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PROCEEDINGS AT THE GUELPH TEMPERANCE FESTIVAL.

Thursday, July 25th, 1850.

The Midsummer Festival of the Guelph Temperance Reformation Society was held here on the 25th ult. Several circumstances, beyond the control of the Society, combined to prevent the attendance of many friends from a distance, and so to render the demonstration less striking than had been anticipated. The Committee had selected an earlier day for the celebration, but were under the necessity of altering their arrangements to suit the engagements of the Rev. Dr. Burns, to whom the friends of Total Abstinence in this vicinity are under lasting obligations for his invaluable assistance on the recent occasion,—so readily vouchsafed and so cordially bestowed. In consequence of the delay, harvest had already commenced in several of the adjoining townships, preventing the attendance of many friends from these localities, and several divisions of the "Sons of Temperance," and other friends of the cause, in Erin, Esquesing, &c., had already made preparations to attend the Great Celebration of the Sons of Temperance held in Toronto on the same day; yet, notwithstanding these and other untoward circumstances, the celebration was certainly the most enthusiastic, and the attendance the largest that has ever been congregated in Guelph on a similar occasion.

The proceedings were commenced by the "Sons of Temperance," in their regalia, bearing a white silk banner (with the inscription Love, Purity, Fidelity, the title of the Division and date of institution) and preceded by the Mechanics' Band, marching to the Pavilion [illegible], being joined on the route by the Juveniles.

The chair was then taken by Mr. D. Savage, one of the Vice Presidents of the Society, the Band taking their places on an elevated platform to the left, and the "Sons" to the right of the Chairman.

The Rev. J. Spencer having opened the meeting with appropriate prayer, and the Band having played the "Missionary Hymn," Mr. J. Ferguson addressed the assembly.

MR. FERGUSON.—We have assembled to-day to beat up for recruits for the Cold Water army; and when, at the close of the day you shall have learned the nature of the service to which you are invited, I hope you will not only be willing, but anxious to enlist. It is indeed a just, an honorable, a mind-elevating, a world-emancipating, and a God-glorifying service; and, my friends, we need recruits; for though we now muster pretty strong, though we can already bring into the field an army of twenty millions, yet that field is so large, and the devoted followers of the old tyrant Alcohol so numerous, clothed as they are in all sorts of liveries—not a few, from long campaigns and [illegible] tions in his service, having garments which may literally be styled "coats of many colors"—that he has been enabled as yet to keep the field on which he has stood for many centuries, warring against the best interests of man. I have heard of a military orator who astonished an [illegible] try fur, by his glowing [illegible] the honors, the pleasures, and the ease of a soldier's life; when an old beggar, who had been long in the service, [illegible] meal pock on the [illegible] his staff, and with stentorian lungs exclaimed, "Behold the end of it!" But, my friends, we have no fears of such an unpleasant interruption to this day's proceedings; for we defy any man to refute the statement that peace and plenty are the present rewards of the Cold Water service, and a degraded because a drunken population emancipated will be "the end of it." Our friends who will address you this day will prove that this is a good cause; and I hope you have come here with minds free from prejudice, and ready to ask, "In what channel shall the healing waters of my exertions run, so as to penetrate and cause to bloom with lovely verdure the moral wilderness around me?" And if an institution calculated to have such an effect is proved to exist—if you cannot look to the right hand or to the left without discovering broad traces of the march of a mighty Regenerator, I hope you will not hesitate in declaring yourselves upon his side. I trust none of you will act the insipid part of those who inquire whether or not the movement has become fashionable; that none of you will call upon our secretary with the view of looking over the roll of membership, to ascertain whether or not the name of Mr. so-and-so, or the Rev. this or that, be yet upon it; but that you will consider that your God and your country demand from you personal exertion in the cause of improvement, and that you should be ready to discharge your duty. Ah! my friends, were more love to our brethren glowing in our bosoms, were the blessed teachings of Christianity in more active and constant operation, the labors of Total Abstainers would be in a great measure uncalled for. It is, we fear, a want of these heaven-born principles and feelings—it is a being more in love with the customs of a "world lying in wickedness," than with what is morally excellent and upright—which engenders such apathy, and provokes hostility to the great Temperance movement. And our advocates will prove this day, that it is not only a good, but a pleasant duty, you are called to perform. Yes! to contemplate the workings of all benevolent institutions, to mark their progress, but more especially to increase their success by our own efforts, constitutes employment most transporting to the mind, while at the same time it is most beneficial to society around us; and were we to participate more largely in such pleasing sensations, we would labor yet more and more for their increase. As it is, how many are there who have no such sweet experience! The dull monotony of life which so many exhibit—rising, dressing, eating, drinking, spending their time in most frivolous conversation or vain amusements, and then retiring to rest again, without having done one action for which society has cause to thank them, or by which any claim is established to the gratitude of an unborn posterity—is benumbing to all right and manly feeling, and most withering to the surrounding community. [illegible] satisfied with themselves, and [illegible] a few, men thus go on [illegible] day to day, and year to year, until the dull [illegible] of their wasted hours is brought to [illegible] Death, the grizzly king [illegible] for a befooled world, puts forth his hand, and draws them beneath the surface of that sod they have so long [illegible] disgraced [illegible]. Poor creatures! who would envy them? However high their rank, however much wealth they may possess, they are nevertheless [illegible]. Whose is the [illegible] benevolence, who cannot look upon a tear, but he would hasten to wipe it away—who cannot hear a sigh heaved, but he would fly to the mourner, and whisper "Peace, be still!"—such is the truly great man, though the sons of fashion and of fortune may frown on him as they pass, nor deign to own him as a man and a brother.

