

been felt for years, our city wears a less inviting aspect than it might, if our lawns and trees appear less green and cool and refreshing than is their wont, you will please accept it as the testimony of nature, through all her imploring fields, to the value, the indispensableness, of the cold water which you come here to commend to our own parched lips; and we accept the grateful shower which has passed over us to-day—the first which has visited us for weeks—which has come with the convention, if not brought by it—as the harbinger of the richer blessings of which it is the symbol. My friends, I would sacrifice, if necessary, the verdant beauty of every street and every avenue in our city; our shade trees should be divested of their leafy honors, and our lawns and evergreen hedges should be withered and sear, if necessary, could I exhibit to you, as our visitors, the moral beauty of a city free from drinking saloons and drunkard manufactories. This exhibition, alas! we cannot offer you. Beneath these pleasant shades lurks the destroyer, even as of old the serpent glided and hissed among the trees of the garden which the Lord planted in the East. The avenues to perdition are kept wide open among us. These death-dealing establishments are in full and fearful operation among us. And this is our reason why we welcome your presence here.

You will do us, as a community, the justice to believe that by the side of these institutions we have others of an opposite character— asylums for the orphan, associations for the relief of the poor and destitute. The two combined, I regret to say, represent the kind of wisdom prevalent among us in relation to the liquor traffic and the evils which it produces. It is recorded as an incident in the battle of Navarino, that after the allied fleets had silenced the guns of the Turkish ships, had shattered or sunk their whole navy, the victors sent out their boats to pick up a few of the survivors of the destroyed ships who were yet struggling in the waves of death. Thereupon, it is said, some of the Turkish prisoners on board could not refrain from laughing at what seemed to them the ludicrous inconsistency of the proceeding. "Here," said they, "you have been cutting us down by the hundred, blowing us into the water, tearing us to pieces by shot and shell, and now you make a special effort to save alive a few wretches whom you have only half succeeded in killing." This strikes me as a fair illustration of the relation of the community to the vendors of intoxicating drinks. These enemies of God and man are permitted, without molestation, to ensnare, corrupt and destroy the unwary of all classes, including some of our most promising youths, and when the mischief has been done we gather up the wrecks, we organize philanthropic institutions to look after the widow and the orphan, to relieve the suffering, to provide for the victims of this nefarious business, including the poor helpless inebriate himself—thus adding to the precious lives which have been sacrificed, the living taxes for pauperism and ruin, and the subscriptions of the benevolent for those charities. We look to this convention to point out to us a more excellent way. Gentlemen of the convention, what is demanded of us is that in the name of God and humanity we lay the axe at the root of the evil.

The Hon. William E. Dodge, president of the convention responded :

He was sure that he expressed the sentiment of the convention in returning thanks to the citizens of Cleveland for the privilege of visiting this beautiful city. He had thought, what if we had assembled in convention to ask what could be done as a nation to stay the progress of a fearful visitation of cholera, how intensely interested would we be? But we are here to ask what can be done to save our country from a more devastating scourge, one which annually carries off more victims than Asiatic cholera. Who could have predicted, ten years ago, so speedy and complete an overthrow of slavery as we have witnessed? And why may not the same good Providence that has rid us of the traffic in human blood, arouse the churches and people by some equally wonderful interposition, to the frightful evils of the traffic in intoxicating drinks, and cause us to determine its overthrow as suddenly, by a prohibitory law in every State of the Union? I trust that we shall go away from here inspired with the feeling that we will fight, all our lives, courageously, persistently this terrible curse.