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A HISTORY OF TEMPERANCE WORK IN PARADISE

By H. A. LONGLEY

History in the abstract may be defined as a road connecting the present with the past. Along this road the historian travels to some more or less distant point in the latter region, and returning, gives an account of his journey. In the history of the human race, which is perhaps as good a concrete example as we can furnish. This road has been divided into three districts, viz: modern, medevial and ancient history. Through the first of these we have the broad, straight, substantial and well kept thorotare of authentic records; in the second a tolerably good highway, for the most part, though greatly inferior to the first; while in the third the road continues fairly smooth and well trodden for a certain distance, but gradually becomes rougher, and narrower, more sinuous and obscure, as we enter upon the regions of tradition, legend and speculation, finally shading off into the very narrow and uncertain trail which that indefatigable explorer, Science, has blazed into a portion of the illimitable jungle of preing historic time. The foregoing metaphor will, we think, be found more or less applicable to any and all histories, whether of the world at large, the nation of which we form a part, the community where we reside, or even so comparatively insignificant a subject as that of temperance work in the little village of Paradise, of which we will now try to furnish a brief historical sketch.

Having followed the trail back into the past as far as we could trace it the last land mark we came upon was something near three quarters of a century ago, when a certain Judge Marshall who lived somewhere in the eastern part of the province used to travel through it in the interest of temperance. The following extract from a letter written by Mr. George Starratt, a former resident of Paradise, now of Halifax, to Mrs. G. L. Pearson here in reply to a request for reminiscences thus describes the said Judge Marshall and his work. "He was a true philanthrophist laboring at his own expense without fee or reward. He was an earnest, faithful, good man, and it affords me very great pleasure to have this recorded and thus pay just tribute to his memory.

He always stopped at Paradise and held meetings and through his instrumentality many were induced to take the pledge and join the society, but whether they pledged themselves to total abstinance or only as simply temperance people I cannot say, for we must remember that the temperance sentiment advanced gradually." Mr. S. also speaks of the great change that has been wrought in public sentiment since those early times when it was the regular custom for all men to drink spirituous liquors including christian ministers of all denominations.

At all public gatherings including barn-raising, etc., liquor was freely used; it was regarded as an important adjunct to the hay-field; and was especially in evidence at election times, particularly in the earlier days when the voting was held at different places and continued for a week or longer at a time. The rites of hospitality would not have been supposed to be properly observed in those days had not visitors and callers been treated to wine or liquor of some kind.

The first real temperance organization in our village so far as we can learn was that of Clyde Division, No. 157 S. of T., organized Jany. 12, 1860. Tradition says that some of the emblems included in the set now belonging to our present division, were originally the property of "Clyde" but apart from this and the date of its re-organization (which later we obtained from the grand scribe, together with the information that for one quarter ending June 30th, year not mentioned, Clyde Division returned 55 members and 49 lady visitors,) the only traces of its existence we have thus far been able to find are certain entries in an old ledger, kept by the late W. H. Troop, the earliest of which is as follows:

Clyde Division Dr.

1860, Jan. 29th, to 1 lb. candles 1s, 2d
Feb. 23, to 1 lb. candles, 1s, 2d.
March 8, to 1 lb. candles, 1s 2d.
May 24, 4 candlesticks, 2s 6d.
July 12, 1 lb. candles, 1s 2d.
Oct. 17, 1-2 lb. candles, 7 1-2d (seven pence ha' penny).

These items are of interest also as they show that the tallow candle was truly "the light of other days", both in public and private life, and that only a little over a half century ago.

On Feby. 14, 1863, there occurs this item, To 1 gal. rock oil, 4s and from the price charged it would appear that 'rock oil' must have been an expensive luxury at this time. Later on we find, April 21st, the same year, to 1 gal. oil, 75c, showing that the change from the English to the American money system umst have taken place about this time.

At this point we seem to emerge from the district of ancient history and to enter our middle district.

The fact that ladies were not then admitted to the full privilege of membership in the order of the S. of T. may have had something to do with the apparently sudden death of Clyde Division for the order that succeeded it made no such invidious and antiquated distinctions in regard to sex.

On the 17th of May, 1865, Paradise Lodge R. O. G. T. was organized in Bent's Hall, Paradise, by Provincial Grand Worthy Chief, A. J. Cox.

The Charter members were Alfred Vidito, Benj. Starratt, Joshua Beardsley, Wm. L. Leonard, Silas R. Lantz, Thos. N. Chesley, Edward H. Brown, J. Ferguson Starratt, Chas. Ray, Hezekiah Hall and Fred Leavett.

Officers re-elected for first quarter—A. Vidito, W. C. T.; E. Brown, W. Vice T.; S. R. Lantz, Chap.; F. Leavatt, W. Secty.; B. Starratt, W. F. Secty.; W. Leonard, W. Treas.; T. N. Chesley, W. M.; J. F. Starratt, W. I. S., and J. Beardsley, W. O. G. At the next meeting, May 23rd 24 candidates, 6 being females, were proposed for membership.

These were all passed and initiated, but one male, who was reported upon unfavorably by the investigating committee, showing incidentally that this particular committee at least realized its responsibility and did not carry it quite so lightly as became rather frequent in later times. That no ill will on either side was the result of this action is shown by the fact that the rejected party was subsequently admitted to membership. Paradise Lodge of itself furnishes material for quite an historical sketch.

