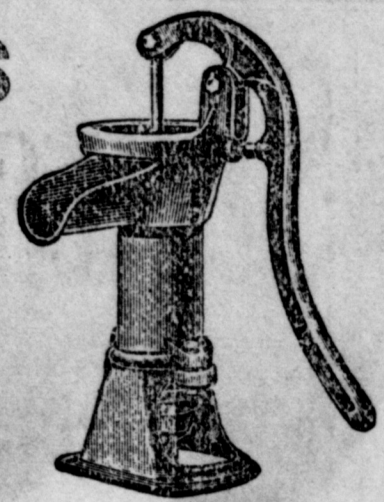


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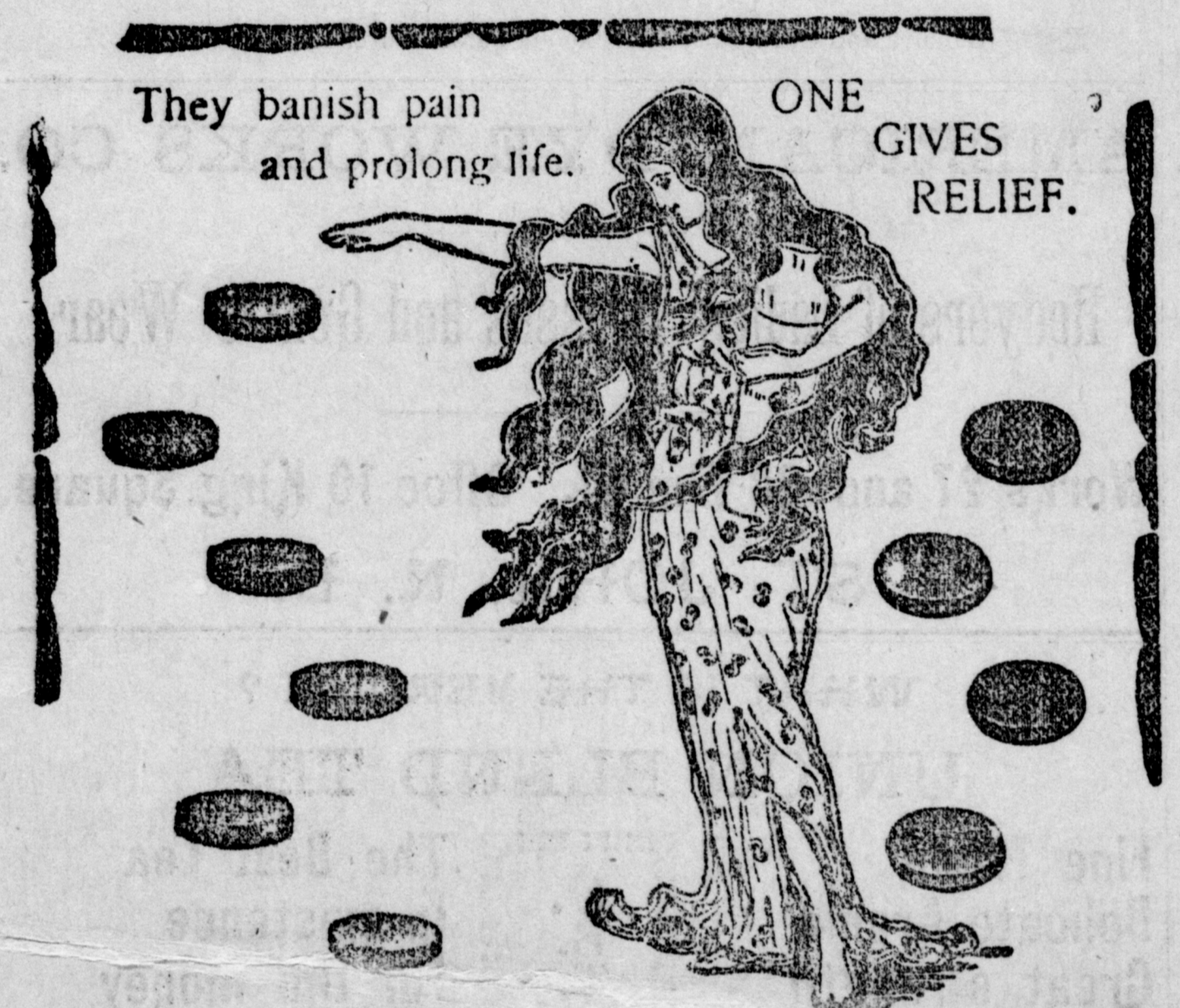
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TEMPERANCE

Contributed by the J. G. T.

A BIBLE TEMPERANCE SOCIETY. I suppose the object intended in giving me this subject was to see whether there were any temperance people in olden times, or whether there was such a thing known as a temperance society, or a temperance pledge or obligation.

