This paper cannot be commenced with more appropriate utterances than those of Abraham Lincoln — the dauntless, tireless champion of the overthrow against the overthower; he who saved the American Union; he who enfranchized the black race, and he who — as one of the world’s great men has said — "exhibited a power for the government of men which has scarcely been surpassed in any age." Away back in the sixties Lincoln dreamed of a saloonless land, a stainless flag, a sober people, and said: "Far around as human breath has ever blown the demon of intemperance keeps our fathers, our brothers, our sons, and our friends, prostrate in the chains of moral death.

"Of our political revolution of '76 we are all justly proud. In it was the germ which has vegetated, and still is to grow and expand into the universal liberty of mankind.

"Turn now to the temperance revolution. In it we shall find a stronger bondage broken, a viler slavery manumitted, a greater tyrant deposed; in it, more of want supplied, more disease healed, more sorrow assuaged. By it no orphans starving, no widows weeping. By it none wounded in feeling, none injured in interest.

"And when the victory shall be complete — when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on the earth how proud the title of that land which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions that shall have ended in that victory! How nobly distinguished that people who shall have planted and nurtured to maturity both the political and moral freedom of their species!"

NOT A MUSHROOM GROWTH.

And so prohibition in America has not sprung up overnight as the result of some heavy dew of enthusiasm; neither is it true that prohibition is a fruitage of the war, although surely an achievement as the Eighteenth Amendment would have been in itself stupendous repayal for
the share the nation took in that world holocaust. America’s recognition of strong drink as a national menace, and her heroic struggles to control it, find their first record before the war of the Revolution.

In 1642 the Colony of Maryland passed the first law punishing drunkards by a fine of 100 pounds of tobacco. In 1648, in the beautiful St. Lawrence Valley, the Red Man, in the natural oratory of his race, could be heard warning the tribe of the evils of “fire water,” and with impassioned appeal securing their oath in a bond of temperance. In 1664, the Assembly of Virginia prohibited ministers of the Gospel from excesses in drinking, and the Quakers awoke public agitation over the use of liquor at funerals. In 1774 the Continental Congress urged upon the several legislatures the imminent necessity of “passing laws the most effectual for putting an immediate end to the pernicious practice of distilling grain.” So the thought of prohibition was conceived before America was born a nation.

During the last ninety years various states of the Union have been passing anti-liquor laws, which laws have been fought over, and vanquished, and brought back to triumph, again and again. Abraham Lincoln threw his unparalleled personal influence into the movement when he joined the “Sons of Temperance” at Springfield, Illinois; and when nominated for president he refused to “treat” the National Committee, and returned unopened the presents of wine and whisky sent to him, he announced to all America that Temperance was a plank in his platform.

NATIONAL CONSCIENCE AWAKENED.

In 1873 the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union began its powerful warfare, and not only awakened the national conscience, but gained access to the public schools, instructing the youth of the nation in the mental, moral, and physical disaster accruing from even a moderate use of alcohol. And the salvation Army from its very beginnings flung its full powers, alike of public platform and personal influence, into the fight against the drink; and those in whose bands the organization of the united campaign was placed have again and again expressed a deep sense of the value to the cause of our help.
So the battle grew. America's greatest men, who gave time and unremittent toil without monetary reward, enlisted in its lines; men of religious thought thundered from a thousand pulpits denunciation of strong drink as Christianity's overwhelming opponent; men of scientific research lectured on its deadly attack upon the mental faculties, its distortion of the reason, its vitiation of the mind, making impossible intellectual freedom; medical men testified to its destruction of vital physical organs and tissues, and its shattering effect upon the nerve centers; while men of ablest pen flooded the country with literature that blazed with facts of the awful fate of Drink's mangled victims — men, women, and children whose alcohol-wrecked lives were the horror of the land from sea to sea.

America has waged a mighty war, a war of righteousness, a war in which she has faced the most desperate opponents. But the blessing of God was upon it, the entreaties of mothers heralded it, and the tears of the children baptized it.

And so, after the most desperate and persistent moral struggle a nation has ever known, one glad morning America spread her starry banner to a new sun of liberty, and startled the whole world by the stupendous announcement that she had thrown without her gates the superlative foe of her peoples.

Prohibition has been enacted in the only legitimate way, namely, by Constitutional Amendment. The United States has taken the same means to abolish the iniquitous use of strong drink as it took to abolish the iniquitous practice of slavery. Its enemies can never say that fanaticism had anything to do with the great achievement. Had a referendum been taken, it would have been quite possible that the people might have been swayed by zealots or extremists, on either side, but the slow process or amending the National Constitution prevents stampede. Antagonistic voices may cry of prejudice and coercion, but the fact written upon the Statute Book remains the sovereign will of a free people, converted by them in regular legal procedure into a law of the land. Future historians will not be blinded by present hostility and hysteria, and they will place the Eighteenth Amendment as the supremest act of self-restraint and intelligent self-government ever enacted by the world's greatest republic.

AN OVERWHELMING RATIFICATION.
Daniel Webster said: “Nothing will ruin the country if the people themselves will undertake its safety.” And this was indeed so in the case of prohibition, for while it is required that three-fourths of the States be in favor of any Amendment to the Constitution, the majority for prohibition went a long way beyond this, the most startling and significant feature of the struggle being that only three out of the forty-eight States failed to ratify; and the largest of these, New Jersey, has been so convinced of the value of prohibition by its experience of its benefits, that its Legislature has just passed a most drastic enforcement code.

Through the long years public sentiment had been growing and ripening, instilled and nurtured by the noblest hearts and the most intellectual minds, and at last the time had come when the soil which had given birth to such immortals as Abraham Lincoln, Henry Ward Beecher, Charles Finney, John B. Gough, Dwight L. Moody, and Frances Willard, could no longer tolerate the legalized iniquity of the liquor seemed to speak again when that “Government of the people, by the people, and for the people,” decreed that the mammoth slaughterer of its citizenship be exiled from their land.

(To be continued.)

(N.Y.W.C.)
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