

# BACKBONE.

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By the Prohibition State Central Committee.

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## DID THE SALOON WIN?

In our last issue we incidentally spoke of the recent campaign as a "conflict in which the saloon won." A reader takes exception to this statement. Was it true or untrue? Did or did not the saloon win?

Our critic claims that it did not, for the reason that the President-elect is "a Christian, a good Methodist, a total abstainer and a prohibitionist." If Mr. McKinley is a Christian, then a Christian may for many years occupy positions of the highest influence, both legislative and executive, and be as dumb as an oyster concerning the most unchristian thing in the land. If he is a good Methodist, then it is not necessary, in order to be entitled to that appellation, that a member of that church should use his ability or the influence of his position to hasten the overthrow of an institution which his church has denounced more often and in more scathing terms than it has applied to any other. If he is a total abstainer—and we have no reason to think otherwise—then, like many a saloon keeper, he has sense enough to let alone the stuff which injures all and ruins many of those who drink it, but like him also lacks the moral courage to get out of complicity with the business which furnishes them the easy means of their ruin. If he is a prohibitionist—and in his earlier years he declared himself in favor of that policy—he is taking a good deal of pains that no one shall find it out.

When we say that the saloon won we do not mean that he who is soon to occupy the executive chair is a heathen, a Mohammedan, a drunkard or a saloon keeper, but that the 240,000 saloons which have flourished under the present administration will also under the new administration be let alone, which is all they ask. What reason is there for supposing that President McKinley will open war upon the liquor traffic of the country? Who of the millions who voted for him expects this at his hands?

We would not be understood as holding that a prohibition President could alone abolish the saloon. He could do much toward that end. The recommendation in a presidential message of the passage of a prohibitory law governing the District of Columbia and territories, or of the submission to a vote of the legislatures of the several states of an amendment to the constitution forever prohibiting the alcoholic liquor traffic in the United States would shake the nation with its power. Yet in view of the great interests which stand at the back of the liquor traffic, every office, high and low, should be filled by one of its foes. In this respect also the recent contest resulted in a victory for the saloon. The Republican landslide was in general the triumph of men who, whatever their personal convictions regarding the saloon, will

not array themselves against it. Largely under the influence of the national Republican organization, South Dakota, if she saves her prohibitory law, will do so on a technicality. The mulct law of Iowa will be amended in favor of the saloon if at all. In Minnesota the most that is hoped for from a Legislature overwhelmingly Republican is a county option bill, and of the passage of even this its friends would like to be assured. And so throughout the Union.

A tremendous conflict is on. He that is not for the right is against it. The voters of the land know what the saloon is and what it represents much better than they understand the meaning of the terms "gold standard" and "double standard." They are aware too, of the existence of the Prohibition party, and of what it stands for. For years past the question has been agitated as a political issue in practically every community. The great churches of the land have again and again declared for the destruction of the saloon. Nor can it be urged that their declarations have been only in behalf of the principle while a majority of their members have rejected the Prohibition party method. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian church and the General Conference of the Methodist church have said that "no political party has a right to expect nor ought it to receive the votes of Christian men so long as it stands committed to the license policy or refuses to array itself in open antagonism to it." How many and what parties were in the last campaign arrayed in open antagonism to the license system? Then, too, in most of the states every man who abhors the saloon and desires its overthrow had an opportunity to say so. Every one of the 300,000 Minnesotans who voted had the Prohibition ticket before him. There were other issues, but the liquor question was an issue nevertheless. The fact that partisans for partisan purposes threw dust into the eyes of the combatants cannot obscure this fact. They had done so before and might reasonably have been expected to do so again. The Prohibition party was not numerous, it is true. The more honor is due on this account to its brave rank and file. Alas! that the great army of patriots and Christians of our land came not up to their help and to the help of the Lord against the mighty. "But they were misled." Doubtless. They meant well, but just the same the saloon won.