The speaker then went on to denounce the conduct of those who say they admire the cause of Total Abstinence, while they refuse to come out in its support; and spoke of a gentleman who, at the close of a public meeting, said that he had no objections to Total Abstinence; that he could say from his heart he wished the work God speed, but that he could not *see his way* into it. He [Mr. F.] was puzzled to know what darkened his way, when he *had no objections!* The speaker related an anecdote of an old woman in Scotland, who went on a Sabbath day to a grocery where whisky was sold and asked for a supply of oil for her lamp. The profoundly pious dealer told her that he did not traffic on the Lord's day. Next Sabbath she went to the same store and asked for a gill of whisky, which was readily supplied, when the old woman said she did not need it, and would not take it; for, as he would not sell her oil to enable her to see to read her Bible, he should sell her no whisky to make her blind so that she could not see to read it. The blinding influence of strong drink, in the speaker's opinion, hindered many from *seeing their way* into a Total Abstinence Institute. Mr. F. dwelt at considerable length upon the patriotic character of the Temperance enterprise, and made some reference to our own town and neighbourhood—the number of [illegible] who had gone down to the drunkard's grave during the few years he had resided in Guelph, and [illegible] [illegible] on the bank of the grave, who [illegible] and the [illegible] knowing his condition, and still supplying him with the drug about to send his body to the dust, and his soul to an unprepared tribunal; the widows and the fatherless whom strong drink had here, since the last Temperance Festival, been brought under review; and it was shown that since we had the power to put an end to such "horrid cruelty" and suffering—while we yet permitted things to continue, it would form a foul blot on our boasted patriotism and professed Christianity—it would be an ugly stain, which not all [illegible] could remove—[illegible] it would be a wound deep, putrid, and incurable save by the balm of penitential tears, followed by determined exertion to eradicate the foul plague-spot from our country's countenance, that so hell and the grave may no longer be satiated with the wreck of our noble sons and our lovely daughters. Mr. F. continued: Had men, instead of looking on with cold indifference—had men, instead of wrapping themselves up in the filthy robe of self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency, and asking us continually "Am I our brother's keeper?"—had men, instead of so doing, with heart and soul helped onward the Temperance Reformation, when a few years ago its first notes of peace were sounded thro' our bleeding country, long ere the 25th of July, 1850, had arrived, ours might have been the glorious boast, Canada without a drunkard! How many sighs that have rent the midnight air had never been heaved! how many hearts beating high with delight had been amongst us! how many parents had been spared the overwhelming pungency of laying in the drunkard's grave the remains of their beloved offspring! Sorry am I to say, men in general did not so act. Sorry are we to see such lukewarmness still existing—for, speak of it as men may, while *respectable* people indulge in strong drink, while Christians will not deny themselves for their brethren's sake, drunkards in all [illegible] their misery will arise, and havoc and desolation abound in our Province. But the time of apathy and indifference, I trust, has passed, and the season of energetic exertion commenced. The River of Death will, by God's blessing, soon be dried up. The Monster Intemperance must by *human instrumentality* be slain. Up, then, to the work! On to the combat! Come one—come all!

