

The Camp Fire

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF
THE GOOD TEMPLAR ORDER.

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NOTE. It is proposed to make "THE CAMP FIRE" the cheapest temperance paper in the world, taking into consideration its size, the matter it contains and the price at which it is published.

Every friend of temperance is earnestly requested to assist in this effort by subscribing and by sending in facts or arguments that might be of interest or use to our workers.

The editor will be thankful for correspondence upon any topic connected with the temperance reform. Our limited space will compel condensation. No letter for publication should contain more than two hundred words—shorter, still better.

TORONTO, JULY, 1894.

Thank God for the great Good Templar organization.

Think of what it has done for humanity, and the joy it has carried into thousands of homes.

Then ask ourselves: Are we true to its interests, and making the most we can of its splendid possibilities.

Step! It is the temperance cause we are working for. Why get so enthusiastic over what is really only a means towards an end?

True! But you can't have the end without the means. We glory in Good Templary because it is a machine so well-adapted to that mighty work, and so effective in accomplishing it.

We disparage no agency. We criticize no honest effort. "All and more than all are wanted." Other orders are doing nobly. We wish them all God speed. May they all grow better and stronger and more successful. Every fighter against the drink demon is a brother. We rejoice in every victory for our common cause.

Still we must confess to a special attachment to the loyal craft that has weathered so many storms, has come victorious out of so many fights, and has carried rich cargoes of blessing and gladness to so many lands. Fling out the old flag once more! As sound as the day she was launched, manned by as true-hearted a crew as ever was mustered, ready and fit for her rightful place in the van of the battle—Hurrah for the grand old I.O.G.T.

But as the veteran colored color-sergeant told us, KROW is a better word if you spell it backwards. We do well to be proud of the order to which we belong. We will do better if we show ourselves worthy of our place in its ranks. All we can boast of position and power is only of value in as far as we make it tell to-day in the conflict against evil, in the fight "for God and Home and Country."

Oh! how white are the harvest fields that wait our sickles. Nearly forty million dollars was paid out for strong drink in Canada last year. The grass is springing green to-day on three thousand graves that the drink traffic has dug since July, 1893. And no tongue can tell, for no man has ken, of all that lies behind the awful record, the broken hearts, the blighted lives, the ruined homes, the immortal souls swept—whither?

Are we doing all we can? Ontario has a population of over two millions, and has about eight thousand enrolled Good Templars. The State of Maine has a population about one-third that of Ontario, but she reports fifteen thousand members of our order. Eighteen years ago we had over thirty-five thousand men and women in our lodges, though our population was less than it is now. Are we not falling far short of our full duty to our cause and Order?

It is easy to point out failures. Any fool can find fault. Honest, earnest desire to do better will rather prompt enquiry as to the reason for the remissness and the best way to overcome it. The former success of Good Templar work here, the success of the Order elsewhere, and the success of other orders here, all make it certain that we can do much better than we have lately been doing. What are the hindrances to our work? How are we to get rid of them?

Everybody knows of something that can be done. Every member has brain power and energy which may prove mighty forces in our work. If these agencies are simply united and exercised, great results must be achieved. This union and action are exactly what our Order aims at. Organization and effort are the secrets of success. Let us make up our minds to get together, give a little sympathy, a little thought, a little effort to the cause. If our members co-operate in this we shall inaugurate an era of progress and usefulness. By way of suggestion we add a few short articles in reference to important matters and methods in which we may thus work together.

It must be remembered, however, that all suggested plans, and plans to be suggested, are but modes of operation of the great spirit of philanthropy, which is our Order's reason for existence, and means for the accomplishment of the overthrow of the liquor curse. Plans without this spirit behind them would be as useless as machinery with no motive power to operate it. The measure of the utility of both power and machine is in the result they accomplish. If, in the Master's spirit, looking to the Master for guidance, we approach the Master's work, difficulties will shrink, wisdom will pervade our deliberations, our plans will be crowned with magnificent success, and out of all will come "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men."

RETAINING MEMBERS.

Nearly every temperance organization has a record of many members joining it and leaving it. Every year reports large additions to the various orders, and at the same time a great falling off of those who have previously belonged.

The Good Templar Order is no exception. At every Grand Lodge session we have reported an immense number of members retired from our ranks in one way or another, besides those taken from us by death. The average would probably be not less than 6,000. This means that during the time our Order has been working in Ontario fully 200,000 members have left us. Where would we stand to-day were it not for this tremendous drain?

Of course it was a good thing to have these members with us for a while. They had the advantage of some Good Templar training. Allow liberally for death rate and emigration, and still there must probably be in Ontario the greater part of 100,000 men and

women who have had some schooling in our lodge rooms. They are the better for it. Many of them are leaders in the temperance cause and other philanthropies, who would not have taken such positions but for the start our Order gave them.

