Flinn (J. J.)

The Keeley league and its purpose —

not sufficiently strong in experience to lead the soul to the infinite and if it were it would die. Confession and repentance are repulsive to every worthy soul when they crowd themselves in as saviors.

When Mr. Blanchard has brought his claims within the bounds of reason, and has proved some of his reckless assertions, it will be time to call the secret societies to account. Meanwhile they will continue to grow and to bless civilization with their noble and elevating influence.

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THE KEELEY LEAGUE AND ITS PURPOSE.

BY JOHN J. FLINN, CHAIRMAN EX. COM. NATIONAL KEELEY LEAGUE.

THE formation of the first club of cured inebriates ever organized in the world, in the village of Dwight, Ill., April, 1891, was an inspiration. A handful of gentlemen, among whom might be found a capitalist, a merchant, a lawyer, a journalist, and an artisan—perhaps a farmer, and not unlikely a minister—were passing through that stage of the Keeley treatment where its effects were beginning to be felt in renewed vigor of mind and body. From time immemorial it had been the custom among reformed drunkards, and particularly among those just escaped from the misery and perils of a debauch, to relate their stories, to recount their adventures—to talk over among themselves their personal experiences with the whisky bottle and the saloon. Not unnaturally such exchanges of confidences as resulted from these symposiums had an opposite effect from that which those engaging in them anticipated. The harrowing tale of woe, instead of deterring the listener from taking the thorny path, very frequently led him, all unconsciously, of course, into it. The thought that others had suffered and escaped from trials greater than he had undergone, impressed him with the conviction that he was not half as depraved as he might have been—that in reality, or by comparison with others, he was far from being the abandoned wretch he had supposed himself to be. Temperance agitators during recent years had rather encouraged the "terrible example" idea. The man who could get the floor at a temperance experience meeting and prove to his listeners in words of glowing eloquence that he had been the most depraved wretch they had ever seen or heard of, was the man who got the applause and was looked upon as the hero of the hour. Indeed, during a temperance revival of a few years ago in a city

not a thousand miles from Chicago, it became necessary in order to move the multitude to enthusiasm that the person relating his experience should tell how he had served his term in jail or in the penitentiary, or had killed his man, before he had begun to see the error of his ways, and to change them. It had come to the pass that no reformed drunkard who did not leave a train of vice behind him as long and as fiery as the tail of a comet, could command a respectful hearing at an experience meeting.

It is hardly necessary to say that about this time it appeared to most men of discernment a more disreputable thing and a more deplorable thing to be a reformed man than to be a drunkard. So long as the man who drank continued to drink, he at least escaped the suspicion of being a reformed person, and all that the word "reformed" implied. If the thoughtful people who now and then attended temperance experience meetings were led to believe that the only drunkards who reformed were those of the most depraved and worthless class, it is not to be wondered at. There was no place in the temperance meeting for the gentleman who had changed his plan of life because he came to the wise conclusion that it was wrong to drink. The fact that he drank and continued to be a gentleman was not admitted, to begin with; any claim he might make in this direction only served to prove to the satisfaction of those who had the temperance cause in charge, that he was still unregenerate. There was, in a word, no hope for the drunkard, unless he had wallowed in the gutter and had led a life of utter moral obliquity.

The handful of men who organized the first Keeley club at Dwight in the spring of 1891,—this is not a historical article, hence I avoid exact dates and omit names,—were gentlemen. That they were taking the Keeley treatment is ample evidence of this fact, for there never has been a time when the rules at Dwight have so relaxed as to permit those who were not gentlemen, as we understand the term in America, to take their places in the lines for treatment. The "loafer," the "bum," the "blackguard," or the "city tough," would find the atmosphere of the Dwight Institute, or any of its branches, very unpleasant, if by any chance he found himself breathing it. He

would grow restless and uncomfortable. He would be out of his element. If there were a spark of gentlemanhood in him, it would soon be fanned into a flame by the influences around him. If he were utterly depraved, he would soon give such evidence of the fact as to make it imperative on the part of the Institute to put him on board a train.

