

PROHIBITION AS A SOLVENT OF PARTIES.

IN his speech on the political situation recently delivered before the Commonwealth Club of this city, and published in a late number of *Harper's Weekly*, Mr. Geo. William Curtis made a striking comparison between the attitude of the anti-slavery Whigs toward their old party forty years ago, and the attitude of the temperance Republicans toward their old party now. "The Whig party," he said, "was more anti-slavery than the Democratic, and the Whig leaders declared that for anti-slavery Whigs to take separate action was to betray their own cause by aiding its worst enemies. But after Charles Sumner, then a Whig, had eloquently besought Mr. Webster to add to his well-won title of Defender of the Constitution the nobler name of Defender of Humanity, and to place himself at the head of the Whig party as an anti-slavery party, and Mr. Webster had politely regretted their difference of opinion upon the relative importance of public questions; and when the speeches and votes of Whigs upon the Mexican war aided what seemed to Sumner and the Conscience Whigs the conspiracy of slavery; they saw in New England, as their fellow-believers saw in Ohio and New York, that the Whigs as a party cared more for what they called Whiggism, and for the success of the party, with all the necessary conditions of success, than for the anti-slavery cause; and the secession began which ended in the formation of the Republican party." In like manner, he pointed out, the temperance Republicans fear that the Republican party cares more for what it calls Republicanism than for the cause of temperance, "which seems to its friends the chief issue, and they begin to march away. "In vain the Republican leaders cry, and cry truly, that they are more friendly to temperance legislation than the Democrats, and that to desert them is in effect to aid the saloon. The distinctive temperance vote steadily increases. The retiring forces reply that had the anti-slavery Whigs listened to that siren plea, there would have been no Republican party. It is those who believe a cause to be paramount to all other causes who give it victory. In the spirit that formed the Republican party they will apparently raise their separate standard once again and rally their recruits from the Republican camp."

Since Mr. Curtis delivered this speech the accuracy of his diagnosis has been remarkably confirmed by the course of events in the State of Webster and Sumner. There is no question that a majority of the Republicans in Massachusetts believe in prohibition, and desire to have the principle embedded in the Constitution of the State. The men who believe in prohibition feel sure that a majority of the voters in the State are with them in this matter, and are confident that a prohibition amendment to the Constitution would be carried if it were submitted to the people. Pending the settlement of the constitutional question, the temperance Republicans want to have the present restrictive laws made still more rigorous. The Republican State Convention last fall committed the party in unqualified terms to further restrictive legislation and to the

submission of the amendment. After referring to the disastrous effects of intemperance, the resolution said: "We favor such further legislation as may be necessary to render the existing laws more effective. Believing, also, that whenever a great public question demands settlement an opportunity should be given the people to express their opinion thereon, we favor the submission to the people of an amendment to our Constitution prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors to be used as a beverage." The applause with which this resolution was greeted showed that the platform-makers had correctly interpreted the sentiment of the delegates.

But the Republican managers never intended to have the pledges of this platform redeemed. They were made only in order to hold prohibition Republicans in the party, and prevent their supporting the Prohibition candidate. They succeeded in their purpose, for it is safe to say that at least 10,000 Republicans who would have joined the third party except for this plank, supported Ames because of it, and he had only 9,463 plurality. The Legislature having met, the temperance people asked to have the campaign pledges redeemed, but measure after measure, aiming at further restriction of the liquor traffic, which passed the lower branch, was killed in the upper, although twenty-five of the forty Senators are Republicans. Months passed without the first step being taken regarding the amendment. At last a resolve proposing its submission was brought forward in the Senate, and allowed to pass that body, the Republican Senators who are friendly to "the liquor interest" requiring their friends in the House to shoulder the responsibility this time. They responded last week, when, although fourteen Democrats voted for submission, enough Republicans voted the other way to leave the majority tantalizingly short of the requisite two-thirds. It was the same sort of trick which the Republican managers in New York played at Albany a few years ago, and everybody of any sense knows that it was understood, from the very day the pledge of submission was made in the platform, that it was made for campaign purposes only, and that it should be broken after it had served those purposes.

