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judgment here expressed. And we may add, that the evidence adduced by the petitioners utterly failed to prove that temperance is to be promoted, intemperance repressed, or the unlawful sale of intoxicating liquors prevented, by throwing over the traffic in the hands of a few favored licensees, the direct sanction and protection of government. Moreover, it is difficult to understand how the practice of dram-drinking is made less pernicious by making the sale of intoxicating liquors for that purpose lawful. But why should we discuss these questions further which have been so long, and so thoroughly, settled in the minds of the people of this commonwealth; for we quite agree with the Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature of the year 1861, in that part of their report wherein they say: "It may be taken to be the solemnly declared judgment of the people of the commonwealth, that the principle of licensing the traffic in intoxicating drinks, as a beverage, and thus giving legal sanction to that which is regarded in itself an evil, is no longer admissible in morals or in legislation. The license system formerly in operation was the source of insoluble embarrassments among casuists, legislators, courts and juries. A return to it would re-open an agitation long since happily put to rest; it would invade the moral convictions of great numbers of our people; it would revive the opprobrium which public sentiment always adjudges to the monopoly established by law, rendered all the more intense by the offensive nature of the business thus supported by the sanction and protection of the legislature.

And the sound and forcible reasoning of a distinguished writer upon this subject has lost none of its force or value by the lapse of more than thirty years since he declared that, "What ought not to be used as a beverage ought not to be sold as such. What the good of the community requires us to expel, no man has a moral right to supply. That intemperance was dreadfully multiplied by the number of licensed shops for the retailing of spirits, we all know. And not only should the vending of spirits in these impure haunts be discouraged, but the vending of them by respectable men should be discouraged as a great public evil."

Under the lead of such teachers of moral and social duty the great debate which commenced in this State more than fifty years ago, concerning the use and sale of intoxicating liquors, went on, accompanied by the most thorough investigation of facts, until it resulted in the enactment of the law now standing upon our Statute Book. And believing, as we do, that neither public welfare nor private good, neither public rights nor private rights, require or could be promoted by an essential modification of that law at the present time, we respectfully report that the petitioners have leave to withdraw.