

Temperance.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Prohibition and Anti-Prohibition."

[No. 2.]

MESSRS. EDITORS,

In my second Letter, (C. M., Jan. 9, 1856, p. 13.) I considered the objection against a prohibitory liquor law, its alleged infringement on liberty.

Mr. Bent, strangely misconstruing my plain language, of course, (p. 19.) "cannot discover the slightest similarity between" the liquor traffic and the slave trade. Those, however, who do not, (p. 27.) "see through such a distorted medium," can easily "discover" it. The abettors of both notoriously adopt the same line of argument against prohibition, alleging that it is contrary to Scripture, a violation of rights, opposed to political economy, adapted to cause strife, &c. It is evident, that while the latter enslaves the body, the former enslaves both body and soul. Mr. B. does not attempt to question the undeniable fact stated by me, "that the traffic in spirituous liquors robs immense multitudes of their liberty in a moral point of view, and plunges them into slavery of the most debasing and calamitous nature." This objection, (p. 20.) against "confining the right to traffic in spirituous liquors to certain persons, to whose dicta the rest of the community must succumb," applies strictly to the license system, which exclusively authorizes some individuals to enslave others; but it is wholly inapplicable to a prohibitory law, which allows no man to sell such liquors except for medicinal and artistic purposes, which are their proper uses, and do not reduce men to moral slavery.

Far from speaking, (p. 18, 21,) "as if the mass of the people were a legion of drunkards," when I speak of them as "enduring the iron rod of oppression from the tyranny of the liquor traffic," I refer expressly to the infliction of "calamities on unconsenting victims." Who is there in this country that has not suffered from it, either directly or indirectly? By means of it one of my maternal uncles was ruined, his amiable wife and family involved in deep and lasting distress, and my own dear mother's heart wrung with unutterable anguish, and evidently her health seriously and permanently injured. Besides the trouble and grief which it has caused me in various ways, through its influence my life has been endangered at different times. For instance, on a Sabbath evening, when returning from public worship, my horse has been thrown down, and I myself precipitated headlong. Unquestionably the iron rod falls heavily on the mass of the people.

I have not intimated, as alleged (p. 22,) "that every man, without exception, who uses spirituous liquors of any description, becomes a drunkard, sacrifices his property, ruins his family," &c. It is, however, indisputable, that where inebriating liquors are freely used, these consequences do very frequently follow. Mr. B. himself says, (p. 78,) "about twenty-five years ago the vice of intemperance was spreading like some deadly miasma through the length and breadth of this land," and "vast numbers were being hurried by this mighty pestilence into a drunkard's grave." Moral suasion did, indeed, "check the progress of this monster evil." Many intemperate men were reclaimed. Of these, however, numbers were subsequently ruined by the vendors of intoxicating drinks and their allies: and in many instances their widows and fatherless children have seen their once cheering prospects blighted, and their husbands and fathers "hurried into the drunkard's grave." For this dire evil a remedy was obviously needed; and this prohibition only can furnish.

I do by no means, as is represented, (p. 4,) "prefer compulsory sobriety to that which emanates from moral and religious principle." If I were upon the subject, they could easily obtain and retain a prohibitory law in these Provinces; but unhappily too many have allowed themselves to be drawn away by untoward political influences, while the opposers of this philanthropic measure "have organized themselves" into a determined phalanx of opposition to it. I am not aware that there are any in these Provinces, (p. 23,) who are labouring faithfully to promote temperance, and to reclaim the intemperate, by moral suasion, who are not also desirous to have a law that will tend to aid those who wish for deliverance from drunkenness, and to protect the unwary from its fatal snares.

sore judgments on himself and his family. (1 Sam. ii. 22-25; iii. 13, 14; iv. 15-25.)

It is certain that intoxicating drink is an instrument of death, by which, either speedily or gradually, multitudes are slain. Are not, then those who have it in their power, (though they can not remove "all instruments" with which people may be killed,) bound to prevent this profuse destruction of human life? Mr. B. acknowledges, (p. 10,) that it is "often the case among tavern-keepers," that they "sell poison and call it wine, brandy, gin, &c." and that they "not only cheat the public out of their money, but often ruin the constitutions of the unsuspecting." By his own admission, then, this gross deception, destructive of property, health, and life, requires an immediate remedy. The inefficacy of that proposed by him, instead of a prohibitory law, as shown in my former Letter, must be apparent to every considerate man. Moreover, it is not true, (p. 21,) that "a man has a perfect right to sell . . . brandy, or any thing else," as for instance, arsenic, under its proper name, when he has reason to apprehend that the purchaser is likely to use it to the injury of himself or others. No man can do so and be guiltless.

