
ATLANTA.

By GEO. A. LOFTON, D. D.

A Lecture Delivered at the Baptist Church of
Talladega, Ala., Dec. 11, 1887.

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**EXTRACT FROM THE
NEW * ORLEANS * TIMES - DEMOCRAT,
On the Atlanta Election,
Nov. 25, 1887.**

READ THIS—MY TEXT LESSON.

The scenes at the polls beggar description. Many of the best ladies of the city were on hand serving lunches and hot coffee to the Prohibitionists and urging them on to victory. The fair sex gave the Anti-Prohibitionists the cold shoulder all the way through, and retired to their homes in the deepest sadness when the result of the election became known. Bands of little children singing hymns were seen at the polls, who, between their sweet singing, begged the voters to cast their ballots against the return of the bar rooms.

A most pathetic scene was observed at the fifth ward polls, where poorly clad and palefaced factory children sang "Home, Sweet Home," and sacred songs to the voters, and with tears in their eyes entreated them to vote against bar rooms. In many instances the Anti-Prohibitionists jeered these children, and flaunted their wet tickets marked "for the sale" in their faces.

At the third ward polls disgraceful scenes were enacted. Abandoned negro women stood near the polls shouting for liquor, and hooting at every man who passed with a blue badge on. Hundreds of citizens were challenged at the polls by both factions. In the fifth ward the vote of Dr. J. B. Hawthorne, Prohibition leader, was challenged, and he was otherwise insulted. He denounced his challenger.

W. A. Fuller, an Anti-Prohibitionist, took the required oath, deposited his ballot and left in a great rage. The Anti-Prohibitionists wore a red badge with "liberty" marked on it, and in many instances drunken negroes appeared at the poles wearing red caps, cloaks and streamers. The preachers, the church people and the bulk of the better class of people, both white and colored, supported the Prohibition ticket, while a minority of Atlanta's respectable business men, the wine room men, the bummers and the worst class of the negro element worked and voted for the Anti-Prohibitionists. The election was carried by the most vicious negro element, who had been registered in large numbers by the Anti-Prohibitionists, who paid their taxes, thus making them voters.

To-night the streets are filled with bands of drunken and disorderly negroes parading with bottles flourished on the ends of sticks, and making the town hideous with their howls. The city has gone wild with the jubilation of the Anti-Prohibitionists. The Prohibitionists assembled to-night, and after ringing speeched, denouncing the methods of the opposition, and resolved to hold a mass meeting on Monday night, at which it will be decided whether or not they will contest the election, because of the hundreds of illegal votes which, it is claimed were cast by the Anti-Prohibitionists.

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“How are the mighty fallen!”--2 Sam. 1:25.

The eyes of the civilized world have been turned towards Atlanta. Prohibition in America is watched as a great moral issue, with the profoundest interest by the nations of Europe; and the “local option” victory won by Atlanta, two years ago, was regarded as the grandest single triumph Prohibition has ever achieved. No city of Atlanta’s population has ever, of itself, voted whiskey out before. Portland, Bangor, Des Moines, Topeca and other cities have enjoyed Prohibition; but their freedom was bestowed at the hands of the State—not by their own suffrage. Atlanta, with a population of 50,000, won her own liberty against great opposition. The world shouted “glory” to the gallant “Gate City” of the South! The world wondered at the victory; and the whiskey army recoiled in dismay. Never before had so large a city shown so great a preponderance of the moral element. It was a sublime commentary upon American civilization and progress in city life. Atlanta was held up as the “cleanest city on God’s green earth”; and she became the cynosure of all eyes, as the city of churches and church-going people, the largest in proportion to her population in America. Grand in her material development, she stood peerless as a moral, if not an intellectual, center. The world was proud of Atlanta; and God seemed to smile with peculiar favor upon her. Boston, Philadelphia, New York, London, Berlin, Paris, marked her character, and viewed her victory, as the millennial dawn of reformation at the hands of municipal self-government.

