

The following letter to the "Chatham Division" of the Sons of Temperance, is published by their request.—Eds.

Saint John, January 20th, 1854.

To the Recording Scribe of Chatham Division of the Sons of Temperance, Saint George.

DEAR BROTHER,—Since I parted from you I have given the subject of the "Delirium Intoxicatum" my serious consideration, and if you think, as Recording Scribe, that the following thoughts will be of service, you are at liberty to do with them as you please.

Of all the diseases to which the human system is incident, there is none that is regarded with so much apprehension, by most persons of cultivated minds as *Insanity*. In proportion to our estimate of the elevation of man's spiritual nature, as compared with his material organization—in proportion to our admiration of the mental endowments of those heroes of our race, who stand forth as examples of what it may produce in moral worth, in intellectual greatness, in poetic beauty—is our sadness at the idea of its degradation, as exhibited in those various phases of madness which present themselves to the observation of every visiter to a Lunatic Asylum.

It is a fact that in all ages of mankind of which we have any historical record, and in nearly all races, a practice has prevailed among a larger or smaller proportion of every community, of artificially inducing a perverted condition of mind, which resembles *insanity* in all its essential features; the individual, when under the influence of the peculiar poisons which have the property of thus acting upon his higher nature, through his nervous system, being as completely destitute of self-control as is the raging madman, and being, in consequence, utterly incapable of taking care of himself, as well as prone to commit the most serious injuries to the persons or property of others.

The spontaneous fermentation of the saccharine juices of fruits, probably furnished the first alcoholic beverage; and from the incidental way in which the occasional yielding of the early Patriarchs to the temptation of vinous intoxication is mentioned in the Scriptures, may it be inferred that *DRUNKENNESS* was one of the vices of their antediluvian ancestors? In latter times, however, mankind has not been satisfied with the amount of alcohol which could be readily produced from the grape, and other saccharine fruits; but has ingeniously perverted, with the view of supplying the demand more cheaply, one of those wholesome and nutritious products of cultivation, of whose value even the ancients were so sensible that they regarded it as one of the special gifts of the Goddess Ceres, by a misuse of the natural process of germination, which tends to the increase and multiplication of these most valuable plants, instead of to their destruction, the corn-grains are converted into saccharine malt, and its infusion is then made to undergo the vinous or alcoholic fermentation—a process which must be regarded as an act of *decomposition*, and which destroys the real nutriment.

We shall not now speak of other intoxicating substances. There is a large class of individuals, who, having never been led to controul their animal propensities, and being unconscious of the existence of a higher nature within themselves, simply obey the prompting of the instinctive impulses, and are rather to be so considered as ill-regulated automata, than as vicious men. Some of them, from early intemperate habits, seem altogether destitute of anything but a *brutal* nature, and can only be fairly treated as irresponsible beings, and, as such, restrained by external coercion from doing injury to society. But this class is small, in proportion to that of individuals who act viciously, simply because they have never been led to *know* that any other course is open to them, or to *feel* any motives that might give a different direction to their conduct. With these, the object should be to awaken the higher parts of the *moral* nature, and to develop habits of *self-control*. It is the direct tendency of all intoxicating agents to destroy this self-determining power, and to augment the activity of the automatic operations of the mind; thus subjecting the individual to their controul, and inducing a variety of states which admit of an exact comparison with the various phases of *insanity*.

Some individuals contend for the use of these spirits, because of the exhilaration of spirits and mental activity produced by them.

In this case the imagination is excited, the fancy becomes vivid, the current of ideas flow fast, the world of thought seems extended, the mind is filled with images which come to it unbidden; but there is a *want of coherence* among them, and a *want of power* to restrain the expression of them. There are men who are never so brilliant as when in this stage of alcoholic excitement, and whose after-dinner speeches enrapture their audience by their brilliant wit, their graceful fancy, their rich humour. This we have seen and heard with our own eyes and ears, but through all the brilliant halo which surround such achievements, we have perceived a sad *misuse of powers which were given for a nobler purpose*.

Let it be noticed, however, that it is not in the works of our greatest poets and artists, that the traces of such artificial excitement are to be found. On the contrary, all those which command an *enduring* reputation, bear the evidence of *sober, pains-taking* direction of the mind, alike to the development and completion, and to the execution of the conception. The more we know of the mode in which these great productions were *wrought out*, the more we see the evidence of that *intense* and determinate direction of the mind to their elaboration, which can only be maintained by the vigorous exercise of the will. Wit, humour, fancy, and imagination, are themselves among the automatic faculties of the mind. No one has ever *acquired* the creative powers of genius, or made himself a great artist or a great poet, or *gained by practice* that peculiar insight which characterizes the original discoveries, these are all natural gifts, *mental instincts or intuitions*; but they nevertheless all require the training and development which careful cultivation alone can give, in order that they may be turned to the best account, and this never can be done under the excitement of intoxicating drugs; and to force these powers to undue and irregular activity by alcoholic stimulation, is to take the most effectual means possible for removing them entirely from the command of the Will, and for preventing their possessor from calling them into use when most he may need them or desire to do so.

