

PROHIBITION AND MORAL SUASION.

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Opponents of prohibition say "Persuade the people to abstain, and the drink traffic will cease of itself." During forty-five years the present writer has practised and advocated total abstinence. Others have done so longer; very many more than half the time. But we lament that while we have rescued hundreds, drink-shops have ruined thousands. Moral suasion saves individuals; legislative license curses the nation. Moral suasion has a work superior to legislation, and will always be needed; but it says to legislation "If you cannot help, don't hinder." We ask the law not to tyrannize, but protect; to protect industry against indolence, peaceableness against riot, the State against what disgraces, impoerish and endangers it. We ask that the constitutional principle be carried out—"No taxation without the people's consent"—and therefore that the people, lawfully convened, should be able to control or prohibit a trade which heavily taxes them in the pauperism and crime it produces. Those who suffer the consequences should be able to control the cause.

You cannot make men sober by legislation. Nor can you make men honest, yet you can make robbery more difficult. You cannot make men sober, but you can diminish the allurements to intemperance; or you can incur the curse of the old Prophet: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth the bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also."

We hear sad stories of evictions by owners against their tenants. But evictions are a hundred times more numerous are taking place all the year at our very doors. Shivering women and starving children are ruthlessly expelled from house and home by a tyrant that never relents, and is never satiated, who can plead neither justice nor necessity, and his name is Alcohol. The law harbors, sanctions, stimulates this greatest of law-breakers, and sends him forth equipped from the arsenal law has established, to clutch the rent that might have saved the home; to snatch the loaf from the table, the dress from the back; to maim and trample on the passers-by; to wreck trains and sink ships and fire houses; to kick women and torture children; to crowd the poor house

and the prison; to be a seducer and a murderer; to break human hearts, and to send tens of thousands of precious souls every year to a drunkard's grave. And what is law doing? It rebukes the robbery, but shares the spoil; punishes the agent, but protects the instigator; condemns the crime, but screens the criminal; denounces the wounding, but sharpens the dagger; villifies the victim, but licenses the villain.

Why may not law interfere to protect the people from the injuries of drink? Law erects lighthouses to prevent shipwreck; what should we say if it lighted fires to allure to destruction? Law interferes with the freedom of selling combustibles and poisons; but alcohol is an explosive more destructive than any dynamite, a poison more insidious and deadly than any arsenic. Law enacts sanitary measures, but drink causes more disease and death than open sewers and defective drainage; and according to Mr. Gladstone, is the cause of more injury than pestilence, famine, and war combined.

We are always hearing of wars, actual or expected. Every government is prepared to resist attack. If a country is threatened by invasion, legislation would at once prepare to repel it. The invasion has begun. The enemy is at our doors. Should legislation discourage the defence and aid the foe?

Every nation is apt to boast of its greatness, its extent of territory, its wealth, trade, and armaments. But there is a home-bred traitor undermining the tower of the nation's strength. Milton grandly warned the people of England just before the return of tyranny, ironically termed the "Restoration:" "Instead of laying the blame on any but yourselves, know that to be free is the same thing as to be wise, temperate, just, frugal, and abstinent, and to be the opposite is to be a slave; and it usually happens that those who cannot govern themselves and moderate their passions, crouch under the slavery of their lust, and are delivered over to the sway of those whom they abhor, and are made to submit to an involuntary servitude." A drunken, licentious, ungodly people are ready first for anarchy, then for despotism, then for slavery; they are already enslaved. The slumbering volcano may at any time belch forth a lava stream of destruction. The palladium of our freedom is not our armaments, but our virtue; not our com-