The course of the Legislature has opened the eyes of many men who believe in temperance, but who have hitherto supported the Republican party in the belief that they could secure their ends through that party. Even before this latest performance, a revolt had started in one of the Western Massachusetts towns, which is full of significance. Conway is a rural town of Franklin County, immediately adjoining Ashfield, the summer residence of Mr. Curtis. A few weeks ago the following paper was drawn up and circulated for signatures: "We, the undersigned, legal voters of Conway, promise our hearty support to the Prohibition party, provided twenty-five voters of this town agree to the same." Within a short time it was signed by 70 men, 65 Republicans—one-half of the Republican vote last year—and 5 Democrats. The correspondent of the county Republican paper says that they are "the prominent and influential men of our town," and their high standing with their old asso-

ciates is shown by the fact that they include the Chairman, Secretary, and two other members of the Republican Town Committee, and two men who have been elected to the Legislature in past years by the Republican party. Such an incident would be startling if it stood alone, but there seems to be no reason why it may not be duplicated in many another town. Dr. John Blackmer of Springfield, who has figured as candidate for Lieutenant-Governor on the Prohibitory ticket, and is a member of the State Committee, tells a *Republican* reporter that the method employed at Conway does not differ from what is being done all over the State, excepting that perhaps the success is more complete there than at the average place. The State Committee's intention is to have the party thoroughly organized and in working condition by the next election. The *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, the Republican county paper, after a tribute to the high character of the Conway Republicans, makes these comments: "We cannot say that we are surprised at the movement, or that we should marvel if the movement should become contagious. The Republican party promises, but does not religiously keep its promises on the liquor question. It is hampered by a desire to appease the liquor interest and does not dare to cut loose and become the champion of prohibition in deed as well as in word."

The coming year is evidently to witness a remarkable development of the Prohibition party. Hitherto the Republicans who believed in prohibition did not dare to support the Prohibition party, for fear that they might let the Democrats into power and so "ruin the country." But that bogey has been effectually done for, and in 1888 they will vote as they choose.

SOCIALISTIC PLATITUDES.

MR. MORRISON I. SWIFT, writing in the *New-Englander* on Socialism, draws a rather lugubrious picture of the dangers with which it threatens the civilized world, and then says: "How to meet the difficulties which this paper has outlined, we shall not here undertake to discover." This—without meaning to be disrespectful—irresistibly suggests the question, Why, when he had no solution to offer, did he write the article describing the "difficulties"? Surely we have had enough of these accounts of the power and peril of Socialism from writers and preachers who do not even pretend to know what is to be done to avoid them. Surely, too, every sensible and observing man knows that these articles feed the fires of anarchical discontent all over the country; that there is nothing more mischievous than persuading ignorant men that they are suffering from evils for which nobody knows any peaceful remedy.

It is true that, at the close of his essay, it occurs to Mr. Swift that he ought to give us at least a hint of how we are to get out of our scrape; so he says: "It is useless to face Socialism with old weapons. It can only be successfully met by an early recognition of whatever justice there is in its claims, and the hearty endeavor to alter

the operations of the social organism accordingly." Now, is not this very unprofitable? How does it help us to be told that "we must recognize whatever justice there is in the claims of Socialism"? How are we to "recognize" it—in books, and pamphlets, and articles, or in the management of our private business? If in the latter, how? Moreover, how are we to know the "justice" in its claims? Where is this justice authoritatively described? Is there any general agreement about it among Socialists themselves? And what are "the operations of the social organism" which we must "alter"? Who is going to begin altering them, and who is to superintend the process and see that it does not go too far and yet goes far enough? Finally, ought not the discussion of this subject to be suspended among writers and orators who confess that they have no clear ideas whatever about it? Should we not all, before we approach it, follow Dr. Johnson's advice and clear our minds of cant?

Mr. Swift finds fault with us for attaching in these columns significance to the fact that the Socialist dissatisfaction with the world as it is, has not produced any sign of an economic reconstruction of society in the Socialistic direction; for, says he, "we have been accustomed to believe that a very essential part of any social reconstruction is a change in the mental attitude of men, which finally culminates in a change of visible institutions." And the first change, he maintains, has taken place. This would be important if there were anything new in Socialism in its present form, which is simple discontent with the unequal distribution of property. This mental attitude is as old as civilization, and has found expression at some period or other either in the religion or politics of every civilized race. The reason why nothing has ever come of it is that the experience of mankind has shown, in every age, that to secure a more equal division of property you must not only secure a change of mental attitude—that is, a change of political or economical opinions—but a change in human character. In other words, it has been found that when you go to work to "alter the operations of the social organism," what concerns you most is not what people think about the social organism, but how they behave in it. A man's "views" or "mental attitude," for instance, are of very little consequence to those whom he asks to take him into partnership on an equal footing in working an iron mill. What they seek to know about him is whether he is industrious, intelligent, sober, faithful, peaceable, and frugal, and will contribute his full share to the production of the mill. If he is, they are willing to get him into their "organism." If he is not, they get rid of him, no matter what his mental attitude may be. It has always been so, and, Mr. Swift may rely on it, so it will always be. If we threw our argument into the George-McGlynn form, we should say that God meant human society to be organized always, and, on the whole, in the interest of the industrious, prudent, self-denying, ingenious, shrewd and honest people; and will on no account permit it to be controlled by the lazy, stupid, and shiftless, or reorganized for their benefit, no matter what changes their

mental attitude may undergo, seeing that their opinions almost always change in the direction of more work for their neighbors and less for themselves.

