

## TEACHING TEMPERANCE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

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I take it for granted, that when the Committee asked me to speak on the subject named, viz. "The Teaching of Temperance in the Public School," it was not intended that I should occupy the Institute in an aimless discussion of the evils of intemperance, or of the virtues of temperance or total abstinence.

Momentous as the question of temperance is to you personally, to you professionally, it is more important as intended here, affecting as it does the welfare of the children—the future state.

While the importance of the general phase might justify it, while the personal habits of here and there a teacher might demand it, I shall not thus occupy the time. We might divide in opinion on some phases of this, the question of the latter part of the 19th century, whether considered socially or politically; but I trust we shall not be divided in the view I purpose taking this evening.

At the outset, then, I stand here as a citizen and not as a member of any temperance body. My subject is independent of the temperance cause as such. It is not the discussion of moderate drinking vs. total abstinence, nor of high vs. low license, nor legal vs. moral suasion. It is in no way thus involved. With your permission I shall state what I consider the true meaning of my subject viewed in the light of the onward march of the idea and province of the public school. It is this:

*Resolved*, That it is the duty of the State to ask the Public School to teach the children entrusted to it the nature and effects of alcohol upon the human being."

That is the question. Not the discussion of theory, not a war with social custom, simply a matter of state fidelity to itself. It is the duty not of the school to the state, but of the state to the school and then to itself. The school exists for the state, and should be used by the state for its strength and honor.

The state says the public school shall teach its children to read and write, not alone because of the pleasures thus opened up to the child, but because of the safety thus provided the state. The state is consulting its own comfort and stability. One child unable to read or write, a hundred such in fact, would not trouble its conscience, a nation of such, however, would tax its government and bring it dishonor.

Proceeding on the theory that intelligent citizens are better for a state than the ignorant, New Brunswick years ago wrote a school law, the vital principle of which is a recognition of the state's duty to the child and itself.

Its own interest, and not the citizen's comfort is what the state considers when the law-breaker is punished or the incorrigible put in chains. The tendency among the best nations of to-day is to educate the masses, the source and supply of governments. The precedent of the American Republic set a century ago in this respect is being followed in a degree by Conservative England, where recent events proclaim the democracy.

In a state like Canada, where practically universal suffrage exists, the masses make and unmake governments, and thus in effect govern the country. The strength of a country, therefore, must in time be measured by the intelligence and virtue of the common people. The schools are for the people, and year by year the teaching of the schools appear in the people, and therefore it becomes apparent that what we would have in the citizen we must teach in the schools. I speak here in general terms.

If we would have a loyal people, loyalty must be taught, if a healthy people, the laws of health must be unfolded. Without teaching forms of worship or doctrines or belief, we should teach

what is higher, reverence for a Supreme Being. In the regulations of our School Manual the teacher is enjoined to teach his pupils respect for authority and superiors, kindness to all, obedience to duty, manliness and courage, self-control and self-control in school, the virtues which at once ennoble the child and dignify the state. And are not these things better in a state and thus more worthy of a school than paralogisms and formulae and pages of history which tell of the ambitions of tyrants and the atonements of the people. My thought is this: A state whose masses are educated to respect each other, to obey the laws of health and of society, without any education in arts, would be a stronger state than one whose people were graduates in arts but lacking in good-will towards each other, and in respect for and obedience for superiors, the cohesive elements of society. The ideal state, however, is neither the one nor the other of these extremes, but a combination of the two, that in which a practical phase is given to the work of the school and where the children are fitted for intelligent citizenship.

And it is just here that this question of temperance in the schools comes in, the teaching of the nature and effects of alcohol in the human system, having a bearing on the physical, mental and moral nature of the child, and hence a problem of society and the state. Before society in these later years, an overwhelming mass of evidence against alcohol has been presented, and the verdict of the people again and again has been to pronounce it guilty of terrible criminality. Science has lifted her calm, deliberate voice against the deadly character of alcohol in its effects on the human body and brain, and society has felt its withering blight on the human soul. The statistics of the work-houses all over this broad earth protest against it as the enemy of the body, our asylums proclaim its maddening or deadening influences on the brain; and our penitentiaries and places of confinement and punishment tell of its wreckage of the moral nature.

Without taking the evidence of enthusiasts in temperance work, the news columns of the press speak out to condemn it, the voice of the pulpit pleads for its overthrow, the judge on the bench proclaims it fatal to social order, and the man of science forbids it as a delusion. These all, without fanaticism or prejudice, with no object but human good and truth in view, unite to condemn it as inimical to the trinity of man's nature—physical, intellectual and moral.