I need not dwell upon the hopes of millions, inspired by Atlanta’s example, who yearned for the overthrow of licensed and legalized vice—fostered and perpetuated by the State. I need not say that the same victory inspired all the energy and venom and skill of opposing evil. Never before have such gigantic efforts been made in the interest of whis-

and prominent whiskey leaders—howled and thirsted for drink. There were 9,244 votes cast. Of this number 5,183 were for whiskey and 4,061 for Prohibition. There were 5,827 white votes and 3,317 black. Hence 2,817 negroes and 2,366 white men voted for whiskey; while 3,461 white men and 600 negroes voted for Prohibition. Over one thousand more white men voted for Prohibition than for whiskey; while 2,217 more negroes voted for whiskey than for Prohibition. Against 1,095 white majority the negroes gave 2,217 black majority—leaving Prohibition, in the whole vote, defeated by 1,122 votes. The negroes did it. Even the worst element among the whites were discounted by over a thousand votes; and we may safely say of the 4,061 Prohibition votes in Atlanta there was scarcely a dirty vote cast. They were cast upon moral principle from the Christian population and from the loftiest circles of society. The great mass of the 5,183 votes for whiskey were reeking in the filth of selfishness, greed and appetite—coveting filthy lucre and thirsting for drink. Religion, morals, culture, peace, sobriety—the liberty and happiness of home—the greatest good to the greatest number—all this was crushed beneath the feet of those 5,183 voters, led on by business and political demagogues, blind leaders of the blind, and whose loftiest conception of social and political economy is money, or preferment, however obtained. Many of these leaders actually sympathize with evil. They worship only the gods of appetite and lust; and, at heart, they prefer a saloon, or a brothel, to a Church or a Sunday School. Some of them, from earthly standpoints, are better men; but I cannot conceive, in all that 5,183 voters, a single Christian man intelligent enough to know that God has pronounced an eternal “*woe*” on the drunkard, and upon the giver of drink a similar “*woe*,” both alike. He is an infidel at heart, whatever his profession, who favors the whiskey business; and he will trample the loftiest “sentiment” and the plainest “fact” of prohibition, drinker or not, beneath the icy foot of business and political policy. Such, however, will favor prohibition, whenever it *pays*; and some would vote for the

devil, if it would bring them money or secure political preferment. I admit that there are some insane enough to see "personal liberty" through the whiskey bottle—*honestly*. I admit that, honestly, there are those like Col. Howell and others who cling to the theory that "Prohibition does not prohibit." But, usually, these are the sinister pleas of those who sympathize with the liquor curse.

Now let me prophesy and moralize a little.

1. Let me *prophesy*. The defeat of Atlanta is not a Waterloo. It is only a Bunker Hill, a Lexington, a Valley Forge. Saratoga and Trenton and Yorktown are yet to follow. Truth and liberty have suffered a thousand defeats—rotted in dungeons, pined in exile and burned in fires—before a single great victory. Christ was crucified, Stephen was stoned and Paul was beheaded; but from the cross and the sepulchre, and from the ashes of burning martyrs, the seeds of Christianity took root and covered the world with its growth and its glory. Prohibition is a gospel product; and as certain as the gospel is true, it will prevail. It was the gospel which killed slavery, which purifies the marriage relation from polygamy, which ultimately extinguishes the power of the sword; and this same gospel is to break down the strongholds of the devil, fortified in the bar room, the brothel and the lottery wheel. Prohibition might suffer a thousand defeats; but no power this side of God can turn her revolution backward. As well try to hush the harps of the angels, as stifle the voice of woman, whose holy mission it is, in this age of the world, to rescue the home and the family from the clutch and the curse of the bar room. Woman never knows that she is whipped—and therefore she cannot be defeated in a holy cause. The bar room hates woman, now, worse than it hates the devil—but "the heathen rage in vain." I could not keep from tears, the other day, as I looked over that long list of Atlanta's glorious women who returned thanks to the gallant men who aided them in the great contest; and, in conclusion, bid them adieu and God-speed, until the contest should come again! Immortal pluck and piety of immortal woman! Glorious women

of Atlanta! I thought then of the most beautiful Atalanta, swift-footed and fleet-limbed, outstripping all her antagonists until Hippomene threw the golden apples of Venus in her pathway. When I read that address I said, "*No, Atlanta has not stopped to pick up the whiskey apple.*" She has only stumbled and fallen in the race. She is wounded and broken, but she gets up again; and the time is coming when the whiskey anaconda, which now twines around her fair form, shall be torn from her fleet and beautiful limbs. Atlanta—fleet-footed fawn of progress—shall win the race. She will not stop to marry the fraudulent and blackened Hippomene of the bar room.