#### FORESTS AS PLAYGROUNDS.

LOVERS of the woods will welcome the tidings of a new movement affecting the heart of the Adirondacks. A number of gentlemen have lately bought the greater part of Mount Marcy (Tahawus), with intervening country to the Hunters' Pass at the head of Elk Lake, including the Ausable Ponds, and intend to preserve it all and to make many improvements, rendering this wild region more accessible and enjoyable, without affecting its peculiar charm of wildness. We learn that they are already at work upon the road leading to the Lower Ausable Pond from the head of the Keene Valley (at the Beede House), hitherto a "pass of fear," even in good weather, while in wet it has been a mere ditch of mud and water, hateful to the hardest pedestrian; not avoidable, either, by any trail or other subterfuge, since it was the only route to the interior woods, even for foot-travellers.

In all the region under mention, improvements of this kind are greatly needed. Owners of forests who hold them as investments have no interest in the convenience of summer visitors; and even those to whom such interest is of peculiar consequence—who get their living out of the annual flow of forest travel—rarely look beyond the immediate returns of a single season, or do anything, or plan anything, to make their neighborhoods more attractive. Adirondack hotel-keepers and guides commonly are very slow of perception in matters directly affecting their business, while a silly jealousy hinders the doing of many things which they know well enough might be done to their own advantage. A man will not improve a road leading to his hotel, or clear out a trail lying within his accustomed routes, because somebody else may profit by his labor. If an ugly windfall comes across a trail which a guide may traverse fifty times in a season, he will not chop it out, but will climb over it, or track around it, and make the parties he may conduct do so, until it decays. Yet if every guide would occasionally carry an axe, and clear out a bad place or two, say once a week, the trails would be in permanent fair condition. It is no answer to this to say that one must not look for the sidewalk of Broadway in the woods. People do not look for it there, but they look for the local equivalent of the Broadway sidewalk—that is, not the absence of all rough or wet places, but paths reasonably fair and open, on which one may swing along mostly at a good rate, and take some pleasure in the woods as he goes, not being obliged to put his whole mind to the process of getting on. A trail is not a place to endure hardness—that can be got ten feet away from it almost anywhere in the brush, and thoroughpaced amateurs of the forest who have leisure for exploring, know well the delights of inventing ways and "making" an untracked mountaintop or pass by the sheer power of their strength and wits matched against the intricacies of the woods. Trails are the means of getting from point to point comfortably, and should

be as good as may be. Perhaps, so long as guides exist, guideboards will not be suffered in the Adirondacks under any ownership. It is altogether probable that the guides would tear them down as fast as they were put up, though this would be foolish, since a few direction posts here and there on the main trails would tempt into the woods many new travellers, out of whom much fresh profit would be got by the guides in the long run. Their property of camps and boats makes guides a necessity at last. Their present policy of making themselves necessary on all occasions, even for trivial little excursions, tends to scare people from the woods both by exaggerated notions of the difficulties of forest travel, and by increasing unnecessarily the cost of movement in any direction. This keeps many visitors in the settled and frequented places, whereas the guides should wish to see wandering made easy and inviting to the greatest possible number.

Under the new holding some of the things will be done that we have hinted at, but after all the first and last advantage of such a change of ownership is the security of the forests. At any rate they will remain, and this is no light thing, considering what has happened elsewhere in the Adirondack country, on the north, on the south, at the east, and even in parts about the centre. For instance, last summer, though the woods were yet visibly unbroken before him to the south, one lying for a nooning amid the stern splendors of the Indian Pass must have felt a chill as he heard distinctly the ring of axes by Lake Henderson steadily working up into the stretched wilderness. The railway from the north nearly reaches the St. Regis lake country, pushing in front the portable steam sawmill, before which miles of timber go down in a season. The railway from the east has invaded Loon Lake. Now the land taken up by the gentlemen who, though following their own pleasure, have laid us all under obligation, has hitherto belonged mainly to owners who cared only for the timber it carried; there was no certainty that it might not be cut over at any time, and ruined for all purposes of delight. Security against this is cause for public gratitude. There are other associations of gentlemen in the same category with these new owners—they are alike to be thanked, if not for public spirit as a sole motive, at least for the exercise of good taste in a manner by which the public must profit.

#### THE BACHELORS OF ART.

Now is the time for the annual article warning the college graduates that they are not so wise as they think they are; that they will be rudely undeceived if they suppose that their degree is going to do them any good in the great world in which they have entered, and especially in the newspaper offices. The warning touching the inadequacy of a mere college training for the work of journalism has to be made especially solemn, owing to a delusion among new Bachelors of Arts that editorial chairs can be had for the asking in any of the great towns of the country by anybody producing a degree from a salt-water college. They are accordingly carefully prepared by the existing occupants of these chairs