The handful of men who organized the first Keeley club at Dwight in the spring of 1891 were not only gentlemen, but they were men of prominence in the various honorable walks of life. They were men of ability. They were men of forethought. They were men of the world in its broadest sense. They saw that there was a tendency on the part of some of the patients to mingle together and to talk over their past experiences. This tendency was not so manifest at Dwight as it had been elsewhere, but the tendency was there. To a majority of the patients the conversations certain to arise out of such conditions, were distasteful if not disgusting. They had come to Dwight convinced that drunkenness was a disease, and they were at Dwight to be cured of it. They regretted the past, but were looking hopefully into the future. The wisest among them understood that Dr. Keeley's work would be only half done if they did not help him. The sooner the old life was forgotten, the old associates abandoned, and the old thoughts buried, the sooner would the new life take possession of their souls. They wanted to check at the very outset this tendency toward the resurrection of old experiences among their associates. They felt that when they left Dwight there was work to be done in behalf of their fellow-men in the world beyond, and that it could be done better if, here and now, they laid the foundations of an association which would bind them together in a fraternal bond for all future time. They had come from every point of the compass, this handful of gentlemen; had learned to respect and to love each other; formed attachments which they felt would follow them to the grave and beyond,—and for this reason, also, they proposed to form a regularly organized association.

I need not go into details. The first Keeley club was formed. The first meeting was held in a blacksmith's shop. Hence the

horseshoe emblem of the Keeley League. In the treatment at Dwight is used what are known as "Dr. Keeley's double chloride of gold remedies." The founders of the first Keeley club wanted a name. They wanted a significant name—a name which would be closely associated and identified with the Keeley treatment. "The Double Chloride of Gold Club" would not sound well, they thought. Why not take a little liberty with Dr. Keeley's remedies and use the more euphonious term "bichloride of gold"? "Bichloride of Gold Club" sounded well. It was just the thing. It was adopted. Of course the inventors of the name and the founders of the club little dreamed that the employment of this term would in a few months have confounded the minds of the most eminent savants of France; have stricken with horror the most eminent chemists of England and Germany; have disturbed the waking and sleeping hours of the most eminent pathologists of America, and caused them to denounce Dr. Keeley on the ground that he was attempting to give to the world a remedy for drunkenness, the basis of which had no place in the pharmacopœia of medicine. They little thought that learned medical societies and learned medical journals would confuse the name of the Keeley club with the name of the Keeley remedies and make it, for a time at least, or until their premises were shattered by a simple statement, an excuse for the persistently malicious and maliciously persistent tirade of abuse, professional and unprofessional, which they heaped upon the discoverer of the Keeley remedies, who had taken the precaution to give them a proper name. But above all, these inventors of the name and founders of the club little thought that they were providing a trap for the unwary imitators who were soon to spring up throughout the country with their fraudulent pretenses and their fraudulent methods. The term "bichloride of gold" it seems, sounded as catchy to the quack doctors and disreputable speculators in human life and human happiness as it did to the patients who organized the first Keeley club at Dwight in the spring of 1891.

So we first hear of the Keeley League as the Bichloride of Gold Club. From a membership of a dozen or two, it grew

rapidly to a membership of one hundred or two and more rapidly still to a thousand or two. The cured man on leaving Dwight regretted that he must leave the Bichloride of Gold Club and its associations and influences behind him. It occurred to the Chicago graduates that they were sufficient in number to organize a club of their own, and we find the first Bichloride of Gold Club outside of Dwight organized in Chicago in the summer of 1891. This was followed by the organization of other clubs in different parts of the country. Then in Dwight in November, 1891, was organized "The Bichloride of Gold Club of the World," the first step toward the formation of a general organization, national and international in character. By this time the membership of the Dwight club had reached and passed the 3,000 mark.

This was followed by renewed activity in the formation of auxiliary clubs, composed of graduates of Dwight and branch Keeley Institutes who resided in all parts of the Union, and the public next hears of the National Convention of Delegates from Bichloride of Gold Clubs, which is held at Dwight in the spring of 1892. The total membership of the Dwight club at this time numbers about 4,000 and the outside membership about 2,000. The name of the national organization is changed to "The Associated Keeley Bichloride of Gold Clubs," and the new organization continues to grow. The public next hears of the National Convention of Delegates from the Bichloride of Gold Clubs which is held in Dwight in September, 1892. The public is surprised, perhaps amazed, to learn that the delegates present, representing every state and territory in the Union, number over 600. Leading merchants, ministers, and physicians, and citizens generally, who visit Dwight during the convention are surprised, perhaps amazed, to find that these 600 delegates are the best-looking and the brainiest body of men they have ever seen assembled together for any purpose. They are equally surprised, and perhaps amazed, to find that these are prominent men—men of high social standing in the communities which they represent, men of prominence in every department of commercial life and in every one of the professions, learned and