"Canadians! see, your country deeply [illegible]
Strong drink hath sadly marr'd her beauty [illegible]
Intemperance, with her fiend-like troops,
Stalks thro' your land—YOU KNOW YOUR DUTY!"

During Mr. Ferguson's address a heavy shower of rain fell, and it was consequently deemed advisable to abandon the idea of the procession originally intended; on the weather clearing, however, the Band struck up "Blue Bonnets over the Border," and the procession was arranged in the following order, yet shorn of its fair proportions by many declining, from the appearance of the day, to leave the Pavilion.

Grand Marshal on horseback, with flag.
Juveniles with their Banner, inscribed "The Hope of our Country."
Mechanics' Band with their banner.
Crimson Banner of the "Guelph Temperance Reformation Society," with the inscription "Good to all," [illegible]
Office-bearers of the Society.
Members of the Guelph and other Societies with colors.
[illegible] "The Sons of Temperance."

The procession, having perambulated the principal streets of the Town, returned to the Pavilion, when, a blessing having been asked by the Rev. Dr. Burns, refreshments were served, during which the Band performed a variety of favorite airs.

C. J. MICKLE, Esq., President of the Society, having called the meeting to order, said that a pleasing duty had devolved on him, in his being called to preside over the present large and respectable assembly, to welcome esteemed friends from a distance come to help forward this noble cause; and to behold the good will generally manifested towards the principle the society maintained, of which the proceedings of the day afforded striking evidence. He felt thankful for the tranquility in which the societies were making such evident progress throughout the land. There was no agitation, no divisions, no opposing opinions; and where new associations had arisen, however these might differ in the detail of distinctive arrangements, they all alike advocated the great principle of Total Abstinence in the abstract, and, he rejoiced to say, were all prospering as their warmest friends could desire. Tranquility was of great importance to the progress of any great cause; although indeed popular tumults might be so overruled as to promote its success, yet it was generally found that when God designed a cause to prosper and to fill the land, he caused it to progress in a quiet, unostentatious manner, restraining the hands of opponents. When we look on the torrent plunging from the mountain into the valley, we behold a scene of agitation and turbulence, but with little beneficial to [illegible]; when we behold the same river placidly pouring its waters along the level plain, we find that while it [illegible] it is far more [illegible] forward silent and tranquil in their progress, yet mighty in their results. Mr. Mickle then introduced the Rev. Dr. Burns to the meeting, expressing his earnest hope that the result of the address so soon to be delivered would prove highly beneficial to the interests of the Temperance cause in the locality.—(Applause.)

"A Noble Band"—Air, "The Bonnie Rowe"—by the Choir.

Melody, the Band.

DR. BURNS, on rising, expressed the gratification he experienced in beholding such an array of the supporters of the Temperance cause, and in seeing so many others congregated with the view of hearing what might be urged in support or defence of the principle of Total Abstinence. He rejoiced to bear witness to the cordiality, the peace, and tranquility, with which the proceedings of the day had been conducted; and he was satisfied that such meetings, so carried out, were calculated to strengthen and to accelerate the great cause to which, in common with the hundreds that surrounded him, he had cast in his token of adherence. That cause, he rejoiced to say, was greatly prospering, its adherents largely increasing throughout the Province; and, in addition to the older institution, a new organization had recently sprung up—"The Sons of Temperance"—fellow workers in the struggle, fellow soldiers in supporting and carrying onwards the same great enterprise. But whatever might be the variety of instruments employed—the principles evolved, the result evoked, were the same, and the different sister associations would maintain a cordial union, in pursuit of a common object. Wherever he might be called of Providence, wherever the opportunity might be afforded him, he should be found prepared to plead the cause of Total Abstinence, as, in his deliberate conviction, the only principle by which the inebriate may be reclaimed and maintained in a consistent course, and the temperate placed beyond the reach of the Destroyer. [Applause.] It was, perhaps, dangerous to expect too great results from any one instrumentality; still we did well largely to avail us of one, the success of which was daily becoming more obvious and indisputable.