What kind of "civil and religious liberty," (p. iii.) have "the Baptist denomination generally been found foremost in defence of?" Surely not "liberty" to pursue a course adapted, as the liquor traffic unquestionably is, to demoralize and ruin their fellow men. Mr. B. talks, (p. iii, 15,) about "force being applied to the consciences of others," and "putting a yoke on other men's consciences." I ask seriously, does any man's conscience dictate to him, that it is his duty to sell alcoholic liquors to be used as a beverage? If so, it evidently is not a "good" or "pure conscience," but an "evil conscience" that is "defiled" and "seared with a hot iron." If such a conscience prompt a man to kill, or in any way to injure others, it is not persecution or oppression to restrain him. The Prohibitory Law enacted in New Brunswick, or that passed by the Assembly in Nova Scotia, (1855,) does not, as Mr. B. represents, (p. 14, 16, 40,) "subject every person to fine and imprisonment who giveth his neighbour drink in friendship;" nor does it forbid any one to drink whatever beverages he chooses. It simply prohibits the manufacture, importation, and sale of intoxicating liquors, except by persons legally appointed, and by them only for necessary uses.

It may be objected, that without forbidding, the law tends to prevent people from having an opportunity to drink inebriating liquors. True; but it is not common for complaint to be made against a law prohibiting slavery, by free men, that it deprives them of the privilege of becoming slaves, nor by slaves, that it does not allow them to continue in slavery. Men who have no desire for the intoxicating cup, can not consistently allege that the removal of it deprives them of any privilege. Such as from inclination are unwilling to relinquish it, are—however unconscious of it—slaves in the worst sense. If not absolutely drunkards now, they are likely soon to be such. They ought to regard it as a great favour—some do so regard it—to have the temptation removed from them, and their lost liberty restored.

The common use of wine, (p. 22,) in countries where it is made, and frequently used in a state very slightly, if at all, intoxicating, and so diluted with water that it scarcely ever produces inebriety, is altogether dissimilar to the free use of the alcoholic drinks prevalent in this country. These obviously are not, as beverages, "blessings which a beneficent Creator has sent for the use of his creatures." The common use is the abuse of that. Not only does it very frequently lead to drunkenness, with all its innumerable attendant ills, but, as is generally agreed by competent judges, it is prejudicial to health.

If professed "prohibitionists" did, as alleged, (p. 23,) "bring all their united influence to bear" upon the subject, they could easily obtain and retain a prohibitory law in these Provinces; but unhappily too many have allowed themselves to be drawn away by untoward political influences, while the opposers of this philanthropic measure "have organized themselves" into a determined phalanx of opposition to it.

I am not aware that there are any in these Provinces, (p. 23,) who are labouring faithfully to promote temperance, and to reclaim the intemperate, by moral suasion, who are not also desirous to have a law that will tend to aid those who wish for deliverance from drunkenness, and to protect the unwary from its fatal snares.

Mr. B. agrees with me, (p. 24,) that man ought to be 'restrained . . . from intoxication.' Certainly, then, he endorses the principle of coercion. But how are they to be restrained while the temptation is continually presented before them? Would he tantalize the rum-seller's unhappy victim by putting the bowl to his mouth, and then not permitting him to quaff it?

I agree with my old friend, (p. 24,) as to the injustice of "punishing one person for the sins of another." It is known to all, that a great proportion of the crimes perpetrated, are committed through the maddening influence of alcoholic drinks. As the Israelite who was apprized that his ox was "want to push with the horn," and still let him go at large, was responsible for the injury done, and if the ox "killed a man or a woman," had to "be put to death," (Exod. xxi. 29,) so he who knows what these drinks are wont to do, and yet furnishes them, and thereby causes the commission of criminal acts, ought to suffer the punishment. It is, however, my earnest desire to have the necessity of "punishing" any prevented, by the restraining of the destructive creature from going at large to commit his customary depredations.

Yours in gospel bonds,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, June 24, 1856.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

LONDON CORRESPONDENCE.

HOW MATTERS GO IN ENGLAND—THE PEACE CELEBRATION—A GLANCE AT EUROPE—THE AMERICAN QUARREL.

LONDON, June 20.

DEAR SIR,

After an interval somewhat longer than ordinary, I resume our correspondence; and hope that the interest you are pleased to say your readers took in my former letters will be extended to this. At a time when good men and true are weighing with solemn reflection the consequences that would ensue from hostilities with the United States, and consequently restricted communication with, and anxieties regarding, British North America, it behoves all who have at heart the interests of brotherly reciprocity to do all in their power to cement more strongly the cords that unite the dwellers in Canada with the inhabitants of "the old country."

Since I last wrote, how important have been the changes in national existence and foreign relations! "Grim-visaged War hath smoothed her wrinkled front;" assembled armies marshalled in stern opposition for further contest, have found for a while "their occupation gone"; and patriotic warriors, relaxing watch and ward, fraternize with their late foes, and indulge the gentle yearnings that whisper of peace, and reunion with absent loved ones.

Diplomacy has steered through the intricate channels of Congress debate; and the vox populi, erst so blatant with war cries, swells into all the platitudes wherewith poets and would-be orators hail the advent of peace.