liberal. They find in the chair a capitalist who calls to his assistance a man who has represented his district in a state senate for four consecutive terms; they find on the floor, taking active part in debate, lawyers and doctors of large practice, ministers of large congregations, journalists representing or owning newspapers of large circulation—they find politicians of popularity and influence; men who have filled positions on the bench with credit to themselves and to the public; authors who are read from one end of this continent to the other, as well as in other continents; merchants of wealth and credit; superintendents and managers of great industries; and mechanics who have gained distinction in their handicrafts and comfortable incomes by their industry. And strangest, most surprising, most amazing of all, they learn that of this 600 there is not one who has not been cured of the liquor or the drug habit by the use of Dr. Keeley's remedies. A thing which they do not need to learn, but which they can plainly see, is that these 600 men are enjoying the best physical and mental health. There never was gathered together in any convention in any country 600 happier men than are these. They show it in their faces, as well as in their voices. They are grateful men and never miss an opportunity of expressing their gratitude to God and to the Keeley remedies. They are positive men and have formed opinions which are at variance with the notions entertained and nurtured in all other gatherings that have preceded them, where the promotion of temperance was the object in view.

At this convention was born the "Keeley League." In seventeen months the Bichloride of Gold Club with a membership of a dozen or so had grown into the Keeley League with a membership of over 10,000. In less than seventeen months the little club at Dwight had become the parent of 150 clubs scattered throughout the length and breadth of the United States. In less than seventeen months the vague ideas which the founders of the original club at Dwight must have entertained regarding its future had become crystallized into a doctrine for the promotion of which 10,000 American citizens were ready and willing to devote their time, their energy, and their means.

It was not enough for the man who had been saved from the wretchedness of a drunkard's life and the misery of a drunkard's death, that he should simply kneel and thank God for his own salvation. He felt immediately that there was something else for him to do. If he had been saved, if he had brought happiness upon a loving mother or a devoted wife, if he had brought joy to his own hearthstone; if he had surrounded himself with the comforts and with the pleasures which follow in the wake of sobriety; if he had regained the respect and confidence of his fellow-men, he knew that others less fortunate than he demanded his assistance. He had a mission in life, a high and a holy mission, as long as there was a drunkard who could be saved on the face of the earth. He knew that individual work would amount to little, but he also knew that the combination of individual labor, directed in a good cause, would accomplish much. Hence, he allied himself to the Keeley League.

The mission of the Keeley League "is to further the cause of temperance among all people by curing the drunkard of the disease of intemperance, and preventing the youth of the country, by education and example, from contracting it. To bind together in one fraternal bond all who have taken the Keeley treatment for liquor or other diseases; to extend the knowledge of the Keeley remedies; to establish state and auxiliary leagues, and by medical, moral, and Christian methods, with the help of Almighty God, to discourage and annihilate the use of liquor as a beverage in any way that may seem opportune or the occasion may demand." So says the constitution of the Keeley League.

The members of the Keeley League are not prepared to rest with the cure of the drunkard. They look upon the cure, not as a possibility or a probability, but as a certainty. They make no qualified assertions when they speak of curing the drunkard. They hold even more pronounced views than the discoverer of the remedies as to the percentage of inebriates saved by their use. It is held by the latter that 95 per cent of the patients treated with the Keeley remedies are cured; it is admitted that about 5 per cent are incurable. The records of the Keeley

League, fortified by the personal knowledge of its members, go to prove that fully 97½ per cent of the patients treated are cured, or that 2½ per cent only have relapsed. The records and personal experience of the members have taught them also that 70 per cent of those who relapse are either young men who have never been diseased by liquor, and who consequently could not be cured, or old men in whom the liquor disease is an effect rather than a cause. Thirty per cent of the failures are among men who have never been sincere in their desire to be cured, who have other habits and vices to the growth and life of which liquor is a necessity, or who cling to the liquor habit as a matter of choice rather than of appetite.

