

THE CAMP FIRE.

A Monthly Record and Advocate of the Temperance Reform.

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Every one who receives this paper is respectfully requested to read every part of it carefully. It is a journal that no Canadian temperance worker can afford to be without. The subscription price is almost insignificant. In the present campaign for prohibition legislation in Ontario it will be of intense interest and great value.

THINK THIS OUT

It is proposed that a vote shall be taken upon the liquor question in which possibly the majority of those who go to the polls will be beaten. This proposal is advocated on the ground that it is necessary to have a great majority in favor of a prohibitory law to make it effective, and that the indifference of those who will not take the trouble to vote would be an impediment to the effectiveness of the measure.

If there are on the voters' lists of Ontario the names of over 500,000 men, there must be in the Province of Ontario over 500,000 women whose views will not be expressed through the ballot box. It is safe to say that the vote of these women if polled would be overwhelmingly for prohibition, and against the liquor traffic.

If the indifference to prohibition of the men who may stay at home, is to count on the side of that which is evil, ought not the anxiety for prohibition of the 500,000 who must stay at home, be counted on the side of that which is good.

If there is any element of injustice in disfranchising our women who are one-half of our grown citizens, is not that injustice greatly intensified by a proposal that the votes of those who most fairly represent the views of the non-voters shall be counted as of less value than the votes of those who do not represent the character, principles and opinions of the wives and mothers of the land.

If consideration is given to the indifference of some citizens who will not vote, should not consideration be given to the earnestness of the many citizens who cannot vote.

DRINK'S DOINGS.

Here is an instance, only one of thousands. In the city of Toronto a few days since, a little family was broken to pieces. The weak father, through persistent drunkenness, was simply a nuisance and a disgrace. Worn out with worry and hard work to maintain her little ones, the mother succumbed to disease and had to be sent to the hospital. The little ones are distributed among charitable institutions, and the father is among the homeless out-of-workers. Instances even sadder are recurring every day. The traffic which produces them goes on under the sanction and protection of law.

TO HON. G. W. ROSS And the Ninety-Three Other Members of the Ontario Legislature.

GENTLEMEN:—

You are called upon to face an issue of the most momentous character. You know that the liquor traffic in the Province of Ontario as everywhere else, is the prolific cause of pauperism, insanity, crime, disease and death. No evidence is needed to convince you of this terrible truth.

Your own Prison Reform Commission said a few years ago: "Drunkenness does more than any other cause to fill the jails, and it unquestionably does much to recruit the ranks of the criminal classes," and referring to one year's criminal record, adds, "the number of convictions on charges of drunkenness in the province during the year was 7,059, very nearly one third of the whole, and of the 675 prisoners in the common jails at the close of the year, a very large proportion were habitual drunkards."

Our present esteemed Lieutenant-Governor has said that "An enormous proportion, probably three-fourths of the vice that prevails at the present day, of the crime which they have to contend with, of the lunacy, the idiocy, the poverty, and the misery of every kind, is owing to the foul evil of intemperance."

Statistics are however, totally inadequate to convey any idea of the misery, suffering and sin involved in these appalling facts. Behind every case that is added to the list, there lies a sorrowful tragedy. Every step in the downward career of nearly every drink victim is a step upon some weary, aching, bleeding heart. Behind the figures lie heart sickening histories of ruined homes, blighted lives and all the details of a drunkard's wretched career.

These are the stern realities with the cause of which you are to-day called upon to deal. It is your business and your privilege as statesmen, to devise such measures as will be the most effective legislative remedy for these evils. This solemn responsibility cannot be ignored. This question must not be dealt with from the standpoint of party exigencies, but from the standpoint of patriotism and Christian duty.

Viewed in this light you must admit that the prohibitory law now before the Legislature, with the conditions attached to it, is absolutely useless. It cannot be brought into operation on the terms proposed. It may provoke the enmity or win the favor of partisans. It may antagonize votes or may catch votes. It may have some effect upon the movements of party politicians. It can do no good to the temperance cause. It can bring no relief from the terrible evils which it is your duty to consider and alleviate.

This great issue, this serious question, ought not to be looked upon by any man from the low standpoint of mere political effect. It is your business to frame such a liquor law as you honestly believe to be best adapted to the present position of this province, having due regard to the practicability of enforcement and the strength of sustaining public opinion. It is your duty to take the responsibility of putting such a measure into actual operation. If you are convinced that such operation would be made more effective by the previous ratification of a popular vote, you ought to submit it to such a vote under conditions that will ensure the fullest and fairest expression of opinion, giving no special advantage to any selfish interest, and ignoring no principle of political equality.

Such a course of action is the only possible complete carrying out of the letter and spirit of the pledge given by the Premier eight years ago, which pledge cannot be fulfilled either in letter or in spirit, by the unwise and unjust proposals now before the legislature.

SHE TOOK HER PA HOME.

It was nine o'clock at night, bitterly cold and the winds whistled around the police barrack in Atlanta. Hardly a person was on the street it was so bleak and cold.

The officers at the barracks had gathered around the warm heater telling their experiences in the past when a little, gentle rap was heard on the door.

"Come in," cried the call officer. There was a silence for a moment and the rap was repeated again.

"For Heaven's sake tell whoever it is to come in out of the cold," called the station sergeant.

Then an effort was made to open the door but it failed and then for the third time the rap on the door was repeated and the call man jumped up and opened the door.

Out in the cold, on the stone steps stood a tiny little girl. She was thinly clad, although it was freezing outside. Her thin brown hair clung in damp shreds about her pale forehead.

"Great God," exclaimed the officer "come in little girl and get warm."

The child shuddered either from fright or cold and slowly walked into the office.

"What do you want?" asked the astonished sergeant.

"Is—is—papa here?" said the child her eyes filling with tears.

"Your papa," said the sergeant, "who is your papa and why do you think he is in such a place as this?"

Brushing away the tears the child replied in a trembling voice: "Mamma said to-night that papa was sick and the police had him. So I came here to find him. Is he here?"

The little one then gave the name of her father and the sergeant found that he was docketed as being drunk. He called the turnkey and asked him to see if the man had sobered up.

The turnkey reported that the man was sober enough to go home.

"Then let him out," said the kind hearted officer, "and give him a copy of charges. It's not business, but the little girl shall have her papa."

The man came out haggard and weak from the effects of his spree. The child ran with a glad cry into his arms and kissed him again and again.

"Mamma told me you were sick," she said, "and I have come to take you home."

The man made no reply. His hands trembled as he tried to smooth back his brown hair. In silence he passed from the barracks with his trusting, loving little girl.

"If that man doesn't reform and let this be his last drunk," remarked the station sergeant, "he is made of stone."

This is only one of thousands of sad cases that are chronicled by our daily press each year. We think that voters have hearts of stone when they allow such things to exist. Let us as loyal Christian citizens awake and say by our ballots that the saloons must go from this land and Nation and then there will be no more debauchery, crime or misery caused by the hellish traffic which should be forever out-lawed, and which is every year ruining hundreds of thousands of homes and sending thousands to drunkards graves.—Southern Star.

A PROHIBITION VICTORY.

A splendid victory for temperance was won on January 6th in the Township of Marlposa, Ontario, where a local option by-law which had been in force for eight years, was sustained by a majority of 252. The by-law had been carried in the first place by a majority of only 73. The percentage of the first vote in favor of the law was fifty-five, in the last case it was sixty-three.