

**THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL  
TEMPERANCE CONGRESS, HELD  
AT ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND, IN  
THE YEAR 1887. A REVIEW OF THE  
OFFICIAL REPORT**

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The Second International Temperance Congress, Held at Zürich, Switzerland, in the year 1887.  
A Review of the Official Report by G. Thomann

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G. THOMANN.

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NEW YORK:  
THE UNITED STATES BREWERS' ASSOCIATION,  
1889.

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Three years ago, when about to prepare for publication his review of the proceedings of the *First International Congress against the abuse of alcohol*, the writer, astonished at the indifference displayed by American prohibitionists to so important an event, yet unwilling to content himself with accepting the only reasonable conclusion that could be drawn from it, sought to obtain authoritative information as to this point; and with this object in view visited a prohibition meeting, where he entered into conversation with an elderly gentleman, who proved to be an enthusiast on the question of prohibition. After some general remarks on the progress of "the cause," the writer asked why the first attempt at universalizing the temperance movement received so little attention—and that little of a doubtful character—at the hands of prohibitory newspapers, and whether it was, as it manifestly appeared to be, solicitude for the cause that prompted them either to entirely ignore the Antwerp Congress, or to distort its doings by palpably false reports. With more candor than could have been expected, had the questioner's position been fully understood, the gentleman replied by propounding this counterquery: "Do you suppose a Republican paper would publish anything designed to help the Democratic party?" And without waiting for a rejoinder, the gentleman, applying the supposed parallel to the case in question, proceeded to explain, why such a thing could not be done *consistently*, and

that consistency—a jewel, as the proverb has it—should ever be regarded as the paramount consideration in the management of a successful paper devoted to a great cause.

Others expressed similar opinions, but not one of them appeared to be aware of the moral obliquity which their conception of consistency implied. As the writer felt no particular inclination to enter into an ethical discussion on this point, he concluded that he had heard enough for his purposes.

Consistency in suppressing Truth, in distorting facts, in twisting out of their true meaning and intent the words and deeds of men, and in misrepresenting the meaning of events—this sort of consistency may be a policy, precious as a jewel to those who practice it for their advantage; but, whether employed in a good cause or a bad one, it does not deserve, nor does it ever elicit, the approbation of the righteous. It is true, unfortunately, that, exercised in this sense, it frequently is attended with success, but a success ephemeral in itself and tending only to pave the way to ultimate disaster.

This much, at least, the advocates of prohibition might have learned from their past experience, if they were not as consistently and wilfully blind to the signs of the times, as they are consistently stubborn in falsifying them. As they have done from the beginning, so do they now persist in either ignoring every event, no matter how closely related it may be to the question of temperance, which does not afford at least a semblance of support to their Utopian schemes, or in so coloring their representation of it as to give it the appearance, however flimsy, of such support.

This was the reason assigned for the publication of an epitomized report on the Antwerp Congress, and it is the *raison d'être* of the present review of the work accomplished by the second international meeting. In preparing the latter, the writer had the incalculable advantage of personal observation, having been present, by invitation, at the Congress held at Zürich, and the further advantage of a personal interchange of thought with many persons foremost in the movement for temperance reform on the continent of Europe. Yet, all that is contained herein rests principally upon the official report.

Considered as an educational agency, as a centre of information, supplied by channels ramifying all over the globe, and in turn sending its radiating streams of enlightenment throughout the civilized world, this second international congress most assuredly excels its predecessors in a manner and measure far surpassing the expectations of the most sanguine.

The selection of Zürich, as the place of meeting, constituted in itself a powerful incentive and tended to stimulate interest in the congress; because Switzerland, after having finished a series of most thorough and absolutely scientific inquiries, stood at that very time on the threshold of an era of practical reform, which her people, her government and her institutions of learning had helped to inaugurate.

In addition to this, wishing to adjust their final actions to the experiences of other nations, the Swiss authorities had, in the course of their inquiry, compiled a complete history of the reform movement in nearly all civilized countries, and it was to be expected that the representatives of these countries, attending the Zürich Congress, would throw additional light, both on the facts as stated and the conclusions which the Swiss compilers had drawn from their material.

Thus the success of the meeting was assured from the beginning, and the Committee on Permanent Organization\* had cause to congratulate itself, not only upon the choice of place, but also upon the readiness and efficiency with which the local committee, headed by Dr. A. Forel, professor at the University of Zürich, engaged in the work assigned them.

Two hundred and fifty-one persons attended the Congress, representing nine countries and about thirty temperance associations. America was represented by but two persons, viz.,

\* This committee consisted of the following persons :—

Houzeau de Lehaie, Member of the Belgian House of Representatives; Dr. Desguin, member of the Medical Academy at Antwerp; Dr. Du Moulin, professor at University of Ghent; Gratjan, British Consul-General at Antwerp; Lahaye, attorney at law, Brussels; Dr. Moeller, corresponding member of the Medical Academy at Brussels; Dr. de Vanclerooy, professor at the War College, Brussels; Jules Van der Heyde, attorney at law, Antwerp; Dr. Barilla, member Medical Academy of Belgium; Belval, corresponding member Medical Academy of Belgium, Brussels; Frédéric Delaet, attorney at law, Antwerp; Deltise, director of the People's Bank at Namur; Franz Gittens, corporation counsel of Antwerp; Dr. Herpain, chief medical officer, Penitentiary at St. Hubert; Dr. Peithau, army surgeon; Dr. Ronvaux, Namur; Max Roosees, Antwerp; Miss Charlotte Gray, London.