But is this assertion on my part, assertion incapable of proofs? Let us see, and from a mass of evidence let me select a very little, and that of a schoolmaster which cannot be accused of savouring of fanaticism. Four years ago, in June, 1882, the American Medical Association passed these resolutions:

*Resolved* (1). That in view of the alarming prevalence and ill effects of intemperance, with which none are so familiar as members of the medical profession, and which have called forth from eminent English physicians the voice of warning to the people of Great Britain concerning the use of alcoholic beverages, we, the members of the medical profession of the United States, unite in the declaration that we believe alcohol should be classed with other powerful drugs, and that when prescribed medicinally it should be done with conscientious caution and a sense of great responsibility.

*Resolved* (2). That we are of the opinion that the use of alcoholic liquors as a beverage is productive of a large amount of physical and mental disease, that it entails diseased appetites and an enfeebled constitution upon the offspring, that it is the cause of a large percentage of the crime and pauperism in our cities and country.

*Resolved* (3). That we should welcome any change in public sentiment that would confine the uses of liquors to the uses of science, art and medicine.

Can such a conservative, cautious body as that be accused of fanaticism? The influences of the hour, hastily passed resolutions, somebody says. Not so. The other day that same body met again, 2,000 strong, in St. Louis. Had they changed opinions? Not a whit. Let us hear their opinion of this year, 1886:

*Resolved*, That we affirm the previous utterances of the American Medical Association concerning the use and abuse of alcohol and its effects upon the human race, and recommend instruction in all our schools under state control. To further this study we urge the speedy passage by the House of Representatives of the Senate Bill now pending before it, requiring scientific temperance instruction in all schools under state control.

Of the 2,000 present who voted nay? Not one. From Pennsylvania and Ohio, centres of distillery, no opposition; from California, a land of fruit and wines, from Iowa, a land of corn and past brewery interest, no "nay" is offered. These men are now speaking on the deliberate, measured words of men of thought and scientific training. No sentimentality, utterance, no political trickery, but candid professional opinion. Can such an opinion be gainsaid?

Read their lines over again: "*Powerful drug*," "*conscientious caution*," "*productive of a large amount of physical and mental disease*," "*productive of enfeebled offspring*," "*the cause of a large percentage of crime and pauperism*."

To quote individual opinion after such a consensus as that would seem superfluous. Do you wish to investigate further? Consult Dr. Parker, Dr. Richardson, Sir Alexander Clark, Chief Justice Davis, and a host of men who have uttered just such professional opinions.

Now, if these things be so, should not the state hasten to acquaint its citizens through the school with the character of this common and declared evil? A delusion is abroad relative to the character, relative to the effects of alcohol, and the great majority of those who become addicted thereto, do so unconsciously of the jeopardy in which they place themselves. With our children taught the nature and effects of alcohol, is it not reasonable to suppose that many a citizen would be saved to the state, who would otherwise prove a wreck, a nuisance, or a criminal? The state's duty to itself thus lies in the direction of public education on this question. What "useful knowledge" could equal this? What "lessons on health" be promotive of equal good? But whether the end, the state's duty to itself, would thus be reached or not, the state's duty to the child remains, and, like the storm signal to the mariner, the danger signal to the citizen should be lifted by the state. This duty is the state's, and not that of the temperance society. The school is for the nation, the saloon is against the nation. The state erects one fort for its defence, and another for its destruction. Is this consistent? If the state cannot, or will not, remove this latter fort, should it not acquaint its children with the deadly character of its artillery, and thus warn them out of its range? We do not ask to have our schools transformed into temperance societies, but we do insist that if we are right in teaching our children the value of good air and healthful food and cleanly habits, that they may be healthier and happier and better citizens, then to be consistent with ourselves, we should teach them the poisonous nature of alcohol. Only a few years have passed since this agitation for scientific temperance teaching in the schools began in the United States, but wondrous has been its growth.

Four years is only time sufficient for a nation like the American Republic to take breath, but in that time seventeen states and one territory have fallen into line on this question and provided that the children of the public schools shall learn the character of alcohol. They have done it, too, in no haphazard way, by regulation of the Board of Education, which we have learned may mean very little in this question, but they have done it by Act of the Legislature.

These states have written a law on the subject since 1882, when the agitation first took form—Vermont, New Hampshire, Michigan, Rhode Island, New York, Alabama, Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon, Nevada, Maine, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Missouri, Washington Territory, Iowa and Connecticut. Let me read you some of the provisions of some of these acts, and ask you if they don't mean to accomplish something. Here