My friends, the world will weep over Atlanta's defeat; and when she rallies again the outraged sentiment of moral humanity will come to her rescue. Her very enemies will recoil with horror and shame at her prostrate form; and the sense of violent wrong and violated justice will not long submit to the degradation of this fairest daughter of the South, trampled and bedraggled beneath the foul foot of the whiskey rabble—a negro mob—however respectably headed. The country will stand aghast at the unparalleled spectacle; and thousands who have favored whiskey, heretofore, will be cooled down to reason and moral sentiment by the sober second thought. It takes a sacrifice, a calamity, sometimes, to give impetus and force to a good cause; and the disastrous outrage perpetrated upon Atlanta, November 26, 1887, will be the sacrificial price paid for the success of prohibition in the future. Atlanta was then crucified; but she will have a resurrection, not unlike the glory of that risen God whose angels are knocking at our doors, to-day, for renewed energy, and who will break down the doors of the American bar room forever. Atlanta's defeat will stir the great heart of the Prohibition army—as it lulls the mottled hosts of the whiskey mob with the delusive consciousness that, in outraging the beautiful Atlanta, they have stormed and carried the great prohibition stronghold. Atlanta's defeat will prove our greatest blessing. It will bring us now to the mightiest onset of the future. I wept when I saw the

figures of her failure—"1,125"—but when I studied the import of the result, I felt to rejoice that we could now understand and meet the issue before us, as never before. Woman is the outraged victim of Atlanta's defeat; and the world will not stand by and view her humiliation and tears—listen to her cries—in vain. From November 26, 1887, Prohibition views its Bunker Hill.

2. Now I want to *moralize* a little. Atlanta demonstrates that the negro and the white rabble of the South should be educated. The negro alone votes down Prohibition in the South. He lost us Texas and Tennessee; for in East Tennessee, where the negro has no preponderance, Prohibition was carried by a good majority—including the important city of Knoxville. Chattanooga, Nashville, Memphis and other cities were all lost to us by the negro. The negro is the only boast—the great god-send of the whiskey party. I wonder that any respectable man, or paper, in that party, has the unblushing effrontery to crow over its victories! Unfortunately it is a party without scruple, and which can glory in its shame. I think if I were a prominent Anti-Prohibitionist I would work in the dark. I should hate to brag over the victories gained by subsidized ignorance and immorality at the hands of a vicious and stupid negro element—to say nothing of the low white contingent that companies with it.

The great respectable, religious, moral and intelligent element of the South, both white and black, are in favor of exterminating the bar rooms; and yet all this does not make the whiskey party blush! It would vote against angels for whiskey—such is the love of the bottle. All this demonstrates that the negro should be educated. I observe that negro schools and colleges—such as we have at Talladega and Atlanta—turn out Prohibitionists; and this is saying a great deal for their moral and religious culture. I am, henceforth, in favor of the Blair bill. Our poor masses, black and white—especially in our country districts—are rioting in ignorance, vice and whiskey, three things which seem to run together. No moral revolution, Prohibition

nor anything else, can ever succeed until the State, or the United States, provides for the education of these ignorant masses; and it seems that our Southern States are making but a poor provision to relieve their condition. I am heartily in favor of the Blair bill.

