

Then the great man made a compromise with King Alcohol—a sort of half and half bargain. On condition of being allowed to urge temperance upon the people, they consented to drink “moderately” themselves. The old monarch was only to withdraw a part of his forces from the swamps and low grounds, but was still to reign supreme in the high places. There should be no dinners without plenty of wine, and no balls for governors or great men to attend without champagne. The Temperance Societies formed at that time were not out and out, but only “moderate” reformers, and they quoted the Apostle “be temperate in all things,” even to the swallowing of poison. In accordance they pledged themselves to drink “moderately,” and some even went so far as to engage never to drink bad whiskey when they could get sound beer, or sour wine when they could get strong cider.

But, oh! how perverse is human nature. Men were admirably admonished but yet they went astray; wretchedness continued in every family, and the bailiffs were busy in every household. No exact scale could be established for “moderation.” Everybody knew how to “gauge” his neighbor, but nobody learned to “gauge” himself; though something was gained in mathematics for a man sated with a glass and bottle of brandy, and no rule but “moderation,” made the nearest approach to *perpetual motion* that was ever yet discovered.

Nevertheless, as no effort is entirely lost, something had been gained by the movement. Men, by enquiring whether drunkenness was absolutely necessary for the preservation of human life, property, and happiness, learned that sobriety might be, and learned, furthermore, that there could be no surety for sobriety, unless men, wishing to be sober, poured down their throats any portion of a liquid, that, to a certainty, unsobered them, and created a vile appetite for drink, that would only end with death. Thus led to the establishment of societies pledged to total abstinence from all that can intoxicate, and from that day the cause of temperance has gone on prospering and to prosper; and, perhaps, the organizations known as Rechabites and Sons of Temperance, which insure embodiment and combined action, are the final assurance that will give strength, steady activity, and permanent vitality to the beautiful spirit of this Temperance Reformation.

Men, too weak individually for the execution of great operations, have found success in the principle of association, through which almost miracles are accomplished. The individual man wears and sleeps—he grows old and he dies. While he sleeps, the evil one sows tares on his prepared ground, and when he dies they grow up to hide the labors of his hand; but the well ordered society never wears, never sleeps, and never dies, and where the spirit is good and the mind willing, there is perpetual youth, hope, vigor, and elasticity, which watches the prepared ground, nurtures the tender plants, and finally gather in the luxuriant harvest.

We have not only to build up—we must first break down. See yon woodman go forth to the forest. How grand and yet how beautiful, but profitless, are those ancient trees, striking their roots deep into the earth, and spreading their green branches wide abroad, towards the sky. They are felled—the furious fire rushes over them, and as it passes away we see only a broad blackened field of broken rugged waste, unseemly to the eye; but soon comes the husbandman, year after year, through sun and frost, through rain and storm, he labors to remove the rocks and stumps, and smooth the inequalities of the ground, till there is an expanse lovely to behold, verdant or golden with ripe grain, to make glad the heart of man, and herbage for his helper. So, brethren, when we assail those primeval wilds of ancient prejudices and error, or the antiquated customs of bygone times, our first assaults may appear to threaten nought but destruction and desolation—but after all is accomplished, when error is corrected and delusion has passed away, how beautiful and how beneficent appears the work of our hands. Much reform must commence with destruction. We demolish the hovel, before we build up the palace that could not stand on the same foundation, and so must we treat time-worn abuses in society.

The Independent Order of Rechabites was first established in America in the year 1842, seven years ago. What is seven years in the life of a man, and how much less in the life of an Institution? We have not emerged from infancy, and like the fabled Hercules who on his cradle strangled serpents, have, while yet in our swaddling clothes, strangled many serpents, and give fair promise that when arrived at age and manhood, we may exterminate the father of them all.

In 1844, five years ago last spring, the first Rechabite Tent was established in Montreal. A new broom sweeps clean, say the proverb—new fashions are always fascinating, and either from the novelty of the idea always captivating to the weak and thoughtless, or the existence of a better spirit; the Order rapidly increased, and three other tents were established in rapid succession. Everything promised a continued increase, when, suddenly, the love of many waxed cold, inert indifference succeeded to zealous propagandism. Brethren, the most active for a time no longer came near our tents after passing through the chairs of office. Few candidates applied for admission; the emigration from the city, consequent upon depression of business, further reduced our ranks, and many residents ceased to be members, by neglect in paying quarterly dues, till we are now, in the city of Montreal, reduced to the three Tents, numbering in all one hundred and ninety-one members good on the books. The two country tents of Philadelphia and Stanbridge, especially the former, are enlivened by a far better spirit. Many who have ceased to pay dues, have remained faithful to Rechabite engagements. But it is grievous to reflect, that a man may be good on the books, without being a good Rechabite, for, had all these members remembered their vows, and not looked back, after putting their hand to the plough, another spirit would to-day animate our Order, and I should not be called upon to deplore a falling away from that admirable enthusiasm which animated so many but a few years since.

By the general returns of our Order, published two years ago by the High Tent, it appears there were then twenty-six Districts, one hundred and ninety-one Tents, and 9000 Members, whose joint funds amounted to \$40,000. It extends to all parts of the American Union, and probably has gone on increasing in number, though I have no evidence to authorize me in saying that the increase has been in any way commensurate with the nobleness of our pretensions. At the same time, another Order called the Sons of Temperance established, upon an organization and laws nearly a transcript of our own, has become amazingly popular. Later on the field than ourselves, they already number over 200,000 members, and are rapidly organizing Divisions in almost every village of note in the United States, Upper Canada, and the townships.

Children of Rechab! does it not become us to enquire, why of two kindred organisations in the sacred cause of temperance, that under one name should be so popular, and that under another name, so much less so? Is there any thing repulsive in our name of Rechabites? It may be so, but for myself I like it, for I delight in commemorating the memory of that staunch old servant of the Most High, Jonadab the son of Rechab, who battled for the right near 3000 years ago, and whose children were blessed three centuries afterwards, for continuing faithful to the injunction, “drink no wine.” Mahomet made this injunction a prohibition to their descendants and whole tribes of these people had to this day obeyed steadily the precept, “drink no wine.” Suppose that we to-day only number, in America, 9000 true Rechabites. This is more than the remnant of 7000 who never bowed the knee to Baal; and what has that 7000 now become? Look abroad upon the earth's wide surface, and count the number of true believers. Has it not pleased Providence in the midst of grossness, darkness, and vile superstition, always to preserve a chosen race; few perhaps in numbers, but still sufficient to be the conservators of eternal truth, and become an active heaven to enlighten and regenerate the moral energies of mankind?

Children of Rechab! ours is an object magnificent in design, we reclaim the wanderer, we visit the sick, we protect the widow and orphan, and we bury the dead. We inculcate all virtues of observance, and who shall say that we may not be the chosen instruments in that great reform which shall convince all men that they may be healthy without poisonous stimulants, lively without fury, social without silliness, ardent without intoxication, and able to support both the joys and sorrows of this world, without converting their brains into a hell by the maddening delirium of strong drink.

Are our numbers kept down by the too dues we are called upon to pay? By the general constitution of our Order, no candidate can be initiated for a less fee than fifteen shillings, and the dues for one year cannot be less than four dollars. Our City Tents, whether wisely or not, I pretend not to determine, have made them higher, but with the Sons of Temperance they are much less. I see by the rules of the Precinct Division which was lately sent to me, that the initiation fee is there fixed at ten shillings, and