There ought, however, to be some better method of retaining our membership. Were the 200,000 disappointed in the Order? Did it fail to come up to the expectations they had in joining it? If so, how are we to make it more permanently attractive and useful?

In the first place our best sisters and brothers, those who have the longest experience, soundest judgment and most ability, must give their thought to solving the problem. The work we have in hand is worthy our most earnest efforts. Those of us who have talent of any kind must be ready to consecrate it to the cause. We must give as well as take. Parasites and sponges are very poor types of moral reformers. One of the first conditions of success is that all should be anxious to succeed and willing to do whatever they can to attain this desirable result. Unselfish earnestness for the welfare of humanity and the putting down of the liquor traffic, is the first essential towards the securing of the methods and plans of which we are in search.

Many of these transient members were young people who joined when their time was less valuable, or because of associations which were subsequently discontinued, or under the influence of some zeal for the cause that passed away, or perhaps in many cases for mere entertainment. Well, we ought to endeavor to make our lodge meetings such that no one would feel that he had lost the time spent in them. We ought so to unite our members in sympathy and work that the lodge room would draw them closer together and make their friendships even more enduring. We ought so to carry on our work that the enthusiasm and earnestness of our members would grow stronger at every meeting. We ought to conduct our meetings so that they would be to some extent, at any rate, entertainments of the highest and best kind, full of interest as well as of instruction and usefulness.

One of the special lines of work which this journal proposes is the consideration of plans and methods for the achieving of this desirable result.

There are other attractive features of our Order that may be developed. We have in connection with it an insurance system that, if pushed, would hold our members longer, draw them closer together and give us more working power. This has been the experience of sister organizations: why may it not be the experience of our own? THE CAMP FIRE also proposes to give special attention to this important matter.

Other suggestions crowd in. Doubtless many will come to our readers. Let us all have the benefit of them. Send a post card or a short letter giving your ideas. Thus we may have a co-operation of thought as well as work that must tell powerfully for good. Out of it all we may be made wise enough to check to some extent the drain that has prevented our rapid and continual increase in membership.

DISTRICT LODGES.

The Grand Lodge helps the cause by bringing together leading workers and giving the whole jurisdiction the benefit of their exchange of thought, of sympathy and of inspiration. Without this united consultation we

would be scattered and weak. Precisely the same result on a smaller scale is obtained by the District Lodge. In it members get broader views of the work to be done. They make better plans, and are stimulated to carry them out. A well organized, well worked District Lodge is a power for good that only those who have had experience of it can fully appreciate.

The District Lodge is also invaluable in that it provides a local executive made up of members who know their district and understand its requirements. This executive committee is, under our system, equipped with funds to help on the work. Such a committee will find out, as no Grand Lodge executive could find out, where a lodge can be strengthened, where help of different kinds can be given.

The results of experiments tried show the value of the District Lodge system. A mighty gain would be made in our province if every district was thoroughly organized during the present year. Our workers are earnestly urged to give this matter special consideration. The Grand Secretary will promptly give any desired information or aid. Already several inquiries and requests for help have been received. District Lodges in every part of the Province would mean a vast addition to our working force.

Where districts are not formed it is still practicable for Good Templars to hold county conventions for considering the situation of the temperance cause generally and the position and needs of our Order in particular. The heads of different lodges might unite in the call for such convention. Correspondence in regard to this matter is also invited. In union there is strength, and wisdom in the multitude of counsel. Let us take hold of all the benefit we can derive from united action.

One more suggestion. Let the District Lodge or the county convention be made more social. Let it not be too exclusively intellectual. Put into it an hour for the exchange of fraternal courtesies. Let our members learn to know and esteem and love each other better. The kindly feeling born of genial intercourse will make us better able to fight in unity, shoulder to shoulder in the field of conflict. Cordial sympathy is a mighty aid to many a weak brother, and a stimulus often sorely needed by the diffident, whose souls may be warmed into potential activity by the cheery sunshine of pleasant greetings. Take time to shake hands and get acquainted with your sisters and brothers.

MORE PUBLIC MEETINGS.

It should be the effort of the different temperance orders to keep themselves at all times prominently before the public. We are carrying on a campaign, and the class to be reached does not attend our lodge meetings. Important and necessary as is the lodge work, it should not lead us to neglect an equally imperative duty. Public meetings should be held as frequently as possible. The audiences should be told clearly what the Order is aiming at, and should also be invited to join in the campaign. This is a work which can readily be undertaken by the subordinate lodges. Each should set apart a certain number of nights for this necessary work. The meetings should be well advertised, and the names of any prominent persons who are to speak should be announced. One meeting may not accomplish much, but the simple hammering at the public conscience will arouse action somewhere. The public meeting ought to be a more prominent phase of our work.