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REPORT

OF THE

Women's International Temperance Convention,

HELD AT PHILADELPHIA, JUNE 12, 1876.

PREPARED FOR THE TORONTO WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION,
BY ONE OF THE DELEGATES.

The Toronto Women's Christian Temperance Union, in response to an invitation from the Secretary of the Women's National Christian Temperance Union, United States, requesting them to send a delegation to their approaching Convention, elected Mrs. Finch, Mrs. Forster and Mrs. Harvie as representatives of their Union at said Convention.

Leaving Toronto on the afternoon of Thursday, 8th inst., we reached the famed city of brotherly regard and affection at 2 o'clock P.M. on Friday, after a most enjoyable trip. Our route lay through almost every variety of scenery, from the picturesque and romantic to the grand and sublime. Imagine a lovely fertile valley, between ranges of lofty mountains, watered by a smoothly flowing river, whose windings we closely followed—crowned with waving fields of grain just tinged with gold, and dotted here and there with bustling towns and hamlets—then you may have some faint idea of the beautiful country through which we dashed so rapidly. Upon our arrival, we drove at once to the President's office. Mrs. Wittenmyer welcomed us kindly, directing us at once to a comfortable lodging-house.

The Convention opened with a Temperance conversazione on the evening of June 10th, which we all attended. Short addresses were given by distinguished lady speakers of both the Old and the New World.

Mrs. Wittenmyer, President of the National Union, stated in her opening speech that the brewers were then holding their annual Congress in Philadelphia, and, as reported from their own statistics, the trade in malt liquors had during the last two years rapidly decreased, there being, in 1875, 100,000 barrels *less* consumed than in 1874, and 130,000 *less* than in 1873. Such decrease was mainly owing to the

influence and efforts of women. Mother Stewart spoke at some length. She is quite an aged lady, upwards of seventy years, but thoroughly in earnest in the temperance work, and was two years ago one of the foremost standard bearers in that noble crusading army of the far west.

Later in the evening we listened to the story, earnestly told by a lady from Ohio, of the sufferings endured by these fearless western women—how they trudged through snow and storm—knelt upon damp, wet pavements, meekly bearing even imprisonment; and through all this, saying triumphantly with Paul, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that this curse of intemperance be wiped from our fair earth.” And now their colours wave over hundreds, yea, even thousands of dram-shops, and their motto, “Love, Purity and Fidelity,” is the beacon light, guiding many a depraved and erring dramseller away from the darkness and degradation of this awful traffic in human souls, up to the Throne of God. Oh! my sisters, pray that this mantle, worn so gracefully and so well by the American women, may descend and wrap itself about us—that the echoes from this tocsin of alarm, which has sounded along the mighty rivers, and over the vast plains of the west, may reverberate not only through our much-loved Dominion, but throughout the whole earth; and that God, ere long, may so inspire our hearts with zeal in this His own cause, that we shall not hesitate to enter even the proscribed doors of a saloon or dram-shop, to lure, with burning, irresistible words, both the trafficker and his victim, therefrom, into the flowery paths of piety and virtue.

Mrs. Youmans followed Mother Stewart, and with her thrillingly eloquent words carried the assembly away from Philadelphia to her own little county of Prince Edward, as she related how the Dunkin Act had, with many prayers, tears and efforts, been carried there, and that now there were hopes, bright hopes, for its youthful sons.

The conversazione was enlivened by the beautiful singing of Mrs. Clark, a New York lady. As the full, rich tones of her magnificent voice swept through the hall in waves of song, asking, with tremulous eagerness—“Oh! who is on the Lord’s side?” we fully realized how, under the magnetic influence of Sankey’s wondrous singing, so many have given their hearts to Christ; and we then, more fully than ever before, consecrated our lives to the publishing of this grand temperance gospel.