It is an article of belief with the members of the Keeley League that the cure of the drunkard, while it goes a long way, does not go far enough toward the solution of the liquor question. Dr. Keeley cures; he does not prevent. It is sad to think that the young man who is forming the habit of drink must become diseased as a drunkard before he can be cured. There is no place in the Keeley Institute for the reformation of a bad habit or the reclamation of a wild young man. The Keeley Institute is not a reformatory. Parents who send their boys to Dr. Keeley because they are a little wild, or inclined to be wild; because they have been once or twice under the influence of liquor; because they have formed the habit of staying out late of nights; because they will not attend church on Sunday; because they swear, or lie, or steal, are sending them to the wrong place. In almost every instance, young men who have not contracted the disease of alcoholism, but who have been sent to Dwight as a precautionary measure, have relapsed into their old habits. They are not ripe for Dwight. They have been plucked too soon. It is the mission of the Keeley League to teach these young men to let liquor alone, by education and example, before the disease has fastened itself upon them. It is the mission of the Keeley League to teach them that the best years of their lives may be squandered before they are in a condition to receive Dr. Keeley's remedies. It is the mission of the Keeley League to show these young men, by education and ex-

ample, that there is nothing in this wide world to be gained by tippling, by saloon associations, or by riotous living, while there is everything to be lost.

It is the mission of the Keeley League to reach out after the hopeless and houseless drunkard in the city streets, to help him to the cure and to provide for him after he is cured, until such time as he may be able to provide for himself. It is the mission of the Keeley League to bring about a reformation in public sentiment which will close the gates of the prison against the drunkard and open to him the gates of the hospital; to instruct those in authority that the proper way to treat the drunkard is to cure him; to bring about such legislation as will provide for the medical treatment in public institutions of persons arrested for drunkenness, and to convince humanity that the liquor habit and drug habit, so-called, are diseases and that these diseases can be and are being cured. The Keeley League holds it as an article of faith that no man was ever reformed by punishment; that no great vice, public or private, was ever annihilated by legislation.

The mission of the Keeley League is catholic in its scope. It has no quarrel with any existing temperance organization or with any existing temperance effort. Its aim is rather to direct than to antagonize the great temperance organizations of the day.

The Keeley League is composed in the main of men who never before have been identified with temperance or reformatory movements of any character; of men who would not be identified with temperance or reformatory movements, conducted on the old lines. They have thus far given every evidence of the sincerity of their intentions by a remarkable devotion to the cause which they have espoused. These men have no interests in common with the proprietors of the Keeley remedies, and it is safe to say that, with hardly an exception, they would resent, and resent with emphasis, any attempt on the part of the Leslie E. Keeley Company to interfere in their organization or to dictate in the shaping of their policy. They look upon the discoverer of the Keeley remedies as their leader. They have given his name to their organization. They are loyal to him.

But they are interested more in the preservation of his discovery than they are in the advancement of his financial interests. They are interested more in the growth of Keeleyism than they are in the personal prosperity of Dr. Keeley or his associates. It is not difficult to understand how they can disassociate the Keeley movement and the Keeley Company. The one to their mind is simply the medium through which the good is transmitted. The other is the good itself. The one is the agent, the other the principal. The agent is a necessity and is recognized as being an indispensable one in this movement. They realize that without the protection which is thrown around the discoveries of Dr. Keeley by a corporation organized for profit, the discoveries would fall into the hands of persons who would speedily bring them into discredit and disrepute. They have no sympathy with the demand which has gone up in certain quarters that the Keeley formula be given to the medical profession, for they believe that the moment it becomes common property, the usefulness of the remedies will cease. The medical profession would "improve" the remedies out of existence. The public would very soon find Dr. Keeley's Cure for Drunkenness on the bargain counters. Cheap imitations would flood the market, for every conscienceless and characterless manufacturer of patent medicines in the country would feel at liberty to advertise and offer for sale any spurious, cheap, and villainous concoction which might suggest itself, as the genuine article. The spurious remedies would not cure; they would be more likely to kill. In a little while the name of Dr. Keeley's remedies would become odious. Dr. Keeley himself would become a byword, and his discoveries would be lost to science and lost to humanity. It is part of the mission of the Keeley League to protect the Keeley remedies; to expose fraudulent cures; to warn the public against the rogues who, for a few miserable dollars, would create a vain hope in the heart of the suffering mother, wife, or daughter, who is ready to sacrifice every little comfort and every little necessity to meet the cost of a treatment for some loved one, who has become diseased by the liquor or drug habit.

