liquor? And what does he make of the words of the Master of the Feast, respecting the inversion of the usual practice, by putting on the best wine when the guests were "well drunken." Would there have been any sense in that remark if the beverage had been nothing but the fermented juice of the grape? "B.'s" argument only serves—as it seems to me—to exhibit in a marked way the antagonism between his Prohibitionist principles and the practical teaching of Christ.

As to the language of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans about the duty of tenderness to scrupulous consciences in the matters of eating or not eating particular meats, and observing or not observing particular days, it seems to me to have absolutely nothing to do with the question. We are not concerned here with scruples of any kind. I am bound, of course, not to set my neighbour a bad example; but I do not set him a bad example by using wine, or any other of God's gifts, in moderation. I am no more bound to abstain from wine for fear somebody should become a drunkard than I am bound to abstain from meat for fear somebody should become a glutton.

C.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—In my last I referred to the view, advanced by purists, that total abstinence is obligatory upon all persons, for all time and in all circumstances. "B." advances Scriptural abstinence, which does not touch my position. He takes the apostolic view, which mentions the circumstances in which it becomes morally expedient and, therefore, morally obligatory; he speculates upon whether it was likely that Christ made, used, and instituted the use of wine; and he adopts the aphorism that "circumstances alter cases." I take no exception to the Scriptural view; I admit that occasions for exercising the principle of expediency occur; I have no fault to find with perfectly natural speculations, and I concur in the proposition laid down in his aphorism. But inasmuch as the Apostle Paul, whom he quotes, particularizes the occasions—eating or drinking to the offending of a brother's weak conscience—or, in fact, doing "anything" to so offend, he makes it a question of expediency; and an expediency is, as the term implies, merely a means to an end, the end in every instance being a return to normal law as soon as the occasion ceases. If the expediency be made greater than the law which it temporarily abrogates, it becomes the law and the law becomes the expediency, to the inversion of the moral order of the Bible. Upon these grounds I submit that for purists to advance the views they do advance is an attempt to invert that moral order, and make expediency an improvement upon that law which is said to be "holy, just, and good."

"B." evidently takes care not to commit himself to the view that the wine made at Cana was not inebriating: he merely inquires if it were likely that Christ would make such a quantity of such a quality; but he does not mention that marriage festivities in these times were prolonged over several days, and sometimes over a week, while Eastern custom demanded unbounded hospitality to all comers, relatives, friends, villagers and countrymen, who upon such occasions were constantly coming and going; and we may be certain He would deal out His bounties with no niggardly hand to His humble friends. He does not speculate upon the quality of the guests who, having already "well drunk" thin syrup, were so pleased to receive a fresh supply of superior syrup; nor does He stop to shudder at a nauseous gluttony which is worse than a certain amount of inebriation; or to consider that the one is purely "animal" while the other is not. Neither does he speculate upon any probable meaning in selecting "wine" as symbolical of blood—the blood being the "life" in Jewish eyes—nor does he seem to remember that every juice when expressed goes to decay and corruption, excepting "the blood of the grape," which, instead, resurrects itself in the

newness of a self-sustaining life of its own kind, and by the power of its own inherent forces.

It does seem strange that the only brother for whom there is no display of self-denying solicitude, permissible by the "strong" ones, should be the brother whose weakness is temperance. As they are strong, they should be merciful; as he is weak, they should take care not to "offend" him in "anything."

"B." concludes by saying in regard to abstinence that "A." "would, of course, have his own responsibility." Why "of course"? If abstinent men of extreme views have their way, I would expect their "law" to become responsible for preventing any possibility of transgression. That is the object of it. Its scope is much more comprehensive than the laws against stealing or killing; these never pretending to prevent either, by doing away with things which may be stolen, or persons who may be killed. In fact, if the law did either, it would itself perpetrate what it condemned, before proof of things being stolen or persons being killed became manifest. I look to this extremely abstinent law then to do my morality for me by relieving me from any responsibility in the matter. How then must I bear my own burden of responsibility—"of course"? If the law fails to eliminate from my surroundings what it undertakes to eliminate—if I, being tempted by this failure of the law, gratify my natural appetite; if it be an offence to do so,—the offence has come by the failure of the law to perform its obligations, and to the makers of the law is applicable "B.'s" quotations anent "offences." But he surely does not think the creation of the grape a cause of offence?

A.

BRITAIN AND FRANCE IN NEWFOUNDLAND—CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—In yesterday's *Evening Mail* I find the following stipulations alleged to be contained in the articles agreed upon at the recent Convention held for the purpose of settling the long vexed question of the Newfoundland West and North Coast fisheries. Taken as they stand, and unless very much modified by the context, they present to my mind a very startling and disastrous finale to a very pusillanimous policy on the part of the Imperial Government.

"France," says the *Mail's* despatch, "consents to permit the English to establish industries in the harbours on the coast hitherto reserved for French fishermen under the Treaty of Utrecht, and abandons her rights to the salmon fisheries in the rivers. The men-of-war of England and France shall have equal rights in regard to police duty along the coast, and French fishermen shall be exempted from paying duties on articles necessary to the fishing industry."

The idea of France "consenting to permit" the English to establish industries upon soil subject to their own sole jurisdiction is simply absurd. But it is no less absurd than that of harbour reservations for French fishermen under the Treaty of Utrecht. The French certainly had the privilege granted them of landing and curing their fish upon the West Coast, but were not allowed under treaty to erect any fixed habitations or fishing stages; and were only to occupy them from time to time, and during the fishing season only.

The same may be said of the alleged abandonment of French rights to the salmon fisheries in the rivers and estuaries of the coast. France never had any such rights vested in her by the Treaty of Utrecht, or any other treaty. She simply seized them and occupied them without the right being conferred upon her to do so. And now she has the impudence to claim and bargain with the property thus acquired by her.

But the last of these stipulations is the most fatal one of all. Her ships are to exercise equal and co-ordinate jurisdiction with our own over the whole coast-line; and her subjects, carrying on industries there, are to be exempt from the payment of taxes or duty. Do the people and Government of Canada see the force and meaning of this concession? Do they not see that it throws the whole Atlantic and Gulf fisheries of Newfoundland and the Dominion entirely into the hands of France? And not only the Gulf and deep sea fisheries, but the shore and Labrador fisheries as well. For how is it possible for Newfoundland or Dominion merchants to enter into competition in these industries with a people planted on their own soil, released from all public fiscal responsibilities, paying no revenue even to the Government upon whose soil they locate themselves, and receiving at the same time an enormous bounty from France of eight francs per quintal for every cargo of fish entered there, and a much larger bounty for export, whilst upon the shoulders of the British merchants and fishermen is placed the whole burden of revenue and taxation.

Let me ask—Are the statesmen of Great Britain entirely bereft of their senses? And will the Dominion of Canada and the Province of Newfoundland permit this wholesale spoliation and deprivation of their property and industry without one word of remonstrance? Let me suggest that the matter be at once taken up publicly by the commercial men and the public men of Canada. It is not Newfoundland alone which is to suffer; but the whole fishing population and industry of Canada and the Lower Dominion Provinces. The worst it can do for Newfoundland is to convert it into a French province at once; for that must be the end of it. Let me urge you, Mr. Editor, to press this matter home upon the public at once, for there is no time to be lost in order to save a large, valuable, and national industry from being absolutely crushed out of existence. You have my card, and if any knowledge or acquaintance I may have with the subject is of any account, I can only say that it is entirely at your service.

Yours truly,

WYNTOUN.

Toronto, January 28, 1886.