It appears to have gathered within itself the musical literary, business and all other talent in the community for miles around on both sides of the river and was pre-eminently the banner temperance organization among those which have as yet existed in our village.

The names of Mrs. R. D. Balcom, Susie Morse (now Mrs. Wm. Saffner of Williamston) Margaret Starratt, (now Mrs. S. K. Morse); John Saunders, S. R. Lantz, S. K. Morse and others equally as efficient, perhaps, in the musical line; Mrs. E. M. Morse, Mrs. Avard Longley, Benjamin Starratt, C. S. Phinney and their associates, who, among other literary services, edited a paper called, "The Evening Star", devoted to temperance literature, etc. These with the names of W. H. Balcom, Israel Longley, Warren Longley, and others, who are mentioned in the minutes, representing the business talent of the Society, fairly indicate the material of which it was composed. Rev. N. Vidito was a regular attendant, and was a useful and efficient member, as were also his sons, Alfred and Theodore.

As a literary society, Paradise Lodge set a pace with which ours of the present day can scarcely hope to excel, while it was unquestionably a power for good in the cause of temperance and morality.

The causes which led to the decline and fall of this lodge during the summer of 1871 were probably very similar to those which have so frequently produced like results here and elsewhere throughout the land.

The property belonging to the society was sold at auction, realizing about fifty dollars after deducting expenses, and was devoted to the purchase of an organ for the old south meeting house.

On Oct. 20, 1874, the S. of T. again appeared on the scene and organized "Silver Spray" Division No. 376, in the old store belonging to the late Avard Longley, who was appointed D. G. W. P. of said Division, which was a worthy and efficient one while it lasted. It was the first temperance society which the writer had the privilege of joining, and among many other active and useful members he remembers particularly the names of Lavina and Sophia Bent and Clara Bishop. In about three years this society went the way of its predecessor, and was succeeded shortly after by "Life Post Lodge" I. O. G. T., which held its meetings in Bent's Hall. The writer regrets to say that this lodge, of which he was a member, also cannot be as favorably spoken of as those temperance societies which preceeded it. The membership was composed almost exclusively of young people, and though there were doubtless some earnest and sincere ones among them there were rather too many who were in it one way and another. It was disbanded about the year 1878.

In 1877, a band of Hope, called "Coldstream Guards", was organized and conducted by Rev. John Brown.

We come now to our modern history district in which the central figure is Regina Division No. 501 S. of T., organized December 26th, 1882, by Avard Longley, D. G. W. P., with 30 charter members, being among the most public acts of this hero of the temperance cause, who, although only casually referred to once before, has left footprints along the entire length of the road we have been travelling. Elected G. W. P. in 1884; an active member of the Dom. T. Alliance as well as of the National Division S. of T.; ever in the van of the battle for temperance in the old country court, the N. S. legislature, and finally in the Dominion House of commons, no history of temperance work in the community, county, province, or dominion would seem complete without some reference to one who so persistently and often even recklessly sought the Iron Crown of Duty.

Regina Division has had a comparatively lengthy and somewhat checkered career. It was re-organized Oct. 20, 1885, by Thos. Hutching, P. G. W. P., with twelve old and eleven new members and of its subsequent re-organization or resuscitations it might be said the name thereof is legion. It first held its meetings in a half over the store of W. F. Morse, which being taken to be converted into a dwelling house, a meeting place was found in the old Thos. Balcom store, then owned by C. E. Durring. Later it moved to the old store formerly occupied by "Silver Spray" Division

(Continued on Page Seven)

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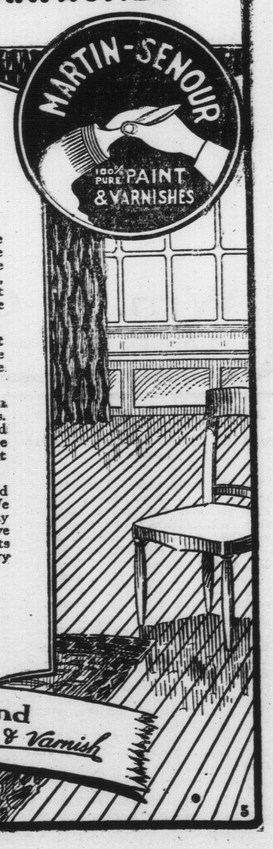

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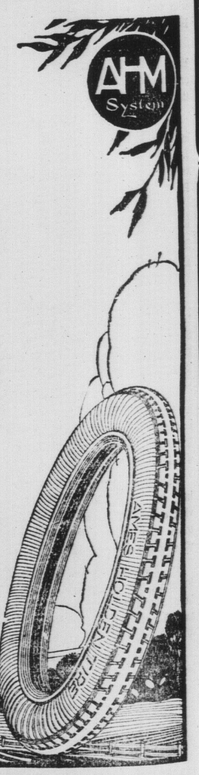

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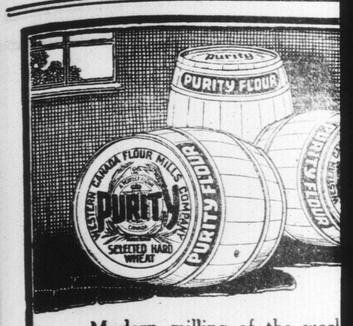

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