Dr. B. went on to say that the principle embodied and embraced by the Society was one of immense importance, and was recommended by enlightened experience. First, as a means of checking and subduing an acknowledged evil of immense magnitude, weighing down society as by an incubus upon its vitals; and also as a likely means of changing public opinion in regard to what are called the drinking usages of society. It is, as he showed, a great matter to prove that it is possible for men to be hospitable, and kind, and courteous to one another, and to be socially happy in the proper sense of these words, in the use of beverages which enliven and cheer without intoxicating and degrading. [Applause.] In the second place, he showed that it is of great importance to furnish a rallying point for those who may desire to relinquish drinking habits, or to guard against temptation to over-indulgence, but who may be prevented from so doing by lack of those associations that might keep them in countenance—the love and the desire of society congenial to their own being in most instances [illegible] ensnaring [illegible] of sobriety. A monster vice was overrunning and devastating the world; it was necessary that a [illegible] should be lifted up against it; and he showed that the testimony Total Abstinence gave in opposition to prevailing customs and evils was clear, plain, intelligible, and pointed; no man could stand in doubt of its meaning, and all must feel its force. It implied a sacrifice in the exercise of self-restraint, which was to tell favorably on society. Moreover, the plan of moderate indulgence had been tried, but had failed to achieve a conquest. The failure of other means, therefore, demanded the exhibition of a remedy more potent and less capable of misconstruction. He meant not to reflect on the means first put into operation; he would be loth to believe that all the pecuniary sacrifices, the labor, the self-denial endured by the propounders of the old pledge, had failed to procure a certain amount of good. No! the promoters of that movement had been the pioneers, the van-guard in the enterprise against a common enemy; and abstinence men were not disposed to undervalue the exertions of such precursors in a common course. Still, it is true that the original Temperance scheme substantially failed, and something more thoroughly out-and-out in all its bearings, both as regarded the beverages used and the classes which used them, was demanded. Four inebriates of Baltimore first made the experiment of total abstinence; it is said to have been done in a frolic, with the view of ascertaining which could longest abstain from his favorite indulgence; they all held out for a week, and on comparing notes, the expression of satisfaction used by one was responded to by all; they were conscious the change was beneficial, and they formed [illegible] to constitute themselves into a society, and [illegible] to make head against the common enemy; and by their union in [illegible] keeping one another in countenance, their [illegible] was increased, and they [illegible] enabled to persevere in their resolution. Such was the origin of the Total Abstinence movement. What had been its progress? When Dr. B. [illegible] Baltimore six years since, the first [illegible] of the Society were still alive, in good health, and walking consistently; and although for a period the number of adherents to the cause was extremely limited, yet within twenty years, twelve millions—[Mr. Ferguson, "twenty millions"]—A friend says twenty millions, continued Dr. B. Well, twenty millions of converts have, throughout the world, been added to their ranks. He would not be understood to assert that these had all continued steadfast. No! there had been many defections; but this was to have been anticipated, and was the natural concomitant of every great popular movement. That such has been the case, only makes more apparent the necessity of more strenuous effort for the emancipation of the slaves of intemperance, and more evident the strength and potency of the vice of which they are the victims. Thousands may have fallen, but millions have held fast their integrity; the exception only proves the rule. [Great applause.] Here, then, was a striking fact, an imperishable testimony to the correctness of our principles. Something new was needed; it had been obtained, and that not a system capable only of being called into operation in particular localities, but one of universal adaptation,—benevolent, merciful, and purifying, as the Christianity on which it is based, comprehensive as is that glorious system. But (continued Dr. B.) were I actuated by no higher motive to help onward the great moral reformation Temperance men are accomplishing, surely a principle of patriotism and philanthropy would lead me to take part in the contest. I behold my country devastated and trodden down by the monster vice Intemperance. The drinking usages have entered into every ramification of society, pervading every institution of public and domestic life with their baneful influence; false ideas of the requirements of hospitality, long practised [illegible] and associations, have given them [illegible] popularity; poetry and [illegible] have lent their aid to uphold them,—the minstrel and the bard desecrating their [illegible] to promote and illustrate [illegible] not to be controverted or impugned, that [illegible] be socially happy without the aid of intoxicating beverages. Such are the [illegible] shades of the picture; but [illegible] crowded with crimes of the deepest [illegible] in all its most appalling forms, destitution, disease, misery, and all the manifold ills to which humanity is heir—the inseparable circumstances of this species of sensual indulgence. Then, on the other hand, I behold a goodly company of self-denying men lifting up a testimony against this time-hallowed system and its abettors, who, while giving a practical exhibition of the untruthfulness of its dogmas, and proving that men may be indeed hospitable and social, and practise all the amenities of life in the largest measure and from the purest motives, without the aid of stimulating potions, form a rallying point where the poor inebriate may flee with the certainty of finding safety and protection; a vantage ground where all good men, whatever diversity of opinion they may hold on other matters—all who fear God, and seek His glory and the good of their fellow-men—may meet, and mutually encourage and animate each other in following out this Heaven-directed plan of Christian benevolence and enlightened expediency for the abatement and destruction of a soul-destroying vice almost coeval with time, and which has grown and strengthened with the lapse of ages. Shall I not, as a patriot, cast in my lot with such men in the promotion of such a cause, and seek to aid them with all the influence and energy I can command?