It is very commonly believed that the provocative which liquors supply to acts of violence, is confined to the state of absolute drunkenness, or to one bordering upon it. We feel satisfied, however, from observation, that such is by no means an adequate statement of the fact; and that in the very earliest stage alcoholic excitement,—as soon, in truth, as the liquor begins to exert any effect upon the brain—there is precisely the same increase in the activity of the *emotional*, as there is in that *intellectual* part of the mental constitution.

We have noticed phrenologically that long before there is an indication of *intoxication*, there is an exaggeration of the state of feeling,—thus, there are men who are so much more generous and conceding under this influence than in their perfectly sober condition, that they are ready to grant favors and make agreements which their better judgment completely disapproves—a circumstance of which those who have a point to gain from them are not slow to take an advantage—hence we have often heard in England the expression—"If you want to get a donation for — from — call after he has dined, when he has his fruit and wine before him."

On the other hand, those in whose constitution the lower animal propensities habitually predominate, experience these propensities in unusual strength under even the slightest alcoholic influence; and having lost from the very same causes, a large measure of whatever volitional controlling power they may habitually possess, they become the subjects of impulses to violence of various kinds, which they have *then* no power of restraining. We feel persuaded that it is in this primary state of alcoholic excitement, that a large proportion of those offences are committed, which statistical evidence demonstrates to be attributable to the moderate use of fermented liquors.

I recollect to have read the following, as related by Captain Drew to the Committee of Naval Officers that sat at the Admiralty a few years ago, and which I cut out of a paper, when they were considering the propriety of diminishing the issue of ardent spirits in the Navy:—

Captain Drew said, "I had a marine who was a very bad character, and who was constantly complained against for quarrelling and fighting, and disobedience to the orders of his sergeant. At length I began with flogging

him; I gave him two dozen lashes, and told him that I would increase his punishment every time I had a complaint against him. In less than a month I had another complaint against him, and I gave him three dozen. Within another month I had a complaint again and it appeared to me that the man's reason was affected, as he was constantly excited. I therefore applied to the surgeon of the ship, and asked him to examine him to see whether he was not a fit subject for invaliding. He was examined, and the surgeon reported that he was as fine and healthy a young man as there was in the ship. I then did not think myself justified in flogging him again, but took upon myself to do an illegal act with a good intention, and when we came into harbour (in the West Indies), I hired a cell in the gaol, and kept him there three days upon bread and water. When the man came out of gaol, I told him, whenever I had a complaint against him, as sure as we come into harbour, I would send him back to gaol. He said, 'Do you mean to say, that I am to be sent to gaol every time we come into harbour?' I said, 'No; only in case of my having a complaint against you.' He said, 'Thank you, Sir.' I said, 'Now, I will start afresh with you. I will forget everything that has happened, if you chose to alter your conduct.' He said that he was very much obliged to me; and he came to me the next day, and asked me if I would stop his allowance of grog, and let him be paid for it. I did so, and never had another complaint against the man while I was in the ship."

The Captain said this man was never *absolutely drunk*. Moderation then in his case and others, afforded no *safeguard* against the excitement of the lower passions.

The closeness of the affinity between the states of *Insanity* and of *Alcoholic Intoxication* is apparent by the extreme readiness with which the balance of reason is disturbed by a small quantity of liquor, in those individuals in which there unfortunately exists a predisposition to mental derangement.

Who has not heard of, if he has not witnessed that terrible state known as "*Delirium Tremens*?" This is the manifestation of the disordered condition to which the brain has been brought by habitual excess, and plainly exhibits, in the complete perversion of the functional power of the organ, the morbid alteration which has been effected in its nutrition. The only cure for this is in *REPOSE—purification and renovation of the blood*. We might add upon Medical authority, that in many cases Epilepsy, Apoplexy, and Paralysis can be traced to the abuse of alcoholic liquors. To overturn this evil what is our duty, dear brethren, then, at this time? Surely, *to be up and doing*—to press the Legislature through the press, and by our voices by making it familiar (if the body does not know it *experimentally*) with the extent and the terrible nature of the evil with which we have to contend.