Again, Atlanta demonstrates that the Prohibition party should organize itself in every State of the Union, as a political institution; and if it throws away its vote for twenty years, keep on working and voting until it wins. We cannot be skirmishing with either of the other political parties, and win. Whenever either of them finds it to its interest, it invariably sells us out; and both of them will use the negro, or the foreigner, to sustain the bar room in their favor—and both of them would, if they could, count the negro out, when he votes against them. Already we hear cries even up North about disfranchising him. Poor, fool negro! It seems that he is interested in but one thing—whiskey; and he will vote with any party for whiskey! It seems now that this is about the only use of the negro in politics. The Prohibitionists have no showing in the party-machine of any other party; and they ought to organize, everywhere, for themselves, upon the principle of moral reform in every direction, as well as in the liquor question. Partizan politics cannot deal with moral questions and succeed; but Prohibition can plant itself upon the great platform of “moral reform” and succeed, as it has done in Maine, Kansas and Iowa. However slowly, we shall win everywhere, at last, by organization and education. In the church, the school, the press, we must carry the subject and thus elevate the ignorant, vicious masses; and the time will come when, at least, we can break down the *institutions* of licensed and legalized vice. The Prohibitionist party, as such, alone can mould moral sentiment and shape public opinion to this end. No other party can rise above its constituency, or its machinery.

Prohibition is not a matter of personal temperance, simply—not, simply, a matter of moral reform. It is, essentially, a political question, because it involves public relations

with government. It opposes public vice, crime, pauperism, insanity and misery among the people at the hands of the liquor traffic; and it is an advance step in the science of political economy. It belongs to the 19th century. Local option is good as an educator and as an agitator; but isolated and opposed by local constituency, its defense is precarious. Prohibition means a political party and an organic law of the State, abating a crime and a nuisance and protecting the life, liberty, property and best interest of society—the greatest good to the greatest number.

Again, Atlanta proves that Prohibition is not a mere sentiment, but a practical fact. Grady and Hill were unanswered and unanswerable. They pulverized, with their figures and facts, the speeches of the Anti-Prohibitionists into infinitesimal dust. The liquor orators and writers dealt only in the flimsiest sophistry, or the grossest misrepresentations, or the basest appeals, addressed to ignorance, appetite, covetousness, prejudice and licentious preference—one threatening Atlanta with “riot.” The Prohibitionists dealt in lofty “sentiment,” to be sure; but they corroborated their sentiments and principles with insuperable “facts.” Atlanta never before so prospered—materially, morally, socially and intellectually—as under her half tried two years of Prohibition, in spite of legal obstruction and organized opposition to render it odious and ineffective. Millions of dollars were added to her capital and business enterprises. The financial, commercial and industrial institutions were marvelously advanced. Population was multiplied, ten-thousand. Hundreds of laboring people became sober, industrious and prosperous. Scores of homes were made comfortable, bright and happy. Religion flourished; and the schools became overcrowded. God smiled upon the solution of the Prohibition problem in the life of a great city; and he will curse the crime that robbed Atlanta of the most precious boon ever bestowed upon her. For fear of complete success, her enemies hurled upon her the recent contest, lest the doom of whiskey there should be sealed. Long in organized preparation, they determined, at

all hazards and by all means, to bring up their forces, after a two years skirmish to break the law; and, with all the odium they had themselves brought upon it, they resorted to fraud and falsehood to abolish it. By every base appeal to the low instincts of degraded man, they subsidized the sovereign vote of 3,417 ignorant negroes and of a large number of low whites, to defeat the intelligence and morality of respectable Atlanta. The men who *wittingly* voted against the "facts" of Grady and Hill, are criminals in the light of God and civilization; and they are enemies of mankind.

