

## Canada Temperance Advocate.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 1, 1850.

## FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MONTREAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Montreal Temperance Society, was held on Friday evening, the 25th January, in the Wesleyan Church, Great St. James Street. The building was densely filled, there being 2750 persons present. The Chair was occupied by James Court, Esq. The meeting was opened by the Temperance Choir singing a hymn, and prayer by the Rev. Mr. Girdwood. The Chairman having made a few suitable introductory remarks, called upon the Secretary, Mr. J. C. Becket, to read the Report, which is as follows:

## THE REPORT

The past year, which was the fourteenth of the history of this Society, has been probably characterised by less activity on the part of the Committee than any of its predecessors. A state of things for which it is not difficult to account.

In the first place, one important part of the former efforts of this Society was the publication of the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, which has latterly been carried on with equal or greater efficiency by private enterprise, and which the Committee take this opportunity of cordially recommending to the public. Mr. Wadsworth also, who formerly travelled and lectured in behalf of this Society, is now doing the same on his own account, with great diligence and effect.

In the second place, the Temperance Society, which was formerly united, has been latterly divided by the progress of Rechabism, and is likely to be still farther divided by the introduction of an organization designated the Sons of Temperance; and, consequently, a considerable share of the contributions, of time, money, and labor, which were formerly expended through the old organizations, find vent in those new channels. It is, therefore, manifest, without pronouncing any opinion on the merits of these later organizations, that the old one must find its means of action greatly curtailed. Meantime, so far as these organizations advance the Temperance cause, they deserve our best wishes.

In the third place, your Committee has had its energies paralyzed by a load of debt, remaining as the result of years of active exertions. Until this debt be diminished it could not, in accordance either with prudence or honesty, launch out into fresh enterprises and expenditures, which might only result in increasing its burthens still farther. And yet, without engaging in renewed efforts, the Society can hardly expect the public interest to be kept up, and the public support continued.

In the fourth place, the difficulty of carrying on the ordinary Temperance efforts, such as holding meetings, etc., is much greater than it was when the cause was invested with the interest of novelty. People are now, in this city at all events, extremely apathetic respecting ordinary Temperance meetings; and, therefore unless some speaker of celebrity can be procured, it appears a waste of time and expense to attempt to get them up.

In the fifth place, the exciting nature of public events—the visitation of the cholera, and the extreme depression of every interest which have characterised Montreal during the past year, were all unfavorable for public meetings or other Temperance efforts. For instance, shortly after last Anniversary the Committee made arrangements to hold semi-monthly meetings, in

pursuance of which Rev. J. H. Marling and Rev. J. M'Leod gave, each, interesting lectures, but in April last the plan had to be discontinued.

These reasons will sufficiently explain the comparative inactivity of the Committee for the past year, notwithstanding their continued deep interest in, and high appreciation of, the cause in which they are engaged. There have, however, been opportunities Providentially presented, of holding meetings with effect, and these the Committee have eagerly embraced. One of these opportunities was the presence of the Rev. J. T. Byrne and Rev. W. Scott, in this city in June last, both of whom kindly complied with the request of the Committee to address a meeting.

On the occasion of Gen. Riley's visit to this city also, in July last, two excellent meetings were held, and another was convened to listen to a philosophical discussion of the Temperance question, by the Rev. Mr. Henderson, recently arrived from Scotland. These meetings resulted in several signatures to the pledge. The number of persons who have signed the pledge during the year, on the Society's books, amounts to 177.

It is matter of great regret that no efforts have been made, during the year, to keep up the organization of the Cold Water Army. The absence of Mr. Wadsworth is, in this respect, severely felt.

It is, however, gratifying to know, that whilst we have been comparatively inactive, the Rev. C. Chiniquy has, with a zeal and ability beyond all praise, labored for the deliverance of his fellow-countrymen from the snare of intoxicating drinks, 200,000 of whom have taken the pledge under his auspices. And that the Rechabite Societies among us have also been active in the same good cause. P. S. White, of Philadelphia, during the last fall, visited several sections of the Upper Province and has done much to revive the cause in that quarter. F. W. Kellogg has also been very successful in extending our principles in the Lower Provinces. Our thanks are also due to many Societies in Canada, West and East, for the handsome donations towards defraying the debt of this Society, as will be seen by the Treasurer's report. Nor ought we to omit mention of the successful labors in the United States of that distinguished friend and advocate of the Temperance cause—Father Mathew, who, it is hoped and expected, will visit Canada next Summer.

Allusion has been made to the cholera, and your Committee feel much pain in stating it as their conviction, that this pestilence was made the occasion of a return to drinking habits on the part of many who had formerly abandoned them; and that, upon the whole, it has given rise to a greatly increased amount of intemperance. Without attempting to step out of their sphere, the Committee may be permitted to add, that the prescriptions of some physicians had a much greater tendency to increase intemperance, than those of others.

But it will naturally be asked, if the Montreal Society is to continue in this inactive state, and if the Committee deem the obstacles alluded to insurmountable? To both these questions we would reply in the negative. The cause is as good as ever it was. There is nearly as much need for prosecuting it as ever, and there are still, doubtless, persons willing to devote time, labor, and money, to its advancement. Besides, some of the depressing causes to which reference has been made, are only of a temporary nature. Perfect tranquility, for instance, appears to be restored in our city. The depression of our commercial and monied interests is, to some extent, diminished; the debt of the Montreal Temperance Society is considerably reduced; and, altogether, the prospects for exertion are much better for the coming