The Rev. speaker went on to say, that he was aware that many plausible objections had been brought against the action taken by the advocates of Total Abstinence, as had been alleged against the promoters of every good work—some asserting that they went too far, while others contended that they did not go far enough—some deriding the impotency of their efforts to eradicate an irremediable evil, while others would have it that the teaching of the pulpit was sufficient to effect the desired result, and that the efforts of Temperance Societies were an undue interference with the mission of the Ministers of the Gospel. But the Bible did not indicate any exclusive mode of action, so far as human agency was requisite, for the attainment of a desirable result; we were not to confide implicitly in any one scheme of human device, but to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. It was a great mistake to suppose an inconsistency in at the same time preaching the gospel and sustaining such human agencies as we may believe conducive to the attainment of the end we aim at, while these are not at variance with the Word of God or the ordinances of the visible church. Was there, then, anything antagonistic between Christianity and the Temperance movement? If so, let it be made manifest, that the error might be seen and avoided. But [continued Dr. B.] perhaps some of our opponents can tell us of a more excellent way than that we follow for the accomplishment of our object. Let them then propound it, and if it proves its superiority by the test of experience, we will at once adopt it. But we will not be satisfied with one merely as good—we must have a better—for we require not only the principle, but the [illegible] interest which has accumulated while the propounders of the new system have been in opposition; but if no better plan can be produced, then let the meaningless opposition of our opponents cease. We are no bigots; but, desiring the attainment of a great good, we seek to acquire it by the means apparently best adapted to the end. Yet, while we desire not to throw the plans of others into the shade, we will follow that which has so signally proved its efficiency until a better has been devised. In the mode of carrying out the system there may be much to blame, for every man has his favorite mode of action, his peculiar hobby; but until the great principle of our institution be proved unsound, I protest against alleged errors in management being used as an argument against the correctness of our principle, or the integrity of our motives. There was no Divine command making the use of intoxicating drinks compulsory; were such the case, the injunction were decisive and abstinence inexcusable. Much irrelevant matter, indeed, had been moved about these beverages being "good creatures of God," and our duty to partake of them as such; on the same showing, every poison the result of chemical action might be denominated a good creature of God, and it be deemed sinful to reject it. But in this, as in other matters, the wisdom of God is manifested, not in the giving of a special command to partake or refrain, but in leaving men to be guided, according to the situation they may occupy, by the rule of enlightened Christian expediency; and we are not left without the teaching of the example of holy men of God when placed in similar circumstances. Paul held that it was "good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is [illegible] and he resolved, if meat made [illegible] to offend, to eat no flesh [illegible] stood; and surely the sam[illegible] able to drink—to intox[illegible]. But some will assert that [illegible] drinks will offend no one [illegible] truth of the assertion. And [illegible] when I see a brother or a friend led away by the ensnaring contagion of the example of a spirit-drinking professor, until, having less self-control and weaker power of resisting sensual appetite than his tempter, he is ingulfed in the vortex of this insidious maelstrom? Are not families [illegible] fended by the ruin of their natural protectors—society by the loss of multitudes [illegible] its legitimate props—the church by the destruction of thousands of her members and office-bearers? and Christian ministers offend many godly men of enlarged and Scriptural desires, and deprive themselves of much influence they would otherwise possess, by their rejection of the practical exposition of the command of self-denial and universal benevolence. If Paul, then, from