

The Camp Fire.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF TEMPERANCE PROGRESS.

SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF
THE PROHIBITION CAUSE.

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NOTE.—It is proposed to make this 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—if shorter, still better.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1899

LAWLESSNESS.

There has been a great stir in Toronto recently over the question of liquor-selling in unlicensed places. The *Evening News* charges the License Inspectors with neglect of duty, and calls attention to the leniency with which the Police Magistrate treats violations of the liquor laws. The city council has appointed a committee to enquire into the matter.

There is sufficient ground for all the complaints that have been made, and more. It is a mistake, however, to imagine that this persistent disregard of law is confined to any special locality or any particular class of liquor-sellers. All over the Dominion the liquor laws are violated, and the prosecutions of violators are comparatively few. There are cities and towns in which every man holding a tavern license is known to disregard the law. In too many cases officials are known to be friendly to the liquor traffic, and do vastly more to oppose than to aid those who endeavor to secure its suppression.

The evidence gathered by the Royal Commission bears out these statements. Judges and other experienced men testified to the lawlessness of the liquor traffic. In fact this lawlessness is often urged as a reason for sanctioning the traffic, men pleading the hopelessness of any effort to suppress it, and presenting the failure of restriction as an argument in favor of prohibition.

As a matter of fact the liquor traffic degrades and demoralizes those who carry it on. It makes men heartless, cruel, dishonest, and disloyal. Licensed or unlicensed it produces the same results. It defies all attempts at regulation. Licensing this traffic is practically promoting lawlessness and crime. It is the duty of the Government to relentlessly suppress it. Prohibition is the only kind of liquor legislation that is practicable or right.

A SERIOUS MISTAKE.

A celebrated bishop in New York recently made a speech that was construed as an apology for the saloon. His utterances were echoed by a noted Toronto preacher, who claimed that taverns were practically working-men's clubs, where toilers met for gossip, rest and recreation. He was afraid of doing these men wrong by abolishing the taverns before there were provided other social institutions to furnish the club feature of the working man's life.

The Toronto preacher simply made

clear his utter ignorance of the facts and conditions of the life of working-men. There is in this city no such state of things as he imagines. The working-man's club-tavern is entirely a fiction. There are only 150 licensed bar-rooms in Toronto, and the patrons of these places are mainly men who come for drinks and go. There are some loafers and loungers, but of our 30,000 toilers, those who spend any considerable time in bars and bar-gossip are very very few.

As a rule the Toronto man's social instinct seeks in other places what our taverns cannot give. Our city is full of social institutions, lodges, divisions, unions, tents, encampments, courts and the like, to an extent that but few realize. Religious and secular, friendly and fraternal, Catholic and Protestant, limited and unlimited, purely social and mainly beneficiary, everywhere these societies thrive, and the toiler who is not a member of some of them is the rare exception. Whatever may be said of these organizations, it is certain that nearly all of them are practically temperance organizations, and those in which liquor would be tolerated at all are comparatively few.

Again there are thousands of working-men who spend their evenings at home, and find no necessity for any club or such resort. It may be that other cities are different from ours, and that the New York bishop referred to conditions that existed in them, but it is safe to say that the total closing of every bar-room in Toronto, would not affect as he suggests the social life or comfort of one in one hundred of our working-men. The Toronto preacher should have learned the facts, before making statements and championing theories. Had he done so he would have avoided so gross a misrepresentation of a great number of his fellow-citizens, many of whom are earnest advocates of the prohibition concerning the rightness and value of which he seems to be so dubious.

SOBER SOLDIERS.

STRONG TESTIMONY AGAINST STRONG DRINK.

The Liquor Habit Must Go.

The action of the United States Congress against the Canteen System is one of the most significant signs of the times. It is a most emphatic practical condemnation of the beverage use of alcoholic liquors. From an article upon this measure, in the *New York Evening Post*, we clip the following forcible paragraphs:—

"The unanimous action of the House in adopting an amendment to the Army Bill which abolishes the army canteen and forbids the sale of liquor in any camp or post of the United States, formulates a conclusion towards which impartial students of the problems involved have been drifting for some time.

"The canteen is a place where the lighter kinds of 'drinks' are sold, under the regulation of the authorities and without the incentive that the ordinary saloon-keeper has to promote excess in order to help his business. The argument for this institution has been that drinking could not be entirely prohibited, and that there would be less drunkenness if the Government allowed the soldiers to buy beer in camp than if they were tempted to go outside for whiskey. This seemed plausible, and a good many army officers were at first inclined to endorse the system. But the experience of the recent war furnished overwhelming evidence for the opponents of the canteen. Each colonel was allowed to establish a canteen or prohibit it, and in Florida, in Cuba, and in the Philippines alike those regiments which were forbidden it not only suffered much less from drunkenness than the others, but had by far the smallest percentage of sickness and death from disease.

"Every general in the army who has expressed an opinion now opposes the canteen, except one—and his dissent is the strongest argument on the side of the majority, for he is Eagen. Gen. Wheeler has said that: 'I am utterly opposed to soldiers being sold intoxicating liquors, and I believe that every effort should be exercised to remove the temptation of such dissipation from them.' Gen. Shafter said that he had 'always been strongly opposed to the canteen system or the sale of intoxicating drinks of any kind on military reservations, and have opposed it until absolutely overruled, and required to establish a canteen at my post. I regard it demoralizing to the men, besides impairing seriously their efficiency.'

