

Messenger and Visitor

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Neal Dow.

As briefly noted in these columns last week, the death of General Neal Dow, of Portland, Me., occurred on Saturday, Oct. 4th. Mr. Dow, whose heroic and successful fight for the legal prohibition of the liquor traffic in his native State had made his name very widely known, was a man of great physical and mental vigor. He came of Quaker stock, his ancestors for several generations being Friends. They appear to have been a long living race. His father reached the age of 95, and his mother lived to be over a hundred. Neal Dow was born in the city of Portland, March, 1804, and was accordingly, at his death, in his 94th year. Having received a good education for the times at schools and under private teachers, he learned the business of tanning in his father's tannery, and afterwards entered into partnership with his father. In business he was successful and became wealthy. From early life he felt a strong interest in the subject of temperance reform. He perceived how difficult, if not impossible was the work of reform while grogshops were permitted to keep the temptation and enticement to drink constantly before the people. He therefore turned his attention to educating the country in the direction of legal prohibition, showing up the iniquity of the traffic as inimical to the public welfare and destructive of happiness in the home and the individual affected by its influence. An incident, which strongly called Mr. Dow's attention to the heartless and diabolical character of the rum-seller's business, quickened his resolve to secure the legal prohibition of the evil traffic. He had gone one day, at the entreaty of a lady, to request the keeper of a certain dram-shop not to sell her husband liquor, as through his excessive drinking, he was bringing ruin upon both himself and his family. Upon explaining the situation to the liquor seller and making the request, Mr. Dow received the following reply:

"It is my business to sell rum; I have a license to sell rum; I shall sell it to anyone who wants it and has the money to pay for it; I support my family by selling rum; I want none of your advice; when I want it I'll send for you; until then, keep it to yourself."

"You have a license to sell rum, have you?" Mr. Dow replied. "You will sell it to any one who can pay for it, will you? You support your family by destroying the families of others, do you? Heaven helping me, I'll see if I cannot change all that."

From that day on, we are told, Mr. Dow ceased not to wage a war of extermination against the grogshops. Winter and summer, hot and cold, wet and dry, he made, for ten years, missionary tours through the State, taking always one friend with him, sometimes two or three, and paying all expenses.

The systematic and persistent work of Mr. Dow and his helpers was not without effect. In the spring of 1851 Mr. Dow was Mayor of Portland; the Legislature was in session at the capital. With an anti-liquor bill in his pocket, carefully drawn by him, he went to Augusta and had a public hearing in the Representatives' Hall, crowded to its utmost capacity. At the close of the hearing, the special joint committee unanimously adopted the bill as presented by Mr. Dow. It was reported to the Legislature the next morning, the last day of the session, and was enacted on that day without change, by a vote of eighteen to ten in the Senate, and eighty-six to forty in the House. That was Saturday, the last day of May. It was approved by the Governor on Monday, June 2nd, and took effect immediately upon obtaining his signature. That bill, thus passed, is known everywhere as 'The Maine Law.' In Neal Dow's words: 'That bill outlawed liquors kept for sale, and doomed them to seizure on sight, to confiscation and destruction.'

The fight against the liquor business in Maine did not of course terminate with the passage of the 'Maine Law.' The fight is indeed not over yet. It is a case in which eternal vigilance is the price of success. Neal Dow was fighting the enemy all through his life, securing amendment after amendment to make the provisions of the law more rigorous and effective. But it cannot be doubted that much was achieved for the cause of temperance reform in Maine when the law was passed in 1851. The effect of it was to banish the traffic from the rural districts, and in the larger towns to curtail its proportions to about five per cent. of what it had been: It is admitted that in the cities, in Portland and especially in Bangor, the traffic goes on to a considerable extent in spite of the law. The value which the people of Maine attached to the prohibitory law is shown in the fact that, after being on the Statute books for thirty-three years, the State in 1884, by a majority vote of over 47,000, adopted a constitutional amendment by which "the manufacture, sale and keeping for sale of intoxicating beverages is forever forbidden."

During the war of the rebellion Mr. Dow raised in his State a regiment of infantry and a battery of artillery. He went to the front with the rank of Colonel, and was shortly afterwards made Brigadier-General. He rendered his country efficient service on the battle field, was twice wounded and, while wounded, taken prisoner. After a bitter experience in Libby prison, he returned to his home in broken health, but rapidly recovered, and was about to go to the front again when the war came to an end.

As to the present and ultimate results of the Maine Law there are no doubt honest differences of opinion. Some men who acknowledge the evil are by no means so sanguine as to the remedy as was General Dow. But this much may be set down for certain, that, if a country had among its public men any large number as sincerely, fearlessly and resolutely opposed to the liquor traffic as was Neal Dow there would be no question as to the success of a prohibitory law.

Paul and Felix.

