

THE PRESENT CRISIS.

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

When a deed is done for freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from East to West,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace, shoots the instantaneous throe
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to and fro ;
At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing start,
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath the Future's heart.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side ;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals, shakes the dust against our land ?
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
And albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong.

Careless seems the great Avenger ; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word ;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne.
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great,
Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate ;
But the soul is still oracular ; amid the market's din,
List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave within—
" *They enslave their children's children who make compromise with sin.*"

Then to stand with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just ;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified.
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—They were souls that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelous stone,
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back,
And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand Credo which in prophet hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward ; where to-day the martyr stands ;
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands ;
Far in front the cross stands ready, and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return,
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

They have rights who dare maintain them ; we are traitors to our sires,
Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar fires ;
Shall we make their creed our jailer ; shall we in our haste to slay,
From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps away
To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of to-day ?

New occasion teach new duties ; Time makes ancient good uncouth ;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of truth ;
Lo ! before us gleam her camp fires ! we ourselves must pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

—Selected.

DOES PROHIBITION PROHIBIT ?

Those interested in the liquor traffic, especially the brewers, perpetually insist that prohibition is a failure wherever it has been tried, and that in prohibition States the sale of liquor is as free and unrestrained as where it is legalized.

That they do not believe this is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that they all oppose prohibition. If prohibition does not in the least interfere with the sale of liquor, why should they expend thousands upon thousands of dollars to oppose it wherever proposed? If, as they say, it increases the sale of liquor, which they assert it does in Maine, why do not those who make profit by the sale of liquor become prohibitionists?

The statement that prohibition does not interfere with the sale of liquors, is a falsehood. In Maine liquor is well nigh unknown in many parts of the State, and in every city its sale is curtailed 90 per cent., with the single exception of Bangor, where the people will not enforce the law. We take no heresay evidence on this, we depend upon no testimony but our own ears and eyes. We know this to be so.

Has prohibition done nothing in Maine when in only three places in a city of 40,000 can rum be purchased? Has it done nothing when in only 25 places in such a city it can be had at all, and even then only by the initiated? It has extirpated the traffic in the country, and well nigh stamped it out in the cities. It has taken thirty years to do this much, but if the same result required three times thirty, it would still be a great success. Compare sober Maine with rum-ridden Ohio, or Illinois, and determine whether or not there is anything in prohibition.

In Kansas where the experiment is being tried, the result is still more hopeful. Mr. A. M. Richardson, of Lawrence, in answer to a statement of this kind, asserts that in Topeka, Lawrence, Emporia, Newton, Wichita, and many other large towns where the trade run riot six months ago, there is not now an open saloon. In Atchison forty-five saloon-keepers have been indicted, and saloons closed by the score. In Douglas county thirteen offenders against the law were tried in the District Court and every one convicted. In the Justices' Courts there were five convictions and two disagreements. At the last term of the Court sixteen saloon-keepers pleaded guilty on forty counts, and were fined \$4,200 and costs, and that closed their nefarious business. It didn't pay to continue with the certainty of such punishment.

Of 460 cases tried in District Courts, there were 378 convictions, and of 512 cases in Justices' Courts, there were 378 convictions. Fines to the amount of \$100,000 have been imposed within six months, and eighty-one liquor dealers are properly in prison for violating the most righteous law that was ever enacted, the time aggregating eleven years, five months and nineteen days.

There are in the State over fifty counties in which there is not an open saloon, and only 300 in the remainder. Of these 300, 160 are in the city of Leavenworth, which, like Bangor, in Maine, will not enforce the law.

These facts, which cannot be controverted, prove that the law once established, it can be enforced.

As a matter of course, there are violations of the law even in the most law-abiding countries. All laws are violated. There are laws against felony, forgery, adultery, and all other crimes, yet crimes are being constantly committed. All the same, because of the law, there are no schools in which thieves are being taught the business. Criminals are compelled to do their work secretly, and the penalties attached are such that even the boldest and most skillful thief may well ask himself if an honest life be not the most profitable.

This is the great benefit of Prohibition. In Maine and Kansas the rum shop is not in the way of every boy in the State, to seduce him into its fatal embrace. The old drunkard will drink—no law can prevent that