When, O when, will our Legislature so act as to prohibit the conversion of men's regulated passions into cruel and headstrong tyrants, and their higher feelings into abject and debased slaves, by the operation of Alcohol on the physical, and through it, on the moral nature of Beings made in the image and likeness of God?

I am, Dear Brother, Yours,  
In the bonds of "Love, Purity and Fidelity."  
R. THOMSON, A. M.

## Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

Gagetown, January 25th, 1854.

DEAR BRETHREN,—The Sabbath after I left St. John I spent with the church at Jemseg, they are without a Pastor, and as we generally see it in such cases, they are in a low and scattered state. On Monday evening, I held a Missionary meeting, but as the weather and roads were unpleasant, but few attended. I, however, addressed them on the subject of Missions—endeavoured to show the importance and luxury of giving the Lord's money to the object that He himself has proposed, as all His plans are matured in infinite love and wisdom; and if His stewards will not harmonise with Him in carrying out His plans, He will depose them, and call in others to His aid. I think the brethren present believed what I said was true, as I endeavoured to take the Bible as my text-book; they, however,

came forward cheerfully to assist in the work of aiding the noble hearts and the heavy purses of the good brethren of St. John, by subscribing to the Auxiliary of N. B. B. H. M. Society; but there was not enough present to justify us in forming a Society, and we propose (D.V.) to return and finish our work a week from next Sabbath. I do not expect as liberal subscriptions in that quarter as though they were supporting a Pastor, as they are not in the habit of giving just now; but still they will not be on the back ground. They are able. I trust our list will prove them willing. I received for the Mission £2 10s. 5½d. I would have remained longer, but circumstances forbid. Next Sabbath I spent in Gagetown, as I have been some time absent.

A fortnight from next Sabbath I hope to spend at Newcastle, Grand Lake, as they are also destitute and calling for help. I expect they are as willing to give as to receive, as the good book tells them "it is more blessed."

I was last week at Wickham, also destitute of preaching in the Baptist Church. I was called to marry a couple. I intend paying them a visit as soon as possible after returning from the Grand Lake. There we listened to the Macedonian cry. I some times say—Good Lord what will we do in Queen's County to supply the wants of the churches, much more to carry the bread of life to the famishing thousands where no churches exist? What are the churches doing to help themselves? Why, in many cases, just nothing at all. Perhaps some do not know what to do, and others are unwilling to do as well as they do know. There exists an awful apathy, and what measure the Almighty will use to wake up his slumbering people I know not. Something must be done.

Yours, in the Gospel,

T. H. PORTER.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

## OBITUARY.

Died September 23rd, at Moncton, Westmorland, at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. Sarah Jonah, in the 93rd year of her age, leaving 10 children, 100 grand children, 155 great grand children, and down to the fifth generation. The deceased came to this Province a few years before the Loyalists, and since that time was a resident of Hillsborough, (A. C.) until about two years before her death when she was removed to her daughter's, at Moncton. During her illness, which was long and painful, she was sustained by Christian fortitude and resignation to the Divine Will. The deceased never made a public profession of her faith, but from what we know of her religious sentiments and character, we rejoice to believe that she now belongs to the Church triumphant, there to sing redeeming grace and divine love through the wasteless ages of eternity. Her remains were removed from Moncton to Hillsborough, and there interred beside the sleeping dust of her husband, to rest in silence till Gabriel's trumpet shall bid the sleeping millions rise.

Elgin, Jan. 16, 1854.

J.

## The Moral Training of Children.

It is in vain to suppose, that by constantly reproaching and upbraiding children for shyness or timidity you will remedy these evils. The fault is not theirs; on the contrary, it is a natural defect, though frequently increased by bad management; and the very dread of parental reproofment which usually haunts the minds of persons so brought up, instead of obviating the baneful effects of sensibility, for which it is intended by the anxious parent, will be sure to excite that state of feeling on every opportunity, and when the individual himself may be using every endeavour to suppress it. Nothing is more painful to young people than to have their feelings and countenances scrutinized, and the degrees of their sensibility measured by the surveying eye of the unmerciful spectator. Under the restraint of such examinations they can think of nothing but that they are looked at, and feel nothing but shame and apprehension. They are afraid to lay their minds open, lest they should be convicted of some deficiency for which they might afterwards be reproved. The season of universal smiles and courtesy of childhood (observes an admiral writer on this subject) is delightful while it lasts, but it soon passes away; they soon speak without exciting any astonishment, and, instead of meeting with admiration for every attempt to express