

NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE MONTREAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, APRIL 2, 1844.

Since the last Anniversary Meeting of this Society, a period of thirteen months has elapsed, marked by little of unusual interest either at home or abroad.

AGENCIES.

Although recognizing to the full extent the importance of employing the living voice in disseminating Temperance principles; the Committee have been unable from pecuniary embarrassments to keep even a single labourer permanently in the field, although that field be the extensive and important Province of Canada. But this great deficiency has been in part remedied by the employment of Agents by several of the District Unions. The Niagara District Union has for instance the high honour of having employed an Agent (Mr. De Bois) for the whole year; the Toronto Society has employed Mr. Bungay to visit the Home District; the Newcastle District has engaged the labours of Mr. Cleghorn; the Gora District has been visited by Mr. McKay, and various other Districts have employed labourers for some part of the year. In addition to which efforts, this Society sent forth their Recording Secretary and Agent Mr. R. D. Wadsworth, to traverse the whole Western Province on a lecturing and collecting tour which occupied three months, and in which he delivered 151 addresses and lectures, travelled 2235 miles, often in very bad roads, visited 170 societies, obtained 1627 subscribers to the pledge, and 633 for the *Advocate*. To the friends who forwarded him, and entertained him free of expense, we desire to return our warmest thanks, as well as to those who have kindly aided our funds.

Through a liberal donation for a special purpose from a gentleman in Glasgow, the Committee were enabled to employ an Agent, (Mr. Bungay) for one month in the Talbot District alone, and with great success—he travelled 300 miles—addressed 600 persons—delivered 34 lectures—received 624 names to the pledge—organized 19 societies—and circulated a large number of temperance publications. This same district has been favoured with the labours of other Agents at different times, and now it can be said, that all the clergy in Talbot District are teetotallers—there are 21 teetotal Magistrates and 32 societies, and it is confidently expected that next year not a single License will be granted in the whole district.

THE ADVOCATE AND TRACTS.

Next to the living voice, or perhaps equal with it, the press is the most potent agent under providence for the advancement of the Temperance Reformation. The Committee have therefore used strenuous efforts to extend the circulation of the *Advocate*, Tracts, &c., and although much apathy and prejudice prevails, their efforts have been crowned with a good measure of success. The low price of the *Advocate*, so low that it scarcely covers the actual cost, has doubtless tended much to promote its circulation, but at the same time it forces the Committee to require payment in advance, and is a strong argument against continuing the gratuitous distribution to Ministers, School Teachers, and others. This last named effort has been continued through the year as heretofore, and we hope on the whole has been productive of much good, but as the all but unanimous voice of the Societies in Canada advises its discontinuance, it will be given up, with the hope that local societies will take care to see the Ministers and Teachers within their bounds supplied.

It is cause of regret to the Committee that the *Advocate* is not sufficiently circulated in the largest cities and towns in the Province. In Quebec, Toronto, and Kingston for instance, the circulation is in no way commensurate with the importance of the cause and the low price of the paper. The contrast however is very pleasing when we turn to back townships and new settlements where in many cases it is almost the only medium of communication with the rest of the world, and where its arrival semi-monthly is watched with an interest that the inhabitants of towns would find it difficult to realize. There it is carefully read and lent from one to another, and it is in view of its influence on thousands of such readers, that the Publishing Committee feel a deep responsibility resting upon them to conduct it in the manner which shall most redound to the glory of God, and the welfare of man.

The efforts of societies throughout the country to procure

Tracts or Publications from the Depot have during the past year been very partial and limited.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

We regret to say that few have been held during the past year, by the Montreal Society, and those few have not been well attended. During the summer season there was for a considerable time a Temperance meeting every Saturday evening on the wharf, at which Dr. Sewall's representations of the human Stomach as affected by Alcohol were occasionally exhibited with much effect. These meetings were sometimes well attended by seamen and others, and it is believed, exerted a happy influence. During a considerable part of the winter a series of excellent lectures were delivered by the Ministerial Association for the Suppression of Intemperance, which have excited much more interest abroad, than we regret to say was manifested at home. The Victoria Society has also held a series of eminently successful meetings.

JUVENILE CELEBRATION.

A very interesting Pic Nic was held last summer at which a Cold Water Army about 2000 strong partook of refreshments in the orchard of John E. Mills, Esq., and walked in procession through the city. These efforts of the young excite much sympathy in favour of the Temperance cause. The arrangements reflected much credit on all concerned.

TAVERN LICENSES.

A strong effort has been made to promote a strict construction of the laws as they now stand respecting licenses, i. e. that no latitude of interpretation should be allowed on the side of intemperance, a principle which, though evidently commending itself to the common sense and good feeling of all men, is we regret to say, seldom or never acted upon. Success at first seemed to smile upon our efforts, and about half of the applications for Tavern Licenses were refused by the Magistrates. But a vast array of private interests consisting of the tavern keepers, the owners of tavern stands, some of them Magistrates, and the sellers of intoxicating drinks, with their numerous friends and supporters was brought to bear upon the question, and caused it to be reconsidered, and as usual decided against the public good, so that our city still lies like a victim bleeding at innumerable wounds inflicted by four hundred or more licensed and unlicensed retailers of intoxicating drinks. The latter class we are sorry to say carry on their nefarious traffic with impunity, it being exceedingly difficult to obtain evidence against them—and when that evidence is obtained the most trifling and frivolous objections are allowed by the Magistrates to quash the proceedings.

PROGRESS.

The number of names added to the Montreal Society through the past year is about 560, but in such a large association it has been found impossible to preserve surveillance or maintain discipline, it is therefore out of our power to say what proportion have fallen back. Total abstinence principles are however gradually, we may almost say rapidly leaving the mass of Society, and this salutary progress is we think peculiarly apparent in the churches and amongst the religious and respectable portion of the community generally. The tone of our opponents of all classes also is very much softened and subdued.

The state of our city above described, may as far as we know, be taken for an epitome of that of the Province, and of the world with respect to the Temperance reformation. We hear of no extraordinary efforts, no remarkable enthusiasm, no vast numerical accessions any where, and yet perhaps the real progress of the cause is quite as great, when the still small voice of reason and conscience speaks, as it is in the whirlwind of the earthquake of excited feelings and passions.

FUTURE OPERATIONS.

There being a general feeling in favour of the formation of a Canada Temperance Union, it is likely that the Montreal Society will soon lose its somewhat provincial character and be enabled to devote its energies to the purification and improvement of the city, a change which will come in a good time, seeing that the city is becoming of very much greater importance than heretofore, both with regard to the number of its inhabitants, and to the extended moral influence which as the Seat of Government it is likely to exert on the Province.

We would therefore recommend the adoption of an efficient plan of operation for the city, suburbs, and neighbouring villages—such as the employment of an Agent,—the distribution of tracts,—the holding of meetings in the different wards in rotation,