a principle of Christian expediency, forbore the use of flesh killed in the shambles—an act guiltless in itself, yet having a tendency to induce sin on the part of his weak brother—how much [illegible] is it a Christian duty in these latter [illegible] when Intemperance is making hav[illegible] the world and of the church of the [illegible] God, to abstain from an article less [illegible] sary than was meat to the apostle, if [illegible] doing we remove a stumbling block [illegible] out our brother's path! The Bible gives no direct rule for our guidance in a multiplicity of circumstances, but laying down certain grand principles, enjoins us to walk according to the law of Chris[illegible] and forbearance, and where [illegible] rule is given, to act according [illegible] tates of enlightened Christian exp[illegible] and we claim for the advocates [illegible] Abstinence the right to make su[illegible] cation. There is nothing in the testi[illegible] of God against their practice—a[illegible] rience is in its favor. Some pers[illegible] us that while they have insuperabl[illegible] tions to joining us, they yet a[illegible] principles in practice—they are [illegible] abstainers, and in private they g[illegible] testimony to the cause of Temp[illegible]. Well, we are glad to have such a [illegible] mony, if given in good faith; but [illegible] men will never forward our cause [illegible] abate the ravages of Intemperance. Our system must have a local habitation and a name—the sincerity of such persons is very questionable, and it is inconsistent with honesty and self-respect to refuse to make a public profession of what we favor in private. They object to binding themselves by a pledge. "What!" say they, "do you doubt our honesty, that you exact a pledge of us?" They hold such unlawful. And does not every bank bill that is issued contain a pledge? What is every promissory note signed by persons in business, but a pledge? Do not servants pledge themselves to serve t[illegible] masters—wives to obey their husb[illegible]. The whole system of society is base[illegible] and carried forward by means of pl[illegible] and so, in this association, there [illegible] some means to guard against dec[illegible] and to protect the consistent. Mo[illegible] our pledge is not a vow, and may [illegible] nounced at will; yet it is a po[illegible] means to consistency and to p[illegible] temptation. Many a foolish fellow [illegible] duced, against his previous determ[illegible] to take a little; but when he is kn[illegible] have pledged himself to abstain, ma[illegible] refrain from urging him, and the [illegible] of failure will prove an auxiliary to his resolution. But, independently of all other considerations, there must be a barrier between those who abjure intoxicating drinks and those who deem them lawful—and that settles the question. Then it is asserted that many take the pledge and break it; this is a lamentable truth—but if those who are pledged fail in their self-denial, how much more likely are they to fall who have no such motive to induce consistency?

After answering several other objections to the principle of Total Abstin[illegible] Dr. B. said there were some who obje[illegible] to join the Temperance Movement bec[illegible] the societies were not religious as[illegible] tions. If not in itself religion, the [illegible] gave religion fair play, promoted the [illegible] secration of the Sabbath, and remov[illegible] grand obstacle to the progress of the gospel. He believed that five-sixth of the crime that was committed might be tra[illegible] in one way or other to the influen[illegible] intoxicating drinks. Were the princ[illegible] of Total Abstinence generally adopt[illegible] religion would have free and full scope. Drinking habits went to diminish the efficacy of the preaching of God's work; [illegible] what availed it to preach the Gospel to [illegible] man under the influence of strong drink? Of a truth God might remove walls of adamant, but we are not to look for such miracles but expect God's blessing on the use of rational means. It is the d[illegible] all men to aid in removing every ob[illegible] to the progress of the truth, and in [illegible] lecting an obvious duty, we sin [illegible] God. Some objected to the proce[illegible] of Temperance Societies because [illegible] were not church efforts; but if [illegible] such, they were consistent [illegible] trines and principles of th[illegible] Gospel is willing to rec[illegible]