

citing Scripture, he admits that moral suasion neither did nor does suffice—so that he is “wiser than what is written, even while quoting what is writ!” How true is that saying of Shakspeare!

The objector asks—“Was it reasonable or just that a man should take advantage of the weakness of another, and help to make him drunk? No publican should permit drunkenness in his house, and no one should be allowed to turn a drunken man out of his house into the streets without incurring the responsibility of his acts,” and, strange sequel! “every means should be adopted to encourage respectable men to engage in the trade” so dangerous to public safety! Why, sir, the law has said for hundreds of years, and the very license of the publican himself says, that drunkenness and riot must not be allowed! But they are allowed—and nothing short of the machinery and provisions of the Maine-law can prevent them. The proposal of the opponent was, “coercion,” but ineffectual coercion. The instruction of the law to the publican was purely absurd. It virtually said that one publican might “prime” a man at one end of the street—if he were a “respectable” publican—that another in the middle might put in a second charge, but a third “publican” at the end must be “responsible” if an explosion took place. In truth, sir, it would require a professor of physiology to deal with this matter; no publican could do it, even with the aid of an *alcoholometer*, indicating when a man became dangerous! Our plan is practicable, but no other: for while we know where the mischief begins, and can stop it, no one knows where it will end. It begins with the first glass which excites the man, and therefore it leads to the second.

The objector admits that the evil is really in the drink sold, for he proposes, as “worth consideration,” not only an addition to the virtue of the publican, but “a reduction in the retail strength of ardent spirits.” There is the mischief which is to be diluted, but it will remain mischief still. I should be very glad to accept the objector’s own regulation—the making the publican responsible for the acts of madness and murder to which this traffic conducted men—for this would be a Maine-Law; that is, if it could be carried out; since what man, “respectable” or other, would dare to carry out a trade like this, if he were made responsible for its consequences? You, Mr Chairman, have already referred to the crime of which the traffic is the seeming source, and the papers of this day, which give the trial of a young man on a charge of culpable homicide, furnish illustration of the point. Here we see publicans licensed by law to sell that which excites a number of men to violence, and recklessness, who attack and throw down a sober, quiet citizen—and, the law offering no protection, the young man, with such weapons as he has, defends himself in desperation, and slays one of his assailants. Mark the shameful paradox! the law proffers us protection—taxes us to pay the cost—deprives us of natural liberties—licenses the traffic which creates three times more danger, disaster, and crime, than all other sources of evil put together—sets to work the machinery which exposes us to robbery and outrage—and then, when we defend ourselves as we may from the customers and victims of the Traffic—places us at the bar of justice on the charge of manslaughter! Yet Scotsmen talked of the “failures” of protective and prohibitive laws—and did what

they could to sustain and sanction a system that so endangered life and burdened the community. I declare, for my part, that such laws and such a system are “a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.”

Do you ask, gentlemen, why I denounce the liquor traffic, and would interfere with it? My answer is simple—because it interferes with me and mine, with you and yours—because it frustrates the very ends of society, protection of life, liberty, and property—because it taxes me to support its paupers, idiots, and criminals—because it endangers person and property—because, in short, it interferes with the welfare and progress of society. One of two things we demand of society—either protect us against the consequences of the traffic, or give us liberty to protect ourselves, by prohibiting the trade.