What a picture of the desperation and depravity Atlanta presents of the "whisky ring!" First comes the head of the column around the circle—the bloated manufacturer and the wholesaler who feel no sting of conscience for the universal ruin of souls; and who furnish the money for the fight. Then comes the army of retailers, red and chuffy, fiery with malignity and hate to all that is good; unscrupulous as to the damnation of millions; and unprincipled as to methods of warfare against the intelligence and morality of society. Then come the brigades and divisions of drinkers and drunkards and bummers, negroes and whites, the home-born and the foreigner—bloated, haggard, thirsting, howling, blaspheming God for liquor—stuffing the ballot box with fraudulent majorities. Last of all come the managers and backers—lawyers, doctors, merchants, preachers even—who see "liberty" and "business" through the whisky bottle and who prefer success by riding the whisky devil. These last furnish the brains, the bribes and methods of party success. They are the orators, writers, tricksters and workers against prohibition. They are the tail that wags the dog—that guides the serpent. This completes the blackest ring that ever girdled the earth—the great "*whiskey* ring!" Its desperation and depravity was never so apparent. It drinks scum and rolls in slime. The ooze of hell trickles upon it from the beer keg and the whiskey barrel. It is green with the rottonness of the bar room and its company; and this "ring," like a huge serpent with its tail in its mouth, now trails its slimy track over Atlanta. Around her fair

form it winds again its anaconda folds—crushing with its Gorgon strength and stifling with its Augean stench. It stinks higher than heaven. It emits the phosphorescent odors of the bottomless pit—distilled through the copper coils of the still-worm of death. This “whisky ring” is the monstrous viper which now entwines, and crushes, and sickens, and paralyzes, and drags down, beautiful Atlanta. God help and God forbid. Is there no hand on high to shield the pure, the fair, the brave ?

Again, Atlanta furnishes an illustration of the purity and magnanimity of the Prohibition party. The speeches of Henry Grady immortalize him—and they make Prohibition in Atlanta corruscate with glory. So I might speak of all that host of noble men and women who worked and wept and prayed for success. I have not read of a single dishonorable method pursued ; nor have I seen the expression of a disgraceful sentiment. In the heat of such a campaign—in the natural indignation with which a proud and patriotic element views the bar room—it is a wonder some of them did not say and do something wrong. It is natural to want to “fight the devil with fire,” and the temptation to do so, no doubt, was strong. The excuses were numerous ; but I notice that the Prohibitionists were strongly in favor of a “contest” over the election. They yielded only to earnest persuasion to the contrary, with the full consciousness, as Mr. Grady puts it, that there were probably enough illegal votes to overcome the Anti-Prohibition majority. The Antis contested in the former election ; but for the sake of Atlanta’s peace and good, the Prohibitionists prefer to win the future victory of the ballot box, rather than enjoy the fruitless triumph of a contested election, even when it were possible to achieve success. This is noble ; and this is just what the other party did not do before, when beaten, and it is just what it would not have done, this time, if defeated. This is the difference, in full view of the fact of wholesale fraud, at that ; and I thank God for the honorable and conservative spirit of Prohibition in defeat, in spite of the temptation to contest. I had, a thousand times, rather share the

glory of such a defeat, than to wear the ignomy of such a victory—the monstrous triumph of sin and shame and iniquity.

In conclusion, let me turn, with heartfelt sympathy, to the prostrate form of Atlanta's beautiful Genius. Clad in white robes and wreathed in the roses of heaven, I see her fallen and wounded. Twined about her splendid proportions are the snakey folds of the whisky serpent. With hands and eyes uplifted to God, she is pleading for help from on high; and about her prostrate form I see her noblest sons and daughters weeping in the dust and ashes of humiliation. There is Hawthorne and Grady and Hillyer and Lee and Carter and Hill and a host of others—the young men and the old—with their mothers and wives and daughters, with saddened countenance and indignant scowl, their right hands uplifted to the God of heaven in prayer, and swearing by him that liveth forever and ever, that this foul wrong upon Atlanta shall be avenged—not by blood and fraud, but by the bloodless victory of loftier sentiment of ennobled public opinion and of the purged and purified ballot box. In the dark background of this picture I behold another scene. There is the motley crowd of whiskey—with “Yellow Stone Kit” in front, scattering the silver bribe of fraud, amid the jeers and mockeries and shouts of drunkards and libertines, black and white; and skirting the dark host that gloats and yells in its triumph over the fallen Genius, I see the stately forms of the prominent partizans of whiskey with folded arms, and looking on with complacent pleasure, or indifference, at the hideous orgy they have created. Behind them still, I see the laughing face, and lurid eye, and cruel wand of Satan, lifted over the scene; and close by I discover the priests of this diabolical worship of the whiskey god laying upon a reeking altar the murdered body of young Hightower, as a sacrificial offering in honor of the infernal triumph! Above the scene hangs a dark cloud, like the pall of death, but the pall is fringed with a lining of golden light. On the other side, and above the cloud, I see a descending hand with a drawn sword, radiating with an

