

THE LIQUOR QUESTION.

LOCAL OPTION IN CALIFORNIA.

HOW THE LADIES WAGED AND WON THE FIGHT IN OAKLAND.

The San Francisco *Alta* of Sunday, May 31, gives a long and interesting account of the election on the question of liquor licenses, which was held in Oakland, Cal., on the preceding day. We quote a portion of its report in the following:

"The election held in Oakland yesterday, under the Local Option law, was the most exciting that city has ever seen. For some weeks past great exertions have been made by both the advocates and opponents of prohibition to call out their full strength. Every man interested in the sale of liquor was actively at work to bring out the strength of that party, and the peddlers of tickets bearing the words 'For License' were numerous. The anti-license party was out in full force. A large number of ladies, old and young, greeted every comer with the inquiry, 'Have you voted yet, sir?' and earnestly implored him to deposit a ballot on which was printed 'Against License.' Very many little girls and boys were out, all offering no-license tickets, and wearing temperance rosettes. Under the present law the saloons were all apparently closed, and, as a result, there was comparatively little drinking of liquor. It transpired, however, that it was by no means an impossible thing to find an open back door, through which to obtain ingress into the realms of Bacchus. The ladies had not neglected the refreshment part of their programme. At each polling-place a tent had been erected, within which bountifully filled tables awaited all who chose to visit them. Everything nice in the line of eatables, together with coffee, tea, or ice-water, were served to the hungry or thirsty voter by the highest and fairest of Oakland's ladies, who were all most unremitting in their attentions to their guests, who, as may be supposed, were quite numerous. The beautiful County of Alameda had been robbed of its brightest flowers, to be woven into the tiniest and loveliest little bouquets, for the adornment of such manly bosoms as beat in harmony with the desires of the temperance ladies. Young girls, carrying little baskets filled with these fragrant symbols, surrounded every voter who expressed his sympathy with the temperance cause, and pinned a bouquet in his coat. So plentiful were these floral offerings that the air was freighted with their fragrance. No election was ever more closely contested than this one. The streets were thronged by men, women, and children from early morn until late at night, all entering with intense zeal into the struggle. The number of matrons and misses who distributed ballots in the vicinity of the polling places could not have been less than 300, while all the male population of the city seemed to be out, either to take an active part in the contest or to enjoy the excitement and novelty of the scene. With very few exceptions the ladies were treated with courtesy. Capt. TARBETT had his regular and special Police detailed for duty at the polls, and twelve extra specials, from the Executive Committee of the Temperance Union were sworn in, and did good service through the day. Frank Laine was arrested for assault in attempting to take a bunch of tickets from a lady, in which brutal effort he wrenched the lady's wrist out of joint. A San Francisco man named Corwin made use of an insulting remark about the ladies, and narrowly escaped being very roughly treated. A rush was made for him by exasperated men who heard his brutal words, but the Police reached him first and hustled him out of the crowd and toward the City Prison, followed by a couple of a hundred persons. A party of men made an attempt to rescue him from the officers, but the temperance people crowded around in superior numbers and prevented a breach of the peace. During the day there were other disgraceful scenes. One man spoke very insultingly to a young lady who was exhorting a voter to put in the prohibition ticket, and was instantaneously knocked down by a gentleman standing by. There were other instances of insulting treatment of the ladies by half-drunken fellows, but to the honor of the License party be it said, they made their fight generally in a manly way, considerately, and even deferentially, treating the ladies, and in many cases offering them protection from aggressions, if needed. All day, at the Congregational Church, a prayer meeting was in progress, ladies and gentlemen earnestly asking Divine help in the work of redeeming the City from the empire of King Alcohol. Early in the day a telegram was received from the faithful of Grass Valley, which read: 'We are praying for you and your battle to-day.' These words of good cheer encouraged the ladies both to pray and work more earnestly; and they were further encouraged by a telegram from Vallejo, announcing the fact that the election was going more in favor of prohibition. So waxed the fight until sundown. During the count of the ballots, the temperance people became even more jubilant, and when the result was finally announced, they broke forth into hearty cheers and exhibited the most unbounded enthusiasm. The result was: For license, 1,038; against, 1,291. Majority against license, 253.

The Local Option law was passed at the last session of the Legislature, without opposition from any source, hardly any persons believing that it would bear important fruit in any section of the State. Both the friends and opponents of prohibition have been astounded at the result, however. The anti-license sentiment has thus far made almost a clean sweep wherever elections have been held, and the whole movement has been simply marvellous, considering the character of our population. In no New-England State could the prohibitionists to-day have the same large measure of success they have had in California. The result of elections held thus far is as follows:

For License—Cloverdale, Bodlego, and Bloomfield townships, Sonoma County; Visalia, Tulare County; Redwood, San Mateo County; Fremont, Santa Clara, and Washington, Santa Clara County; Vallejo, Solano County.

Against License—Woodland, Grayson, and Cache Creek townships, Yolo County; Brainerd, Santa Cruz, and Sequel townships, Santa Cruz County; Centerville township, Alameda County; Wheatland, Yuba County; Clayton, Contra Costa County; Center, Sacramento County; Arcato, Ferndale, and Table Bluff, Humboldt County; Rough and Ready, Nevada County; Santa Rosa, Healdsburg, Duncan's Mills, Ocean, and Windsor, Sonoma County; Oakland, Alameda County.

The law is to go into effect thirty days after the people have decided in favor of prohibition. It has been stated that in Woodland both parties have agreed to remain quiet until the courts shall have passed upon the constitutionality of the law. As showing the line of action that may be possibly adopted by the saloon men, it may be mentioned that, in Oakland last evening, after the result was known, some of these gentlemen expressed a determination to keep their places of business open, regardless of the law, and contest the matter in the courts during the ensuing two years, relying upon the next Legislature to repeal the law. In any event it may be accepted as a foregone conclusion that the liquor question is hereafter to hold a prominent place in party platforms, and to exercise a leading influence in our general elections.