The episode in Paul's life, which the Bible lesson for next Sunday brings before us, is one which appeals forcefully to the Christian imagination. The interest of the lesson centres in the apostle's address to the Roman Governor and his wife. It was an address worthy, in its courage, its faithfulness and effectiveness, of the man who delivered it. The small audience was of a character to embarrass a less faithful and resourceful preacher. There was the governor, Felix, who had been born a slave, had obtained his freedom, and, by means of innate ability and unscrupulous methods, had risen to the position which he then occupied. He had seduced from her lawful husband the woman who became his wife, and his whole career had been marked by impurity and unrighteousness—a man of whom Tacitus says that, "in the practice of all kinds of lust and cruelty, he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave." The woman Drusilla, a Jewess by birth, a daughter of that impious Herod of whom we read in Acts 12: 21-23, had deserted her lawful husband to unite her fate with such a man as Felix—facts which sufficiently indicate her character.

How Paul came to speak as he did—whether it was in reply to a request for a set discourse or whether he was led on by way of conversation—we are not distinctly informed. Having found opportunity to speak in the name of his Master, he adapted his discourse to the needs of his hearers and sought to make his message as effective as possible. Some men, under such circumstances, would have propheesied smooth things. 'But Paul was not the man to deal in pointless generalities and cry peace where no peace was possible. He had been commissioned to preach a gospel which was and is the power of God to salvation to Jew and Gentile; and both Jew and Gentile were represented in his small audience. But the apostle well knew that for men and women, such as Felix and Drusilla, living lives full of lust and unrighteousness, there

could be no gospel, until they were willing to repent and renounce their iniquities. His aim evidently was to make his hearers see themselves in their true character. So Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and the judgment to come. No doubt that he set forth the duty of righteousness on the part of the ruler toward the people, as well as between man and man, showing that unrighteousness, everywhere and always, is opposed to the Divine law. He spoke too of the duty of temperance, the proper control of the appetites and passions—all that we mean by virtue and purity of life. And then he proceeded to speak of the judgment to come, the bar of Infinite Justice to which all are hastening, and before which all, both high and low, both small and great, must give account to God for the deeds done in the body.

The preacher's word did not altogether fail of effect. One at least of his hearers heard and trembled. The word which Paul spoke commended itself to the conscience of Felix, and caused him to feel that the preacher's words were true and ought to be heeded. The faithful preaching of the gospel is never wholly without effect. There is always this witness of God in the soul—this power of conscience working with the preacher to convince men that the message of Christianity is from above. Felix, like many another sinner, was terrified for the moment, but, like many another, he managed to put his terror aside, and go on in sin. He had seen a vision of the judgment of God against sin, but he was disobedient to it, and it passed from his sight; he heard a voice calling him to repentance, but he hardened his heart against it, and it became faint in his ears, his life went on as before, and what had been the ruling passions with him still ruled his heart. He came to be able to hear the preacher with little disturbance, and his interest in Paul became chiefly the sordid hope of receiving money for his release. How many another sinner, like Felix, has heard and trembled, but still goes on in sin, stopping the ears, steeling the heart and strengthening an evil will against the voice of conscience and of God. But there remains the judgment which Paul preached. Terror may seize the conscience, death may claim the body, but after death, there is the judgment. Men may refuse to listen to the preaching of righteousness and temperance here, but they will not be able to ignore the judgment.

Editorial Notes.

—In Dr. Saunders' historical article, in the educational number of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, Sept. 22, the name of the person who addressed the Association at Onslow in 1821, by a typographical error, is given as "Chaplin." The name should be Chapin—Rev. Asael Chapin—and as the incident is of some historical interest it seems worth while—even at this rather late date—to make the correction.

—It is gratifying to learn that the report that the State of New Jersey had, by popular vote, refused to embody in its constitution a prohibition of gambling, turns out to be incorrect. The majority for the amendment was a small one, only 737 in a total vote cast of over 140,000 and a possible vote of over 370,000, but, all the same, it fixes the prohibition in the constitution and makes the enactment of pro-gambling legislation impossible until the people of the State shall vote the prohibition out of the constitution as they have now voted it in.

—Three representatives of the Keswick brotherhood, Rev. F. Inwood, of Glasgow, Methodist, Rev. J. Sloan, of Belfast, Presbyterian, and Rev. F. S. Webster, of Birmingham, Church of England, held meetings in St. John on Friday last. The first meeting was held in the Main St. Baptist church, at 3.30 p. m. A large congregation was present, including many of the ministers of the city. The service was conducted by Rev. Mr. Sloan, and a sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. Webster, from John 16: 22. The evening service was in Centenary Methodist church, and was largely attended. Rev. Mr. Webster presided, and addresses or sermons were delivered by Revs. Messrs. Sloan and Inwood. The visitors met with the city branch of the Evangelical Alliance on Saturday morning, and later in the day left for Halifax, where they are to hold a number of services,

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