I am happy to be able to say to you, that the doctrine of temperance is no new issue of the present day. Its origin is of long standing, and its foundation is firm; yes, more, it is even God's command.

Hear what Solomon the wise man uttered, 1000 years B. C.: "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contention? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without a cause? Who hath redness of eyes? "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Again he says: "Wine is a mocker," with many other similar sayings, which are recorded in the Book of Proverbs.

And shall we not heed these utterances, when God Himself, while speaking of Solomon, declares, that none before him was so wise; neither should any come after him that should possess such great wisdom.

But let us look a little farther. In Isaiah, 5th Chapter and 11th verse we find these words: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow after strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them." And as we continue the search in that Holy Book, we find that woe is pronounced upon all engaged in this terrible traffic, whether he drink or give his neighbour drink.

But I will tell you of a Temperance Society which existed 884 years B. C. It derived its name from its founder, whose name was Rechab; and this society was called Rechabites. They were not only temperance people, but were strictly prohibitionists, even to that degree that they would not even plant a grapevine, nor raise corn, neither would they purchase it. I do not think you will find many total abstinence men of that stamp now-a-days.

They did not build houses, neither did they confine themselves to one place of residence, but live in tents, in order that they might the more easily by so doing advocate their principles, and spread the cause of temperance. But I think I see in their refusal to build houses, or purchase property, a two-fold purpose, one of which I have already given, and the other is, that it forever removed from the temptation, which they otherwise might have had, of renting their property to others, who might desire to engage in this traffic, and by thus doing, aid the cause of intemperance.

When the society was organized, its membership was not large, consisting only of the members of Mr. Rechab's family. He probably seeing the evils of intemperance in the land and desiring to escape therefrom, and also save his family, drew up an obligation, or command for his own family, which was faithfully observed by all its members.

Of Rechab's history little is known, save that he was a strict temperance man. His children, in obedience to the first commandment with promise, "Hooored their father," in carrying out his precepts, from one generation to another.

When Judah was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, which occurred in 607 B. C., and therefore carries us down the stream of time over 2000 years, they fled to Jerusalem for safety. While here, their purity of life, and their strict devotion to the worship of God, gained for them admission into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers assigned to the Priests and Levites. Even here they were tempted to break their pledge, for we read that wine was set before them, and an invitation extended unto them to drink. Ah, how many fall right here, as invited guests, and fearing perhaps to offend their host, or hostess, or perhaps thinking they may appear singular to other guests present, dare not refuse the proffered cup, and therefore fall, perhaps never to rise again. But what of our Rechabites? do they yield to this temptation? No doubt anxious friends are awaiting their decision, and it may be fearing the result. But hear their reply to the invitation: "We will drink no wine," and then repeat the obligation laid upon them more than 2000 years before. But as we read, we find that the eye of Jehovah was upon them, and when He saw that they yielded not to this trial, His special blessing rests upon them. (Jer. 35, 19) Late travellers tell us, that they are still in existence, living near Mecca in Arabia.

But let us descend the stream of time 600 years further. In the days of Christ, when the Jews are watching every opportunity for some excuse to take His life, they in their hatred, and malice, called Him a Winebibber, as though it were the worst epithet they could give utterance unto. This, to my mind, is sufficient evidence that intemperance at that time was regarded as one of the greatest evils of the age.

In the year of our Lord, 62, we find St. Paul preaching temperance. And as

the history might be continued until the present time. And while we, who are striving to advocate the principles of temperance at the present day, may find much to oppose, yea, though we may be, as were the Israelites of old when encamped by the Red Sea, surrounded with difficulties, let our motto be, "Onward." What though the storm cloud may gather, and the enemy outnumber us so greatly, and though we may even hear the murmuring of those just within our own camp, what of all this. Will not God vindicate His own truth? Then as we wage war against this terrible evil, let us gird on the whole armour, and turn not to the right nor to the left, but move forward, and then we may hear for our encouragement, the voice of God as our leader, saying unto us: "Fear not," band of Templars, "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the victory."

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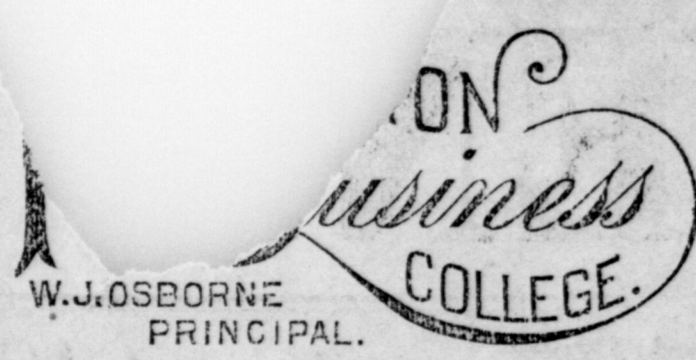
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