"The experience of our army only duplicates that of England in showing that soldiers who do not drink intoxicating liquor are far more efficient and far less subject to disease and death than those who do. Experiments were made with three regiments from each of several brigades in the British army at different times, and in several instances where forced marches and other hard work were required. In one every man was forbidden to drink a drop while the test lasted; in the second, malt liquor only could be purchased; in the third a sailor's ration of whiskey was given to each man. The whiskey-drinkers manifested more dash at first, but generally in about four days showed signs of lassitude and abnormal fatigue; those given malt liquor displayed less dash at first, but their endurance lasted somewhat longer; while the abstainers improved daily in alertness and staying powers.

"As a result, the War Department decided that in the Soudan campaign not a single drop of stimulant should be allowed in camp, save for hospital use. The officers, even including the generals, were forbidden the accustomed spirits, wines, and malt liquors at their mess-tables, and an order was issued that the liquid refreshment for all hands, including even camp-followers, must be limited to tea, oatmeal water, or lime juice and Nile water. The wonderful freedom of the Kitchener expedition from disease, although making forced marches through the desert under a heavy burning sun and in a most unhealthy climate, fully justified the new rule.

"The truth is that the requirement of abstinence from intoxicating liquors for soldiers is only the application to the army of a principle which is coming to be generally accepted in industrial life, that men occupying responsible positions, like locomotive engineers, motormen on trolley cars, and men in charge of delicate machinery, must be men who are never in danger of getting drunk."

A BIG VICTORY.

The Quebec Branch of the Dominion Alliance has won an important victory in the judgment of the Court of Appeals on the long contested "Georgeville Licensing Case." Under the Quebec law the license authorities cannot issue a license until the council of the municipality in which the license is to take effect, certifies its approval of the application. The Council of Stanstead township, elected on the temperance issue, refused to grant a certificate of approval for a license in Georgeville. The applicant appealed to the court to compel the Council to issue the certificate. The Council would have surrendered, but the Alliance took up the fight, guaranteed the costs, and pushed the case. A great deal of litigation, in the course of which many curious judicial decisions were given, has at last terminated in the ruling of the Court of Appeals that the Council had authority either to grant or refuse the certificate, and was within its rights in its treatment of the application. The Alliance incurred very heavy expense in this fight for the right of the municipal Councils, and has rendered an important service to the cause of temperance reform.

AN OLD TRICK.

The Scott Act is being enforced in Kentville, N.S., and some liquor-selling hotel-keepers are notifying the public that they will refuse to accommodate travellers. So far, however, no one has been inconvenienced except those who want liquor, as there is ample room for all who need it in places that will not violate the law.

SAMPLES FROM THE SAMPLE ROOM.

Daily life is more tragic than any tragedy. Behind windows we glance at heedlessly, nay, in the very streets through which we saunter, bloody dramas are enacted which are beyond Shakespeare or Goethe—beyond Hamlet or Faust.

During one recent week, in a single locality, life in New York was marked and marred by the following occurrences:

A farmer from Goshen, tiring of milk and honey, came to New York. After some hours in the city he was arrested at the corner of Eight avenue and West 28th street, wild as a Malay running amuck. He shot at anyone, at everyone who past, shouting: "I've got to kill somebody." What ailed this farmer? Alcoholic drink.

A promising young actor, newly arrived from Australia, put a pistol to his head and blew his brains out. He had lost a prominent position in a leading theatrical company because he neglected his duties. Why did he neglect them? What made this actor a suicide? Alcoholic drink.

A husband came staggering home. "Oh, John," exclaimed his wife, "you promised this should never happen again!" The infuriated man seized a chair, brought it down with a crash on the woman's head, and fractured her skull. What made this husband a murderer? Alcoholic drink.

A mother crooned her infant to sleep, laid him on the bed, and hurried away to an adjoining saloon. In a daze she fumbled her way back and threw herself on the bed. When she recovered consciousness, she found the baby smothered beneath her. She shrieked herself into insanity. What was the matter with this mother? Alcoholic drink.

On Staten Island a saloon-keeper enticed a number of boys, ten or twelve years old, into his saloon, fired their brains with strong drink, then set them a-fighting, while he sat by and encouraged the sport. What made these lads, the sons of respectable parents, fight one another? Alcoholic drink.

Sad enough in themselves, the occurrences get additional horror from the fact that they were sanctioned by the state. The grogshops whence came the maddening liquor were all run under a license for which each paid for permission to sell it. Therefore the state was an accomplice. A legal adage asserts that a confederate is as bad as the wrong-doer. In the cases under consideration the state lacked the excuse of those who retailed the liquid damnation. They were low-browed men, with brutal instincts; the state represented the wealth and culture of Caucasian development. They sold whiskey for the immense profits in it; the state went into the guilty partnership for the pitiful license fee.

Government exists to safeguard life, liberty, and property. By common acknowledgment, whiskey imperils each and all of these vital interests. The late Mr. Gladstone used to say that a Christian Government should make virtue easy and vice difficult. Our so-called Christian Government reverses this maxim—makes vice easy and virtue difficult. A reformed man with a will weakened by former excesses and with depraved appetites yet couchant within him, cannot walk the public streets without being beset by legalized temptations which he often finds too strong to resist. Unsuspecting youth and innocence are decoyed into pitfalls which yawn under a license from the powers that be.

The sale of other poisons is restricted by law. Arsenic, for instance, can be gotten only on a physician's prescription. Why leave the most insidious poison of all unrestricted?

People will drink, we are told. Some will; but is it the business of the state to encourage them to drink? Does the state permit sellers of arsenic to open arsenic shops to entice customers? Why, then, should it give a license to sellers of whiskey and put saloons under the protection of the law?

When the state goes into partnership with drunkeries it necessarily makes itself responsible for drunkenness and the horrors that result. A Christian Government is thereby transformed into a propaganda of the devil.

But in this country the people are the Government. When the people want a Christian Government they can vote it into existence.—*N. Y. Voice.*