On Sabbath morning the Convention listened to an able discourse from Mrs. Professor Willing, of the Chicago University for Ladies. Subject—“Incidents in the Life and Character of Paul the Apostle.” Some fifty or sixty of the delegates were detailed to speak during the afternoon and evening, in different churches and Sabbath schools of the city and neighbouring towns. In our conservative Dominion, such an arrangement would have been deemed at least imprudent; but there it was accepted as highly satisfactory and commendable. Accompanied by two ladies of New Haven, Mrs. Harvie visited, in

the evening, the City of Camden, New Jersey, and attempted to speak for a short time upon that wonderful epitome of the moral law which has been left upon record by the Divine Saviour of mankind for the guidance of all travellers to the Celestial City. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself;" particularly dilating upon this thought, that if we at all fulfilled this command of loving our neighbour as ourselves, we would strive to rescue at least one from this mighty army of men and women who are annually swallowed up in the drunkard's grave, and whose souls are eternally lost; for has not this awful fiat gone forth—"No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God?"

The morning of the 12th dawned bright and clear, and soon after nine o'clock A.M. a vast assembly had gathered in the Academy of Music, the largest, the finest, and most elaborately decorated theatre in Philadelphia, for the purpose of holding this long-expected Convention.

Mrs. Parker, a quiet, gentle lady of Dundee, Scotland, was chosen temporary President, and committees on Credentials and Permanent Organization were appointed. Mrs. Wittenmyer, of the National Union, gave the address of welcome to the foreign delegates, in which she explained the purpose of the Convention, which was for the defence of right and purity. She welcomed the delegates, and thanked God that they had all been brought together in safety, expressing as her belief, that God had chosen women as His evangelists, and that if the hearts of the women of other lands beat in unison, and with the same strong power as theirs, we would that day see the women of two continents clasp hands at the foot of the cross, and swear eternal hostility to the liquor traffic. Mrs. Parker, of Scotland, and Mrs. Youmans, of Canada, replied to the address of welcome. A letter from Queen Victoria's private secretary was read, acknowledging Mrs. Wittenmyer's letter and request to send representatives to the Convention; but declining, on prudential grounds, to interfere at all in the matter. Mrs. Crane moved that a rising vote of greeting be sent to Queen Victoria, the model wife and mother, who though as a queen she could not convey to them her approval, yet, were she unfettered, would send them such word as would touch their womanly hearts.

The Committee on Permanent Organization then nominated Mrs. Wittenmyer, of Pennsylvania, as President of the Convention; Mrs. Parker, Scotland; Mrs. Willing, Illinois; Mrs. Willstod, Edinburgh; Mrs. Youmans, Canada; Mrs. Johnston, Tennessee; Mrs. Foster, Iowa; Mrs. Prun, Japan; and Mother Stewart, of Ohio, Vice-Presidents; Miss Willard, of Chicago; Mrs. Burt, of Brooklyn; and Mrs. Harvie, Toronto, Secretaries; with Mrs. Leavitt, of Ohio, Treasurer. A committee was then appointed to consider the practicability of organizing a Women's International Christian Temperance Union. Our esteemed president, Mrs. Finch, represented Toronto on this important committee, and succeeded in introducing considerable of the Canadian element into

the International Union; also a committee on the order of business for the Convention. Mrs. James Foster represented our Union on this committee, and by her admirable tact assisted in arranging and harmonizing the business of the day. The Convention then adjourned.

On re-assembling, after a musical prelude by the Buell family, it was moved and seconded that delegates having a right to vote should take seats together. The minutes of the morning session were read and sustained. Report of the Committee on Credentials read and accepted. Report of the Committee on organizing an International Union was adopted in favour of the organization. Committee on Resolutions introduced a number of resolutions, which were read and adopted. Letters expressing sympathy with the objects of the Convention, from literary and prominent individuals of many lands, were read by one of the Secretaries.

Delegates from foreign lands, and also from the different States of the Republic, were then invited to give reports of the work in their respective cities, towns, or countries. As the time was far advanced, this attractive and interesting feature of the Convention was necessarily shortened, two-thirds of the reports being crowded out.

Mrs. Willstood, of Edinburgh, stated that in their city drink and tobacco were associated as things to be avoided by the young. She deplored the fact that the use of stimulants was even more of an evil in Scotland than in America, many women there indulging in private drinking.

