

CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE

DEVOTED TO

Total Abstinence, Legal Prohibition, and Social Progress.

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Annual Address of the President (E. C. Delavan,) of
of the New York State Temperance Society.

FELLOW-CITIZENS, — The Chairman of the Executive Committee will place before you the transactions of the Society since the last annual meeting. But I will here mention, that since our semi-annual meeting, the General Committee appointed by the World's Convention (of which the Hon. Neal Dow is Chairman), have had their first meeting in this city.

The Committee were appointed with power to "Devise such measures, from time to time, as may be desirable for the cause of Temperance throughout the world."

The first step taken, was to issue an Address, prepared by the Corresponding Secretary, of which 10 000 copies have been circulated. The Committee have it in contemplation, to appoint an agent or agents to visit every State in the Union, as well as the British Provinces, as soon as the proper person can be found, and the requisite funds procured. And here, I would remark, that whatever differences of opinion there may be on minor points, there appears to be but one sentiment throughout the entire temperance host, with respect to prohibition, and destruction of the vile poisonous compounds when sold as a beverage, contrary to law.

The various organizations for the accomplishment of this great object can, therefore, act in concert. Jealousies should be avoided as unbecoming, in the advocacy of so glorious a cause. Let each organization, do all it can, and rejoice if any can do more. Let the most enlarged benevolence go hand in hand with the most energetic action. Our country is extending, and rapidly extending, and were our present organizations increased tenfold, there would be ample room for them all. All, therefore, should labour in the common cause with fraternal feeling, and each provoke others *only* to love and good works.

It is unnecessary, gentlemen of the Society, and fellow-citizens, to enter into a detailed history of the past labors of the State Organization. Those who commenced the reform with me, are acquainted with the details; those who commenced at a later period are looking at the future rather than the past. It may not, however, be out of place at this time, to say a few words by way of record, in relation to the leading incidents which have occurred in the progress of the great work.

Societies were first formed in favor of the moderate use of strong drink: then of abstinence from ardent spirits; then, in favor of total abstinence from all that can intoxicate; then, for deciding the question of license or no license. The failure of this effort gave the cause of anti-temperance a temporary triumph, the effects of

which were so appalling as to alarm the fears and call forth the energies of a great majority of the community. And this brings us down to the present great epoch, when a demand is made for the entire prohibition of the traffic in all that can intoxicate, as a beverage, and the destruction of the articles when sold contrary to law; and this on the ground that the sale of such articles for such purposes is a sin against God, and subversive of the best interests of man.

During the progress of this long continued controversy, there have come up discussions in which the Society and individuals have become deeply involved. These side issues have often caused vast labor and expense. They were,

1st. The wine question generally.

2d. As to the kind of wine proper for the communion, whether the "fruit of the vine," as found in the cluster, the press or the vat, the unintoxicating wine of the Bible: or the intoxicating and mixed wine described therein, as—"wine the mocker;" wine that "biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

3d. Whether the moderate use of intoxicating drink caused an incipient disease of the stomach.

4th. Whether the pure, unintoxicating wine of the Bible, the wine of the cluster, the press, and the vat, although probably containing a small amount of alcohol, but so small as not to be appreciable by the senses, should be classed with fully fermented wine, "wine the mocker," "wine that biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

In the discussion of all these important questions it was the rule, after they terminated, to print the whole on both sides and circulate the documents freely. Near 7,000,000 in all were distributed on these various controversies.

We now come to the last great struggle to secure the prohibition of the sale, and destruction of the article if intended for sale contrary to law. I consider all the previous controversies as in their nature, indispensable and preliminary to this discussion. I am free to admit that I have myself arrived by slow and successive degrees to the conviction that it was my duty to become the open and decided advocate of the provisions of the Maine Law.

The more I examined, the more I became convinced that it contained the elements of truth, and therefore, of final triumph.

And here it may not be out of place to remark, that all the great principles upon which the cause of temperance is now established (I may say each one of them) at first had but few advocates: in each case condemnation was all but universal; condemnation too, generally, from an honest belief that they were not tenable. But