

THE ABSTAINER.

Halifax, N. S., July 1, 1857.

Desirous of placing before our readers, as soon as possible, the proceedings of the National Division at its recent annual session, we have anticipated the time of publication, not doubting that the change will be acceptable to them. The next number will be published at the usual time.

The account of the proceedings of the National Division is necessarily very imperfect, consisting only of the reports given in Providence newspapers. No official digest has been issued. We are, therefore, unable to give information respecting many matters of importance, and must be content to wait till the publication of the Journal.

A subject which has been often brought before the National Division has been at length decided on. Acting Grand Scribes who have served two consecutive years, are declared eligible to seats in the National Division.

Lady visitors will be hereafter provided with passwords, different from those supplied to members of the Order. There is a convenience in this arrangement which will render it generally acceptable.

A new Ritual is to come in force on the 1st of January next. We understand that it comprises a large portion of the old Ritual, with some additions from that now in use. Although not passed unanimously, there was what may be considered an "overwhelming" majority in its favor. We sincerely hope that it will prove satisfactory to the Order.

A Committee was appointed to prepare a Circular to Grand Divisions, with a view to place before them such facts as may tend to encourage those who have been disheartened, and to stimulate all to renewed activity. The Circular, we trust, will be couched in a vigorous, animated style, and present such considerations as shall tend to revive the whole Order.

If any members of the Order have been disinclined to the Prohibition policy, or disposed to imagine that Sons of Temperance might consistently be neutral on that subject, they will now see clearly the position which it is their duty to take. The National Division has affirmed Pro-

hibition to be, in the language of the M. W. P., a "fixed necessity," "the establishment of which in every State and Province under our jurisdiction is a matter devoutly to be wished, and sincerely to be labored for." After this there can be no mistake. Our mission is to prepare the public mind for the grand consummation, and not to cease from agitation till "every State and Province" shall be declared free from the legalized traffic.—That there may be, even then, here and there a scoundrel who will defy the law and smuggle in the poison, is likely enough. There are thieves and murderers still in the world, notwithstanding the doom which awaits them in all civilized countries. But the traffic will be contraband—the grog shop a nuisance—and the vendor a criminal, whom respectable men will shun. To bring about this glorious result is the object set before the Sons of Temperance. They will not flinch from their duty.

The pertinacity with which some persons hostile to prohibition reproduce their misrepresentations and sophisms is truly astounding. Their statements are shown to be baseless, and their reasonings unsound; yet they continue to reiterate them with marvellous coolness, reckoning, we suppose, on the forgetfulness of their readers, and hoping that their own unfairness will not be discovered.

Mr Gough has unwittingly given great occasion of triumph to anti-temperance people. In a private letter to a friend in England he intimated his opinion that the Maine Law has everywhere proved a failure, and that the cause of temperance is in an "extremely distressed state." The letter was incautiously published, and great were the rejoicings in the enemy's camp. The Hon. Neal Dow, having arrived in England just at that time, was requested to supply an antidote, which he did immediately in a letter containing such information as could not fail to correct any wrong impressions that had been made on the public mind. His explanations have been regarded as perfectly satisfactory. Some other letters, since written by gentlemen in the United States, and entirely confirmatory of Mr Dow's views, will be found in the present number of our paper.

But, say some, the Maine Law was unquestionably a failure, for the Legislature of that State has refused to re-enact it. In support of the allegation they adduce the following extract of a report presented by a select committee of the Legislature, appointed to take into consideration so much of the Governor's message as related to intemperance and the sale of intoxicating liquors:—

"Whenever a prohibitory law is again enacted by the legislature of the state, it should be drawn with the most cautious regard to its permanence, to its efficiency, and to popular confidence and support. Its form should be the production of the best legal wisdom, such as accords with the intelligence and conscience of the people, and be submitted to the people for their approval before it becomes a finality on the statute book.

"Is it expedient for this legislature to pass such a law? Your committee have decided in the negative. This Legislature was not chosen with special reference to the passage of a prohibitory law. On this question precipitate and hastily action is more dangerous than even unreasonable delay. Time, investigation, and experience at no distant day will bring public sentiment to an equilibrium that will create a law which will be permanent and highly salutary in saving the state from a vast amount of wretchedness, destitution, crime, sacrifice of property, and the thousand ills, that follow in the track of intemperance. The question is fairly before the public. It is for them to select the time when prohibition of the liquor traffic shall take the place of the license law now on the statute book."

We are astonished at the obtuseness of intellect which the misinterpretation of this extract displays. It is looked upon as tantamount to a confession that the Maine Law was a failure, and that no such law must be hereafter passed. Just the contrary. That such a law is necessary, and will ere long be placed on the statute-book of Maine, is clearly implied. All that the committee doubt is the expediency of passing it now. They allege that the present House "was not chosen with special reference to the passage of a prohibitory law." They advert to the propriety of taking time for the preparation of such an enactment as shall be so suitable and complete as to be permanent; and they intimate their opinion that public sentiment will be prepared for such a law "at no distant day." It is in their opinion only a question of time.

One of our cotemporaries observes, referring to the existing license law in Maine, that it is "working so satisfactorily as to justify its continuance for another year." We will charitably suppose that the writer has not read the *Abstainer*