aureole of celestial glory ; and far around on every hill-top I see angels with glittering spears and horses and chariots of fire. I see, again, a flash of lightning and I hear the hum of a far off thunder. It is the voice of God speaking ; and as he speaks an angel writes, in fiery scintillations, across the dark cloud : "They that be with us are more than they that be against us." Atlanta shall be redeemed ; and the anaconda of whisky shall untwine his slimy, crushing folds from the fair form of her beautiful Genius.

Thus my vision of prophecy closes. God has allowed every immortal principle to suffer wrong, in order that its triumph may be complete and permanent. An easy victory never brought lasting results. Liberty, under every form, has suffered, as I have said, a thousand defeats. She has gone from scaffold to scaffold, and from stake to stake ; but, at last, she has triumphed for body, mind and soul against every gigantic oppression of usurped authority and power over the people—at least in this sunny land. The last great battle which Liberty is fighting is against the slavery of lust and greed and appetite. The tyranny of the bar room—the great licensed monster of America—must succumb to her tireless and sleepless and exhaustless conflict. "Liberty or death" is the cry of moral freedom against the licensed licentiousness of that liberty which means the universal slavery of sin and misery and misfortune. Every defeat is but an inspiration to renewed effort and energy and zeal. It is woman's fight for the emancipation of home ; and woman, let me repeat, never knows when she is defeated—because she is always right. God has raised her up for this mighty conflict—the last grand struggle of liberty ; and you had as well try to kill God as to defeat this struggle of woman for the emancipation of husband and son and brother and home from the curse of whiskey. Woman's tears and woman's prayers and woman's rights are sacred and divine ; and her fair and tender and weak hand will wield the omnipotence of God to crush the anaconda of the whiskey ring. Be it so.

Pardon me for one word more about Atlanta. She may

have forgotten me, but I have not forgotten her. She was my foster-mother. In my childhood I prattled upon her knees and pillowed my head upon her bosom. She was the home of my youth; and I drew from her the strength of my young manhood. I caught my first inspiration from her growth and her progressive development. I love her still with a fond, childish devotion; and wherever I have gone, or lived, no city has ever robbed me of my love for the city of my childhood and youth and young manhood. I represented her as a soldier battling for my country; and I was baptized into one of her churches. I was married to one of her daughters; and among the best friends I have on earth still live within her walls—and most all of them are Prohibitionists.

Is it any wonder that I should weep over Atlanta, and feel deeply, for her? Yes, she shall have my prayers and my voice and my pen, as she has my sighs and my sympathies. Let me cry daily to God, until the coil of the serpent shall be unwound from her sacred form. Let freedom shriek over her fall, until all the world shall be moved by the wail; and may she, at last, rise again fair as the moon, glorious as the sun and as terrible as an army with banners—as once she rose from her ashes. May her Churches and Sunday Schools and social circles and virtuous homes and pure institutions soon take the crape of mourning from off their doors. Oh! may the day soon dawn when her thousands of innocent children shall sing hosanna! in her temples of religion, learning and light over the freedom of her mothers and the emancipation of her hearth-stones. God will hear the cry of her women and children at home, and of her friends abroad. Two years hence the battle will roll high again; and the angels will come to the rescue of my devoted mother. The cypress wreath shall be torn from her brow; and sadness and woe shall be turned into gladness and joy, again. If I were a poet I would write a lament which would break the heart of the world; but I am a poor, feeble speaker—and not blessed with the divine efflatus of Milton or Homer. I can only pray and speak and work, the best I know how; and, God helping me I shall never cease to supplicate God's throne 'til Atlanta be free, again.