True the change was not instantaneous. Faithful to their national character, Englishmen grumbled at the terms obtained; but then the fireworks came; it was a general holiday; country cousins visited their relations; London was one blaze of light, as an enchanted city: and amid the furor of excitement, popularity (that ever-shifting chameleon) shifted to "Vive la paix!" The blood and treasure expended in the Russian war being almost forgotten in gas jets and variegated lamps. Almost: for even amid the rejoicings, there were not wanting reminders of past woes, like the Egyptian skeletons at festal boards, to recall official mismanagement and national disgrace. And in how many hearts was that jubilant display but a mockery to death-wounds within, lacerated hearts, mourning for their young and brave kindred, sleeping where Scutari's lofty monument shall proclaim their valour and their bloody end! "Requiescat in pace," ye heroes! England and her songs of victory, will honour and guard your fame!

But the fireworks and the illuminations! Sure never before was such a sight seen. The aristocratic panel-embazoned four-wheeler jostled in loving communion plebeian van, cart, and dray; "my lord," and Brown, Jones and Smith, were alike men and subjects of Queen Victoria. Royalty from her palace, democracy from its scanty foothold on the green sward, gazed alike in com-

mon interest on the triumphs of pyrotechnic art; and female aristocracy, in ermine and jewels, was to be seen threading the blockaded thoroughfares side by side with honest fustian. To attempt a description of that wondrous night is indeed futile: the whole population appeared one—one in good humour, decent behaviour, and ecstasy. Bomba may shiver in his guarded palace, and despots tremble at a mob; but here whatever may be our faults, the people have shown that they may be trusted; and the truest guard around our beloved Queen's person is the unchecked, spontaneous volition of national masses.

Government for once succeeded. All its plans were excellent. Everybody saw the show, everybody was tired out, nine out of ten were well squeezed, and ninety-nine out of a hundred delighted. The calm stilly light of morn rose on the city; gradually its stillness extended over deserted streets and quiet rooms; the celebration was over; and London awoke yawning, the next day, to talk over the peace celebration of May the 29th.

In the provinces it was the same. School children gorged themselves with cake and tea; corporate bodies provided humble imitations of the metropolis; bonfires, candles, flags, and gas, helped to spread the enthusiasm; and from Land's End to John O'Groat's, England shook hands with itself, and its Allies.

Peace! for how long?—Has Sebastopol left no smouldering fires in Muscovy's breast—cast that famous retreat to the north side no shadow? Beaten and foiled, Russia retires with honied words to "cultivate her internal resources;" but bides she not her time for a future swoop with more deadly and revenging aim? American murmurs swell sweetly on her ears: allied courts, now united, are open to her diplomacy. Hoary in intrigue, Russia waits, and watches Europe, the moves upon whose chess-board will dictate her future policy. France changes the excitement of war for the frenzy of national gambling, and her gagged press affords no outlet for that discussion which disarms revolution. Austria gloats with fell delight over the sighs of her enchained nations: Italy—oh, who shall tell the burning thoughts that rend her bosom—who declare the action of volcanoes of wrath and revenge, smouldering beneath the thin crust of that society on which her crowned despots stamp with iron hoof? Peace! let Europe look well to it, or the present lull will be but that pause in which thunder clouds gather their strength, to burst in wide-spread all-prevailing war and desolation. Sardinia, neglected by the allies whom she counted on for future aid, and surrounded by foes jealous of the light she casts on their darkness—is she also to be extinguished, or become the rallying-point of Italy's deliverance, and the future queen of regenerated nations. The Papacy and its Concordat are busily thrusting ecclesiastical dogmas into the throats of men bound down to receive them:—will they burst their bonds? and when will that dies ire convulse the Old world?

Nor is the New quiescent. Pugnacious always, Jonathan has heard the echo of battle till, like a war-horse, he chafes for strife. What miserable drivelling is it, to say that Canadian enlistments are the ground of offence! Did not the States enlist in Canada themselves? Would not such a dispute between two respectable men be settled in an hour? But, no: the Britishers must eat "a dirt pie," and Yankeeedom fumes for its mastication. A bellicose President and Secretary; relying on the filibuster element to back them, goes as far as they dare, and qualify, for the sake of credit their insulting act. Where is the better part of American society at this juncture? Are we to be goaded on, till even endurance fail, and the most horrible of all imaginable butchery begins, to cease we know not when or where? The dispute reminds one of family discord, created by some prodigal son, whose relatives, for the love they bear him, endure with disgust his vagaries rather than enter into war with their own flesh and blood. We have eaten this "dirt pie;" we have acted below purest conviction of due justice; but let not this be repeated, or England will at least be compelled to vindicate her honour; and then—Heaven in mercy avert what would ensue!

As to Central America, the great majority here care not one farthing who possesses it, in comparison with war. If America chooses to fight her way there let her; the responsibility is her own. 'Twill be time enough to defend our West India possessions when America is mad