

Prohibition in New Jersey.

The Maine Law Bill has again been strangled in New Jersey. The *Reformer* of Trenton gives the following particulars and warning:—

“Let hell break forth into singing, and rumsellers shout their joy. New Jersey is doomed to remain one year longer without a prohibitory law,—cursed with the legalized traffic in blood one year more. A brief recital of facts will show on whom the public must lay their censures.

Not long after the session of the Legislature began, a memorial asking for a prohibitory law was presented in the House of Assembly, and by vote, referred to a special committee, of which Mr. Diverty, of Cape May, was chairman. The members of this committee were favorable to granting the prayer of the petitioners, and they proceeded to frame a bill in accordance therewith. In due time, the bill was presented, and ordered a second reading. It was printed, also, and a copy furnished each member, that all might know its precise character. When it came up on its second reading, various amendments were proposed, all of which were either withdrawn by the movers, or rejected by a vote of the House.—The friends of the bill congratulated themselves on the apparent readiness of all parties to come up to the question in an open manly way. Tricky ‘Honorables’ sometimes seek to kill off bills and motions by the amending process, forcing in some alteration which will prevent the friends of the original proposition from sustaining it. If a bill passes to the third reading, it cannot then be amended before the House. The prohibitory bill passed to a third reading unaltered; and the natural inference was that its opponents were ready to meet it in honorable warfare. Wednesday, the 5th inst., was set as the time when its fate was to be decided. The advocates of the law went to the State House that day, anticipating a strong, spirited debate, and expecting a victory in the debate, and a defeat on the vote. It had been rumored that Mr. Cobb, of Morris, had been hard at work, preparing for an onslaught; and there were temperance men ready and well able to reply. The lobby and the gallery were filled, and all was expectation.—Various other matters being disposed of, the bill was called up, and when it had been read by the clerk, up started Mr. Cobb, the redoubtable champion of the rum trade, and moved that the bill be referred to the Judiciary Committee, of which he himself was a member. The friends of the bill resisted in vain; a vote of 32 to 23 took it out of the hands of the special committee, and consigned it to another, composed, with a single exception, of its enemies. Everybody at all acquainted with Parliamentary proceedings will at once understand that the design was to dodge the question. It was just at the close of the session, when all was hurry and confusion; and it was fondly hoped that prohibition would never be seen or heard of again this year. In plain words, the movement was one of those contemptible tricks by which ‘Honorable’ sneaks are wont to evade responsibility. The opponents of the bill hoped thus to get clear of it, and at the same time not incur the hostility of temperance men by voting against it. They fancied that they could go home, and with hypocritical face, say to the foes of legalized murder, that the bill was passed by in the press of other business, to their great sorrow, &c. &c., and then

they could skulk over to the grog-shop and set the whole gang of blackguards and loafers frantic with merriment over the cute way in which they had cheated the temperance men. They already saw the bloodshot eyes of the liquor vender sparkling with rapture, heard him swear his satisfaction, felt his hearty clap on the back, listened to the roar of laughter, and received a pressing invitation to drink gratis at the fountain of death.

A day or two after the bill had thus been referred, it was brought back with a single alteration. The time of the election was changed from June to November, and fixed on the day of the state election,—a mighty improvement, truly! This petty alteration shows the motive of those who made the movement. Business pressed harder, as the adjournment drew near; but on the last evening of the session, the friends of the bill brought it up, and forced it to a vote. It was lost by a vote of 38 against, to 21 for it, 1 member being absent. Thus ends the legislation of 1854, in New Jersey. We hope to discuss the subject more fully hereafter, and we therefore add now only a word or two by way of comment.

The argument on the morality of the rum trade is done, and the traffic now relies wholly upon cunning and rascality for its defence. On the field of debate it is beaten, whipped, utterly cowed out. Liquor sellers look for their salvation to rum bribery at the election: and then to craft and party discipline in the legislature. When Mr Cobb asked that the bill might be referred to him and his fellow committee men, that they might make it “more acceptable to the people if it should pass,” he knew that it would not pass,—that it had been discussed in secret caucusses, and that it had been decided to dodge if possible, and if not, to put it down by direct vote. He got the bill into his own hands, altered it as he chose, and then voted against it. We cannot but regard such conduct as utterly beneath a high minded honorable man, and utterly inconsistent with the character of a legislator bound by oath to act well his part.

Still, the friends of prohibition have reason to rejoice. Last year the vote was 9 to 45: this year 21 to 38. Another year of similar progress, and the streams of blood which this traffic sheds will be stopped in their channels. Let us thank God and take courage. Truth will prevail: and the day of triumph must come. We are now merely beginning the war. We are battling for outraged humanity, for fallen men, for sorrow stricken women, and beggared children. We are planted on a rock of everlasting strength—WE ARE RIGHT. None but a poor spirit will fail because victory is delayed. What nobler part could mortal act, than to stand up for the right, though alone against the world? But we stand not alone. The noblest hearts and the clearest intellects of New Jersey are with us. Ane God is for us. What if the rum trade is defended by low cunning, and unscrupulous falsehoods; could we reasonably expect any thing better from such a source? The trickery which excites our scorn is but the writhing of the serpent to save its head from the crushing blow which it cannot much longer escape. Let us then go into the war with augmented zeal and determination, and the battle shall soon be ours.”

“Truth struck to earth shall rise again.
The eternal years of God are hers,
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies amid his worshippers.”