Nearly one hundred thousand patients have been treated with the Keeley remedies. Not all of these have been treated at the institutes; and not all of them have been cured of inebriety. The Keeley remedies have been doing their work quietly, but none the less effectively, in the homes of the country, during the past thirteen years. Thousands of liquor, opium, and morphine cases have been cured by the home treatment. These cannot, as a rule, be taken into account as available material for the Keeley League. Neither can the thousands who have been cured at the Keeley Institutes of diseases other than those resulting from the liquor habit, although many cured morphine and opium men are to be found in the ranks. It cannot be expected that those cured of nervous diseases would become active members of an association for the promotion of temperance. When all of those cured by Dr. Keeley who for one cause, or for one reason or another, abstain from active participation in the work of the Keeley League, are considered in making up the figures, together with the five per cent which are supposed to have relapsed, it is safe to say that there are at least 50,000 persons in the United States who are interested directly in the Keeley League and its work. And this number is being augmented at the rate of 1,000 every week. The Keeley Institute at Dwight and its branches are curing drunkards at the present time at the rate of 50,000 per annum. One half of this number, at a most conservative estimate, become active members of the Keeley League. To put it with all the force the statement is entitled to, for it is a remarkable one,—Dr. Keeley is turning out missionaries in the cause of practical temperance at the rate of 25,000 per annum. It is part of the mission of the Keeley League to direct the work of this magnificent force. And what can it not accomplish? Was there ever before such an army engaged in such a work? Can the reader realize the magnitude of the movement which will soon be able to number 25,000, 50,000, 100,000 intelligent, energetic, faithful advocates, every one of whom is equipped by nature, education, and experience for the work which he is to do? If the liquor question is ever to be solved, will not the solution be brought about by an army

of men who are prepared to cure the drunkard of his disease, and to prevent the youth of the country, by education and example, from contracting it? If the liquor question is ever to be solved, will not the solution follow the stopping of the demand for drink on the part of those who have become addicted to its use, by curing them of the appetite, and by rousing a public sentiment which will make it as disgraceful and ruinous for a young man to be found in a whisky shop, as it would be to be found picking a pocket?

And what will follow the work of the Keeley cure and the Keeley League within the next ten years? The sight of a drunken man reeling through the streets of a city will soon be a rare thing, and be as shocking as rare. Nearly 4,000 drunkards who formerly either habitually or periodically reeled through the streets of Chicago, have been cured. They are missed, deeply missed, in the drinking places. They are sober men now, every day in the year, making happy homes and happy lives for those who love them. The Chicago employer, who, two years ago, would tolerate the occasional or steady drinker in his establishment, tolerates him no longer. He must get cured or lose his employment. The cured man is more certain of employment and advancement in any of the great houses of Chicago, if he wears the badge of the Keeley League, or shows a certificate of cure from a Keeley Institute, than if he had never been addicted to the immoderate use of liquor. Why? Because experience has taught the employers that they can place more dependence upon the cured man than they can upon the man who drinks moderately. The latter is likely to become diseased at any time, while the former has been vaccinated against a relapse.

Chicago is mentioned because Chicago is the nearest great city to the parent Keeley Institute, and in Chicago more than in any other great city has the Keeley treatment been subjected to the closest scrutiny and the most severe criticism. In Chicago more than in any other city, thus far, have the mercantile and corporate employers of labor made intelligent and systematic inquiries into the results attending the treatment of the liquor and

drug habits at the Keeley Institute. And these inquiries have resulted in conclusively establishing the fact that drunkenness is a disease and that the disease can be cured. It is the mission of the Keeley League to see that the confidence reposed in the Keeley treatment by the employers of the country, is not imposed upon or violated; to protect the good name which Keeley graduates have established for themselves everywhere, and to do its utmost toward elevating the moral tone of those who, after graduation, are placed in positions of importance and of trust.

Let the Keeley League but maintain for a few years its present ratio of growth, and its influence will be felt in every workshop, in every mercantile house, on every railroad, in every industry where labor is largely employed. It will make drunkenness a thing to be as much feared and avoided as any other loathsome disease. When employer and employee disagree, the employer will have sober and not drunken men to deal and reason with. Strikes will be fewer, because disputes will be settled without them. The man at the bench will have a brain as clear as the man at the desk. The one will be as quick to discover an imposition and as capable of determining his exact rights as the other. The mission of the Keeley League is to reach the artisan and the laborer as well as the merchant and the lawyer. Indeed, it is more the mission of the League to reach the laboring class, so-called, than any other, for they are the greatest sufferers from the curse of alcoholism and the least able to bear the suffering. It will require time, hard work, and strong argument to convince the laboring classes that liquor is the one enemy above all others with which they have to contend, and that this enemy can be crushed, but neither time, energy, nor argument will be spared, and success is as certain to follow the efforts which will be put forth to accomplish this grand result, as day is to follow night.

The mission of the Keeley League unfolds itself as the days go by. Its field is the world. Its opportunities are limitless. Its possibilities are boundless.

JOHN J. FLINN.