Miss Emma Marwedel, delegate of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the writer of this review.

In organizing the meeting, the Joint Committee submitted the following list of officers, which was approved, to wit:—

PRESIDENTS.

Chancellor von Steiger, Berne.  
 Dr. de Vaucleroy, Brussels.  
 Prof. Dr. Boehmert, Dresden.  
 Dr. Max Chevalier de Proskowetz.  
 Jules Robyns, Paris.  
 Grant Mills, London.  
 Gallus Thomann, New York.  
 Dr. Snyder de Wissenkerke, Hague.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

Rev. Bovet, Berne.  
 Dr. Cauderlier, Brussels.  
 Rev. Hirsch, Lintorf.  
 Dr. Drysdale, London.  
 Dr. Rziha, Innsbruck.  
 Rev. Diez, Rothau, Alsace.  
 Mr. Wagener, Sabro, Denmark.  
 Dr. Custer, Zürich.

In order to facilitate and expedite the work of the meeting, the same committee circulated a printed programme, announcing the principal subjects of discussion, and the names of the delegates or independent participants who had given notice of their intention to take active part in such discussion. It was understood from the beginning that the order of business laid down by this committee would not exclude discussions upon any other subjects which might be brought forward.

The programme comprised the following subjects of discussion:—

I. Governmental monopoly of the sale of *distilled* liquors; its utility as a means of combating alcoholism, and the best method of applying it.

II. The nutritive value of alcoholic liquors as compared with that of other beverages and of food in general.

III. The practical results achieved in inebriate asylums.

IV. Statistics on the consumption of food and drink in coffee-houses and other drinking-places, in which alcoholic liquors are not sold.

The time allotted to each speaker was limited to but fifteen minutes, but every delegate had the right to submit his views in writing, with the understanding that they would be embodied

in the official report. The parliamentary procedure was conducted in the German language; but delegates, unable to speak either German or French, used their native tongues, and it was this polyglot character of the discussion which rendered the meeting uncommonly interesting.

An analysis of the general bearing of the foregoing subjects of discussion appears unnecessary, except in so far as it might serve to familiarize the reader in advance with the fundamental principles upon which the Continental reformers proceed in their efforts. To an American mind the most striking characteristic of these themes is a negative one—namely, the absence of any reference, however remote or indirect, to the question of prohibiting the *proper* use of intoxicants. Of the four subjects of discussion, two are of a purely scientific character, while the others treat of two distinct methods of combating alcoholism. Considered in connection with the objects of the Congress, as expressed in its very name: *Meeting against the abuse of alcoholic drinks*, which, as we have pointed out elsewhere, implies a sanction of the proper use, the range of the discussion appeared well defined, and logically excluded prohibitory arguments. Yet, mindful of the dictates of courtesy and hospitality, and, no doubt, recollecting the somewhat brusque impatience with which prohibitory suggestions had been treated at the first international meeting, Professor Forel, in opening the Zürich Congress, deemed it necessary to plead, in a half apologetic and somewhat indirect way, in favor of admitting, or at least politely hearing, extraneous discussions. He held, to quote his own words, that “in debating upon the question of combating the abuse of alcohol in the widest sense of the term, the greatest possible latitude should be offered to the expression of all shades of opinions; that the meeting should hear not only the views of those who advocate alike a truly temperate use of alcohol and a discontinuance of the use of the more concentrated and harmful spirituous drinks, but also of those who regard total abstinence as a requisite for the accomplishment of the end in view, especially in the case of habitual drunkards.”

Evidently, although inclined to treat prohibitionists with the utmost courtesy, Dr. Forel did not venture to countenance their ideas, seeing that he clearly avoided even the mention of them. The difference between prohibition in the American sense and voluntary abstinence, or abstinence enforced by direction of a physician in the case of a habitual drunkard, is so great and so obvious that it needs no explanation. Hence, no matter what interpretation was given to Dr. Forel's words by those prohibitionists, who, encouraged by them, subsequently participated in the debates, it is clear that prohibition did not form a part of the official programme. It is true, it manifested its presence in the meeting; but it was there through sufferance—an intruder, barely tolerated. It will presently be shown what a pitiable spectacle it presented.

“GOVERNMENTAL MONOPOLY OF THE SALE OF SPIRITS,” ETC.

The first address on this subject came from Mr. W. Milliet, a gentleman admirably equipped for the task by his recent official investigations, and eminently qualified to speak authoritatively by his official position as chief of the newly created Monopoly Bureau. Under his supervision the famous Swiss inquiries have been conducted, and from the office of which he was then the principal (Federal Statistics), emanated the celebrated report on the drink-question. Mr. MILLIET said:—

The abuse of alcohol, fitly characterized in our language by the striking term “gin-epidemic,” is old in some parts of our fatherland. The complaints about this abuse arise partly from the excessive consumption, partly from the bad quality of the beverage. The causes which have produced this wide-spread disease are of the most complex character. In this, however, we are all agreed, that beside other general causes, social as well as individual, an unwise system of taxation has added materially to the development of alcoholism. It was, therefore, naturally the first aim of those who wished in a *legal* way to do away with the evils of excess, to remodel the laws in a rational manner. That which men have made, men can undo or change. The former legislation of which I speak was irrational in two respects. On the one hand, several cantons (and among them the very cantons which have neither