

THE TEMPERANCE CRUSADE IN OAKLAND

"The city of Oakland is situated across the Bay about eight miles, or a ride of about forty minutes by steamer and cars, from San Francisco. It has a population of about eighteen thousand. The literary, scientific, and military institutions located here are very popular, ranking among the first on the Continent. Its natural advantages of location, climate, etc., was unsurpassed. And it is every way worthy of the title it has obtained, 'The Athens of the Pacific Coast.'

"But, like other cities, it has a dark side. It supported one hundred and thirty-five saloons, or places where intoxicating liquors were retailed! The friends of temperance becoming alarmed for the morality and reputation of the city, decided to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the Local Option law, to regulate, and if possible to abate this great evil.

"The women seemed to take the lead in the crusade, and for several weeks they labored under many discouragements. But finally the City Mayor, several clergymen, one of the daily papers, and several of the leading citizens and businessmen, came to the rescue. Having thoroughly organized, the Executive Committee planned for a series of mass meetings, which were held in our large and commodious tents. They worked night and day, until the whole city was roused to action. A strong and healthy sentiment was created by the public speeches, and the printed documents which resulted in a glorious victory. The majority against license was two hundred and fifty-three!

"It was estimated that over five hundred ladies were personally engaged during the decisive day. When the result was declared the public rejoicing knew no bounds. Church bells were rung, bonfires lighted, and a rousing mass meeting at the tent which did not break up until eleven o'clock at night.

"The following from the Oakland Daily News, shows how the victors feel toward us:

"The Tent Elders

"We feel that public thanks are due to the Elders who have placed the use of their tent at the disposal of the Local Optionists. Saturday is regarded by their denomination as the true Sabbath, and they evinced a most exalted idea of the temperance cause when they joined with the temperance people in doing good work on their sacred day. The Elders have the thanks of the community, and it affords us pleasure to give public expression to the feelings of the thousands who cannot thank them in person."--M. E. Cornell, Signs of the Times, June 11, 1874.

Celebrating the Oakland Victory

The following items, clipped from the Oakland Daily News, will give some idea of the zeal of the workers in this contest:

"What the Women Did

"The excitement ran high from the opening of the polls until sundown. The presence of women on the street, offering their 'No License' tickets to every passer-by, was a novelty that struck all as being an exceedingly remarkable feature.

'Have you voted, sir?' was the usual salutation of the fair ones, who at the same time extended their tickets to the accosted. All along Broadway, at the Point, Temescal, and in other parts of the city, were large numbers of matrons and misses to be seen engaged in the arduous service they had accepted in the noble cause. The ladies did not limit their work to a mere distribution of tickets, many of them feeling it their duty to urge indifferent voters and others who declared themselves for license, to vote an 'Against License' ticket."

"LARGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC GATHERINGS OF THE PEOPLE AT THE ADVENT
ELDERS' TENTS ON BROADWAY AND IN EAST OAKLAND.

"At the corner of Fourteenth street last night was one of the largest of the campaign. Every seat was filled and every foot of standing room occupied, and hundreds remained outside where they could hear the speakers if not see them. Fully one half the assemblage were ladies. A band was stationed outside, and music was played at the close of each speech. A large transparency was displayed in front of the entrance to the tent, upon one side of which was the motto, 'Home Influence versus Whisky,' and upon the other, 'Oakland Ladies and Flowers Won the Battle [Saturday] May 30th.'" Another transparency, barrel-shaped, bore the significant legend, 'The Death Knell Has Tolloed.' Over the speakers' stand was the inscription, 'Against License. Our Oakland Homes.'"

"East Oakland

"A rousing meeting was held in the Elders' tent, nearly opposite the Post Office. Though Elder Cornell had previously announced his subject for the evening, he only used a few minutes and managed his subject so as to direct his remarks to the temperance cause, assuring his audience of his hearty cooperation in the work."
--M.E C., Signs of the Times, June 25, 1874.

Ellen G. White Publications
Washington 12, D C.
July 5, 1955