Mrs. Pruyn, of Japan, referred to the temperance restaurants of Yokohama, and expressed her opinion that the temperance principles of the Japanese were running in advance of those of Christianity—leading the way. The Japanese associated tobacco, theatres, and all sin, with liquors, and were pledged to abstain from all alike.

As the Report read in your hearing a few weeks ago was considered a correct and concise account of the rise and progress of our Toronto Union, it was slightly altered to suit the occasion, and read, then commented upon by Mrs. Youmans in her inimitable style. Mrs. Foster, of the Iowa bar, reported from the Committee on the formation of an International Union, defining its purpose, and naming officers.

Mrs. McMaster, of Toronto, a lady much respected by us, for her integrity and firm adherence to temperance principles, was chosen one of the Treasurers of the new Union.

Convention adjourned until eight o'clock, P.M., which was a public session, addressed by ladies. Tickets, with the following strange but significant device engraved upon them, were distributed to delegates and members of Convention. This was the design—you will notice its appropriateness:—A venomous reptile crawling from out some rushes, its ugly head almost levelled to the ground from the effects of a violent blow, dealt by a sword in the hands of a fair lady, who is kneeling near by on the green sward. Her right hand is again raised to strike, and with the left she gently draws aside, out of danger, a bright curly-

headed boy. The serpent is the liquor traffic. The lady represents our women who are dealing deadly blows at this evil; and the boy symbolizes our sons, whom we are struggling to save.

The speeches in the evening were well received, all of them being above the ordinary of feminine oratory. Mrs Youmans was, in our estimation, the bright particular star; and, lest you may think our preference was owing to her nationality, I quote from an American paper:—"Mrs. Youmans' speech was hailed with constant applause, and the audience was wrought up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm during its continuance." And thus this long-expected 12th of June was past.

Before concluding my report of the day, I would like to mention an incident which occurred about midnight, as we returned to our lodging house. Mrs. Finch and Mrs. Church, of Washington, while passing one of Philadelphia's most attractive saloons, were suddenly arrested by the strange anomaly, of a soldier within, singing hymns in a drunken, maudlin voice—scores of young men and lads standing around the well-filled counters listening. They fearlessly entered, and for a few minutes, in earnest words, exhorted the inmates to return home to watching broken-hearted mothers, and above all to give their hearts to the dear Lord Jesus. As they turned out and passed homeward, a score of these young men followed them, promising never to enter such a place again. Perhaps who can tell! When the angel has stood, one foot on sea and one on land, and sworn that time shall be no more; when the heaven is rolled together as a scroll, when the books are opened, some poor trembling soul may be found ransomed, redeemed, gem won for the Lord's crown, through the instrumentality of this night's crusading in a dram shop. A noble crusade this—worthy the loving heart of woman.

"Not to heroes only,
Not to the tried and strong,
Does the armour—the unseen armour—
Of Christ belong;
To us, to us it is given,
To strive with the hosts of wrong.

"And not for a ruined city,
A cross, and an empty tomb,
Do we traverse the seas and the deserts
To meet disaster and doom;
But the Lord is planting His kingdom,
And He has bidden us come."

A dejeuner, for the especial pleasure of foreign delegates, was provided in Horticultural Hall, on Thursday morning, June 15th, at which a pretty poem, written by Mrs. Swanson, of Brooklyn, was recited, entitled the ringing of the tea-bell, allusion being made in it to King George's tea, which had been emptied in Boston harbour, and, as the writer quaintly observed, had all this time been steeping for this great temperance gathering.

“Come over, Christian women,
 And sit with us at tea;
 So much we have now to talk over,
 So much of what should be.
 Your boys and ours need mothers' prayers,
 And sisters' earnest hands;
 There's heavenly work to do together
 To save our Christian lands.”

The Temperance Congress was held on Tuesday, the 13th June, in Broad Street Presbyterian Church. Your delegates have notes of this meeting also, and will endeavour to place them in order for the Union, if required.

