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LETTER OF MR. E. C. DELAVAN TO THE WORLD'S TEMPERANCE CONVENTION.

Ballston Centre, U. S., July 4, 1846.

To Richard Potter and Thomas Beggs, Esquires, London.

Gentlemen,—I have the pleasure of acknowledging your kind invitation to attend the World's Temperance Convention, to be held in London on the 4th of August. Until within a few days, I had hoped to attend it, but other pressing calls upon my time, compel me, very reluctantly, to forego that pleasure. Though out of my power to be personally present, my whole heart will be with you; and I shall therefore hope to be pardoned for expressing briefly, by letter, my views in relation to the points to which you have called my attention in your letter of invitation.

First.—The state of the Temperance cause in this land. With regard to the United States of America, the cause is, on the whole, evidently progressive. When public attention was first called to the subject, a general belief existed that the moderate use of alcoholic liquors was generally beneficial, and that the excessive use only was to be avoided. To this great fundamental error it is believed most of the intemperance with which our world has been afflicted, is to be attributed. It is not known by whom the great discovery was first made, that drunkenness, the world over, was produced by moderate drinking. But, be it whom it may, it was a discovery which produced a new era in the history of the world. For societies were now formed on the principle of entire abstinence from distilled liquors, which were believed to be the chief, if not the only, liquors likely to produce intoxication. Of these societies, some 10,000 were organized; numbering about 4,000,000 of members. Experience, however, soon proved, what was not generally known before, that *fermented*, as well as *distilled*, liquors contain alcohol, and lead to drunkenness. For this vice was found to exist, and to a lamentable extent, among those who had taken and adhered to the ardent spirit pledge. The brew-house, and cider press (aside from destroying the healthful grain and fruit of the earth) were found to produce the same evils as had been produced by the worm of the still. Indeed, it soon became apparent, that the products of the still, by a process of art, were

made to assume the appearance of the products of the vineyard, and, as such, were palmed on the community; while other poisons, more deleterious than even alcohol, were found to have been abundantly mingled with impure waters, dispensed from the brewer's vats, under the imposing name of ale, beer, and porter.

In view of these melancholy facts, the friends of Temperance, both in Great Britain and America, came to the conclusion, that the only practicable method of freeing the world from the curse of drunkenness, would be *abstaining from all that can intoxicate, as a beverage in health*. Hence, a new organization was commenced, and the Total Abstinence Pledge adopted.

A measure so new and so contrary to prevailing opinions met, as might have been expected, with great opposition, even among the acknowledged friends of Temperance. Among these friends, however, opposition was of short duration.

The discussion which took place in private circles, in public conventions, and in the political and religious journals of the day, and above all, the *manifest powerlessness* of the ardent spirit pledge, soon brought a vast majority of the friends of Temperance on this side of the Atlantic to admit that the only sure method of reclaiming the inebriate, and of preventing the moderate drinker from becoming an inebriate, was the observance of entire abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a beverage.

And though this movement was deemed at first ultra and fanatical, yet when it was shown by authority indisputable, that about 200,000,000 dollars were annually wasted, directly or indirectly, in alcoholic poisons—that about one-third of the male adults in the United States died inebriates—that even in the city of Albany, from which nearly twenty millions of Temperance documents had been distributed throughout the Union and the world, of 2,500 cases brought before the Police Court, it had been ascertained that *ninety-six* per cent. owed their existence, directly or indirectly, to the use of intoxicating poisons, and that of 634 persons received into the Alms-House in one year, 616 were brought there from the same cause; when these, and many similar facts, came to be spread before the nation, a very general conviction was produced, that the *extreme remedy* which had been proposed, was the only remedy suited to the exigencies of the case. And even by those who do not yet feel disposed personally to unite in the total abstinence enterprise, it is now generally admitted to be a noble enterprise, and to have already accomplished great good. Indeed, it may be doubted, whether any considerable number of the friends of Temperance could be found in this country who are not friends of Total Abstinence; and it may be questioned, also, whether a single society can be found among a population of 20,000,000, organized, and in operation, on any other principle than that of *entire abstinence from all that can intoxicate*. If any such exist, I am not aware of it. This same tendency in the public mind, to advance from the moderate use to entire abstinence from intoxicating poisons, apparent on this side of the Atlantic, is apparent on the other also.

With you, as with us, prejudice has gradually been re-