## "That Sunday School Man."

There is in this state a Sunday school missionary who is accustomed to sandwich prohibition doctrine into his Sunday school and revival addresses, and to sing the prohibition gospel as well into the hearts of his hearers. In his repertoire is "The Sunday School Man." It sings of

"That Sunday School man, no man could be truer,  
Who kept busy all summer denouncing the brewer,  
But his fervor cooled off with the change in the weather,  
And late in the autumn they voted together."

Despite his Prohibition record the aforesaid worker got a little rattled last summer, and in the earlier part of the campaign, thought he must vote for McKinley. Later he swung to Bryan. But day after day rang in his ears the words he had so often sung to others, especially this couplet,

"This Sunday School man had always been noted  
For fighting saloons except when he voted."

"That's you! That's you! You never can sing it again," something continually said to him. The upshot of the matter was that he traveled seventy miles across the country in order to get home and cast a vote for Levering.

## A Few Samples.

Since our last issue the drink demon has been at work. Twenty or twenty-five Poles who

were drinking in a Pennsylvania saloon got into a row. One was killed, and two others will probably die. A St. Paul officer found an unknown man lying near a stone pile and in great agony. He was taken to the city hospital, where he died in two hours from acute alcoholism. The autopsy demonstrated the fact that his death was due to a protracted spree. Louis Balser, of Mankato, a heavy drinker, shot and killed his wife while he was intoxicated. He was convicted of murder in the second degree, and is now in Stillwater. In an attempt to enforce the liquor law, two Grand Rapids, Michigan, policemen were pounded half to death, and their assailants were shot. On New Year's Day, Edward C. Flannigan, who had been drinking heavily, shot Geo. W. Allen with whom he was boarding. He blew out the light and shot Mr. Allen's mother dead. He then shot a Miss Slack through the spine, and Lela Allen through the head. Prof. John Dow committed suicide. He was graduated from the Edinburgh University with highest honors. He had been a professor in the Universities of South Dakota and Wisconsin. His appetite for liquor caused the loss of these positions, and ultimately his death.

## Neal Dow Day.

The National Woman's Christian Temperance Union invites all other temperance societies to observe March 20th, as the birthday of Neal Dow, the author of the Maine law. The grand old man will be 93 years of age on that day. The Prohibition State Central Committee gladly accedes to the request of our sisters in reform. Let there be a prohibition rally in every community on that day. Tell again the story of his enlistment in behalf of suffering humanity, of his struggles and triumphs. It will do just honor to one to whom the world owes a great debt, and may be made to greatly further the reform to the success of which he has given much toil.

Well may we say of him:

"Thy monuments, in Maine, are empty jails;  
Thy laurels, laws observed and unrepealed;  
Thy medals, grateful hearts of men redeemed;  
Thy friends, the friends of all the human race,  
And nations shout thy name across the deep."

Photographs and sketches of the hero's life, copies of the Maine law and other matter helpful for the celebration may be obtained of the Woman's Temperance Publishing Association, The Temple, Chicago.

## Work for Young Men.

The State Convention of the Y. M. C. A. will be held at Red Wing, from the 11th to the 14th, inst. Great preparations have been made for it, and we hope it will give a new impetus to the splendid work now being done. We often wish the association would take hold of the temperance question in earnest. It would seem reasonable that an organization of Christian young men for the moral and spiritual welfare of young men should make vigorous warfare upon the drink habit and the drink traffic, their greatest danger. Some are doubtless doing so, but this is not the rule. We have asked a number of their officers for the reason, but have never received a satisfactory reply.

A few months ago there was an excellent opportunity to put Christianity into politics. Now we have reached the season for getting Christianity expressed in legislation.—Methodist Herald.

The season, certainly. But when a farmer straddles an apple barrel at the grocery all through seeding, he isn't kept very busy in harvest. We wish much joy to those who think it can be otherwise in politics.

Would it not be better for the government to control the liquor traffic than for the liquor traffic to control the government.—New Epoch.

We vote no on both propositions.