As there are ladies present to-day belonging to the order of the Sons of Temperance, the oldest secret temperance organization in the world, having been first established in New York in 1842, we would state that our enjoyment during the latter part of our stay in Philadelphia was greatly enhanced by receiving an invitation (being members of the Order) in this city to visit the National Division of North America, then in Session in Independence Hall. On our entry, we were exceedingly pleased to meet several of our Canadian friends, who were there attending to the interests of the Order.

Your delegates were invited to, and enjoyed on the afternoon of the 15th a delightful drive through Fairmount Park, given by the Grand Division of Pennsylvania, and in the Exhibition Grounds joined in the dedication of an Ice-Water Fountain, placed there by, and at the expense of the Sons of Temperance of Pennsylvania, for the free use of the thirsty thousands who will visit the great exhibition this year.

The Grand Division of Pennsylvania also, gave a grand public reception in Music Hall that same evening, which, in many respects, may be considered the most interesting meeting of the week. The gathering was large—upwards of three thousand. The hall was tastefully decorated and brilliantly lighted, while a well-trained orchestra band from Girard College discoursed sweet sounds. Towards the close of the programme, G. W. Ross, Esq., M.P. for Middlesex, in a peculiarly graceful speech, presented Mr. Bradley, M.W.P. of the National Division, with a beautiful banner—stars and stripes—from the Canadian brethren; while Gen. Wagner donated a handsome Union Jack to the M.W.P. from the American brethren.

Mr. Bradley, a fine specimen of the true American, stood on the platform, a banner in each hand, surrounded by the officers of the Division, clad in regalia. Mr. Ross intertwined the two flags about him, and the band opportunely struck up the American national air, gliding in a few minutes, almost imperceptibly, into the soul-stirring strains of our own glorious anthem, “*God Save the Queen*,” The vast concourse rose as with one impulse to their feet, while we stood; and as the music died away, the Grand Worthy Patriarch's clear tones were heard uttering this most applicable sentiment from Scripture—“Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

The effect was fine. Afterwards, Mr. Raper, whom many of you have had the pleasure of hearing in our own city, held us in breathless attention for almost an hour with one of his brilliant witty addresses.

And now, in closing, we have but to add, that although so much has been accomplished by our sisters of the neighbouring republic, and by ourselves during the last few months, it still is all but as a few grains of sand borne away from this mighty mountain of sin; but as a few drops of water from this boundless, fathomless ocean of iniquity, the liquor traffic. Think for a moment of the fact, take it home with you. The Sabbath, your delegates spent in the quiet, Quaker city of Philadelphia. There were 8000 saloons, gin, or dram or beer shops open, not the back doors merely, but the front doors and windows, wide open, each one of these places manufacturing that night, and every night through all the week, four drunkards, making an aggregate of 40,000 nightly; 40,000 wives and mothers weeping bitter hopeless tears; 100,000 children with pale, pinched faces, shrinking into cellars and corners, or mayhap thrust out into the pitiless, merciless night. And if this be so in one city, what is the average amount of suffering in all the numberless towns and cities in the republic, and of our own Dominion. Surely the guardian angels of sinful man go up to God, with drooping pinions, dropping crystal tears, and crying as did the saints who were slain for the word of God and the testimony, heard by John, the beloved apostle:—"How long O Lord, most holy and true." Our Father clothe us with heavenly armour; the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, and may we fight manfully this Thy battle against the strong drink traffic. And should we fall in the struggle, or before the grand triumphant chorus of victory bursts forth from the lips of the women of all lands, and the flag of "Prohibition" flutters in every breeze, the wide world round; let it be in the fore front of the field, and thus dying may we bequeath our weapons of faith and prayer to our daughters, and while they work we shall wear the wreath, and hear the welcome "Well done."

"Oh! chosen of God and precious,
Knights of the Holy Quest,
After the war of Battle,
Shall follow the sweet behest:
The armour! put off the armour!
And having done all things—rest."

Toronto, July 5th, 1876.