The objector’s last argument is that of—*prophecy!* If the law succeeds, says he, it will bring a frightful host of evil in its train.—But do not be alarmed, for he predicts—“There is no hope that a Maine Liquor Law will ever be enacted in this country.” But what prophet’s mantle has fallen on the objector? Where is the proof and attestation of his mission to vaticinate? He knows no more of the future than I do and therefore all his prophecies are an empty sound—and nothing more. The true fount of prophecy was faith in God—in his laws, his goodness, and his power. I do not pretend to say when a Maine-law shall be enacted—but I believe that it is based upon the true principle of removing ruinous temptations from the people—that it is demanded by justice and expediency—and therefore that we ought to sustain it with all earnestness and power. The issue of our efforts I leave to a wiser and better intelligence than that of man; but doing our duty—the duty of the hour—the duty nearest us—I have undoubting confidence that the great curse of the traffic will be removed. We are philosophers enough to know—though speaking from no official elevation—that when the cause is removed the effect will cease. The effect we know—drinking and degradation, and pauperism and crime;—and the cause also we know—the temptations and net work of the traffic. Remove this—withdraw the sanction of the law, and proclaim the outlawry of the great source of misrule—and in the fair social field which will open out before us, education will spread with power, and political amelioration advance with safe and giant strides. In order to bring about this desired consummation, all we have to do is to present the truth to the enlightened and patriotic portion of the nation, and in due time the response will be given. The human soul loves truth—yearns for it—and it is of the nature of truth to spread;—light will kindle light, and make all around luminous, till at last truth will quicken into enthusiasm, and the cry, “Prohibit the curse,” rise from millions of hearts, and ring from sea to sea, until it shall culminate in the great Protective Law.

IMPORTANT TESTIMONY.

We have much pleasure in quoting the following important statement made by Dr Gregory, Professor of Chemistry, at the recent meeting of the Students’ Temperance Society at the University of Edinburgh. The Professor addressed the members on ‘Temperance Considered Physiologically.’ After dwelling at some length on the baneful moral influences of the drinking usages, he proceeded—

ed to consider their effects in a chemical and physiological point of view. He said—

Amongst the classes of society which were sufficiently fed and clothed, science taught us that every drop of alcohol was hurtful, nay poisonous. Our ordinary diet consisted of two kinds of matter—matter intended for the renovation and increase of our bodies, and supplying the daily waste to which they were liable, and matter for the promotion of the animal heat. Animal heat was produced from the Oxydisation or combustion partly of effete matter and partly of the carboniferous portion of the food. Oxygen was therefore not only essential to the production of heat, but to the combustion and carrying off of the effete matter from the system. Alcohol had, however, so strong an attachment for oxygen, that it absorbed it in large quantity, giving out, no doubt, a certain amount of heat, but leaving the effete matter which should have been carried away to remain in the blood. This was the true origin of gout, calculus, rheumatism and other secretory diseases. The nervous, muscular, and secretory organs underwent a certain amount of waste every day; they become partly decomposed, and the decomposed portions must be expelled from the system. This was done by various methods, but they all required the presence and action of oxygen; and if oxygen was not supplied by respiration, or was diverted and absorbed by alcohol, the decomposed matter must accumulate, and was diffused through the blood, which became diseased and began to deposit sediments, calculi, &c. The oxygen was taken up by the alcohol, and there was not enough left to oxydise the food. The Professor afterwards went on to say, that even if a larger supply of the heat producing principle were required in any circumstances, it might be obtained from substances cheaper and more agreeable than alcohol, and, at the same time free from its stimulating and injurious effects. If a person, along with his ordinary food, were to take a large portion of oily matter, such as fat meat, butter, olive oil, cod-liver oil, he would find it impossible to take wine or ardent spirits. The fact was well known in the wine-countries, and arose from the large portion of heating matter contained in the oil, &c. He thought that this might be made available by those who wished to promote the temperance movement, for he could very well imagine that persons who had got into the habit of taking more alcohol than was good for them might have a difficulty in taking less, although they were anxious to do so, and it appeared to him that if they were to take a large portion of oily matter, they might much more easily get broken off that pernicious habit. He could corroborate from his own experience the distaste produced for spirituous liquors from a similar cause. He was in the habit of using more butter and oily substances than most people, and the effect in his case was that even half-a-glass of wine was intolerable to him. The Professor concluded by asserting that the argument from science was entirely in favor of the temperance movement, because, while, on the one hand, they had the mere possibility that alcohol might not be injurious in certain conceivable, but rare circumstances; on the other hand, in these circumstances, even when they did occur, alcohol was not the best agent, and they could always supply its place by other and better materials, which were entirely free from its injurious qualities.