

# THE ABSTAINER.

ORGAN OF THE GRAND DIVISION OF THE  
SONS OF TEMPERANCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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## Essays, &c.

### THE VERDICT OF THE PHYSICIANS.

[We copy the following from the *Prohibitionist* and commend it to the attention of the medical gentlemen of Nova Scotia]

On the 4th of February 1857 the Medical Society of the State of New York passed a unanimous resolution, in favor of a prohibitory law—beyond all comparison, the most important event which has transpired in the temperance world for many a day. But while it will exert a powerful influence over legislatures, and the public mind generally, it is very curious and inspiring to notice the influence of this action of the Society upon its own members. At a similar re-union of physicians in Albany, a few months ago, liquors were generally called for, and freely drank. At the supper on the 4th of February (such was the moral influence of the demonstration in the Convention during the day) but one bottle of wine was called for, and only part of that was drank.

Mr Delavan, Rev Dr Marsh (though the former could not attend) and the editor of the *Prohibitionist*, were invited to be present among the guests.

Other facts are thus mentioned in the report of the Albany Atlas & Argus:

About ninety sat down to supper, among whom were many of the most distinguished physicians of the State, Dr Marsh, the President of the Society, presiding. The divine blessing was invoked by the Rev. Dr WYCKOFF.

Among the guests present was the venerable Dr JOHN MILLER, of Cortland county.—He was a student of Benjamin Rush, and was a guest with him at President John Adams' to dine with WASHINGTON.

After satisfying the inner man, in a manner truly sumptuous, but in the spirit of temperance, the sentiment in order, was read by the President:

[Then follow various professional toasts and appropriate speeches. After which, among other things the Atlas & Argus report proceeds:]

ANASA MCCOY, upon being called for by the President and many members, rose and begged the President of the Society to be assured that he was very sensible of the honor which had been done him; first, in being invited among the guests at the Semi-annual dinner of the oldest Medical Society in the United States, and now in being called upon to make remarks in the presence of so learn-

ed and distinguished a body of men. Instead of speaking, however, every feeling of propriety and interest, prompted him to listen. He was not a physician. His studies and pursuits had been in a different direction.—These very studies, however, pursued with too much ardor, had once brought him to the verge of the grave. And he could not but remember now, that while his thanks were due to this society for the refined enjoyments of this "feast of reason and flow of soul," he owed his recovery, under God, to the skill and fidelity of one of its members. He could therefore say with Antonio to Portia, "You have given me life, and living."

His friend DR MARSH of New York, had expressed his acknowledgments for what physicians had done for the cause of temperance. He most cordially joined his friend in such expressions of gratitude. Sometimes, it is true, he (Prof. McCoy) could hardly help entertaining bad feelings towards the Faculty in this regard. For it is found that very many men, and nearly all women who drink, do so because they are ordered by their physician. It is incredible what a quantity of bad liquor is swallowed under the name of medicine. A man is found drunk in the gutter, and he says with Falstaff, I have drunk "medicines." Forty millions of dollars of liquor are drank every year in the State of New York, and no small proportion of it is under the plea, "a little for the stomach's sake!" Whether the Faculty are justly chargeable with this, or if at all, to what extent, is for the conscience and the judgment of each to determine.

Beyond all question, however, some of the medical profession, have at every stage of the reform, been among its best and most effective friends. As early as 1790, the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, petitioned Congress to pass laws "to effectually restrain the intemperate use of distilled spirits." Dr Rush's enquiry into the effect of ardent spirits, published half a century ago, had powerfully impressed innumerable minds. Dr Warren, of Boston, Dr Lee, of New York, and Dr Muzzy, of Cincinnati, had laid splendid contributions of professional learning, on the altar of Temperance. But he need not go out of this dining-hall to find distinguished physicians, whose example, influence, and outspoken advocacy, had been on the side of the same principles. He saw before him Dr Miller, of Cortland county, and Dr Corliss, of Washington county. And who is there in the city of Albany, who does not know Dr Staats, as a friend of Temperance?

But in what terms should he speak of the

resolution which was pressed by this Society to day, and a copy of which he held in his hand.

"RESOLVED, THAT IN VIEW OF THE RAVAGES MADE UPON THE MORALS, HEALTH AND PROSPERITY OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS STATE, BY THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS, IT IS THE OPINION OF THE SOCIETY THAT THE MORAL SANITARY AND PECUNIARY CONDITION OF THE STATE WOULD BE PROMOTED BY THE PASSAGE OF A PROHIBITORY LIQUOR LAW."

Mr McCoy ventured the opinion that no act of the Society to-day was of equal importance; and certainly none would become so widely known. Dr Griscom has spoken of the delay and difficulty in former years in publishing certain transactions, in connection with the Medical School. Behold an illustration of what the President dwelt upon tonight—the march of the sciences! On his way to this banquet he (Mr McCoy) had stepped into the office of the Telegraph, and this resolution would appear, in print to-morrow, in six of the great New York Journals, having an aggregate circulation of perhaps 200,000 sheets. This resolution would be printed in conspicuous characters in the *Prohibitionist* (which he had the honor to edit) and would be quoted over and over again in all the temperance papers in this and other countries. It would be read in thousands of temperance meetings in the United States. He should send a copy of it, with the circumstances to Neal Dow, who was about to visit England, and who would speak of it to vast audiences, in that country. And also to Mr Gough, who follows Mr Dow in June, who would weave it as a great fact in his finest bursts of eloquence. And so temperance speakers and writers would make it known to every civilized community, that at a solemn consultation of some seventy distinguished physicians, representing thousands of the faculty in New York, the Prohibitory Liquor Law was unanimously agreed upon as expedient for the cure of drunkenness. "The violent fit o'the time craves it as physic for the whole State."

For such a timely and emphatic expression by the oldest Medical Society in the country in favor of what he regarded as the grandest social reform of this generation, he, (Prof. McCoy) for himself and in behalf of all the friends of Temperance, begged to tender his profound and grateful acknowledgments.

He offered, as a sentiment, the dying speech of a renowned physician, who said he left behind him three greater physicians than himself—"Air, Exercise, and TEMPERANCE." [Applause]