

of that we said we will have good roads. Once you get a good road bed of the right materials, well ditched and bridged, the work is done. It isn't much to keep it in good order after that."

"But," said I, "your buildings, as I came through the town, seem to be well painted and beautifully shaded with trees. Some of the old farming land is growing up into woodland, but otherwise there are plain proofs of prosperity. How is one to account for this when the population is diminishing?" "There are three reasons," he replied. "First and foremost is the Maine Law. There was a time when we could reckon up seventy drunkards and eighty hard drinkers in this town. You wouldn't find many of the houses painted then. The temperance cause came in and had a long conflict. It did great good, but it could not do the whole work. There was still a good deal of drinking and a good deal of intemperance. But when that law was passed it finished rum in this town. It can't be bought now anywhere." "Are there no drunkards, then, in this place?" "Oh! yes, there are two" (naming them). "They go out of town and get a keg of rum, and while that lasts they are drunk most of the time. The law don't undertake to keep a man from getting drunk at home if he buys his rum by the cask. This law has done more for this town than any body knows who hasn't kept the run of things for the last forty years."

"You say *three* things have saved the town; pray, what are the other two?" "The second," he continued, "is the great improvement in all the tools we work with. I am getting to be an old man, but I can do more on my land now in one day than I could forty years ago when I didn't let any man in town go before me. Now I have a mower, a reaper, a horse rake, a tedder, and ploughs and cultivators which we didn't use to have in old times. I cannot only do more work with them, but I can do it easier and better and in the right

time. And the third is, we farmers have begun to learn how to farm it. We have learned that if we are to get anything out of the soil we must put something into it." He then gave me quite an interesting practical lecture on the making of composts and artificial dressings by using muck as an absorbent and mixing in every vegetable refuse that will rot.

I left this conversation of two hours or more, the substance of which I have indicated, with the deep conviction that the intelligent and earnest defenders of the Maine Law are the Maine farmers and not the machine politicians. The older men have, by personal knowledge, and in vivid contrast, the curse of free rum and the blessings of prohibition. I have had many similar conversations with intelligent farmers, not all capable of such clear statements, but holding the same views.

While the State is safe there is in some of our cities confessedly a reaction. Bangor, Bath, Rockland are said to have free rum. It is generally acknowledged that rum is sold in more than two hundred places in Bangor, a city of some seventeen thousand inhabitants. The Republican party govern the city, but the law is openly defied, and is indeed a dead letter. The leaders of the party, the office-holders and office-hoppers, do nothing to execute the law. One can hardly speak in favour of it without losing caste, and incurring odium. On the principle, apparently, that it is worse to shave a man on the Sabbath than to get him drunk and make his home a hell on a week day, a barber has been repeatedly arrested and fined for having his shop open, shaving men on Sunday morning. The atrociousness of the contrast has finally induced the city authorities to rescind the Sunday law on barbers so that shaving may be as free on Sunday as rum on Monday. For the most part the rum-shops out of pious regard for the sacredness of the day, keep only their back doors open on the Sabbath. It does not appear that those doors

are any narrower than the front, and Sabbath evening is often made hideous by drunken orgies.

I only state these sad and disgraceful facts without pretending to explain them. The power, affiliations, skill, and omnipresence of the Whiskey Ring of the United States must not be lost sight of. The rum industry is by far the largest industry of the whole country. Its annual sales at wholesale prices amount to at least six hundred millions, according to custom house returns. When we add the retail advance, and all the surreptitious liquor, can we doubt that the grand total would reach a thousand millions? This gigantesque interest is pledged to the destruction of the Maine Law. It can touch politics in a thousand ways. It can make it for the interest of some men to do nothing. It can persuade some men that they had better do nothing. It can threaten others. It can use every instrument but truth. When a city government, when party leaders and their associates, when leading business men will do nothing to sustain a law, the rum-sellers and the rabble will have it all their own way. The open rum-shops of Bangor are a testimony, a demonstration that the leaders of the Republican party in the city and country are on terms of entire suspension of hostilities with the Whiskey Ring. The rum interest of the United States cannot afford to have that truce broken. They had better spend millions than to have the war renewed. "Peace at any price" is their wisest motto. In the meantime the liquor interest in Bangor is lengthening its cords and strengthening its stakes. I heard a gentleman who is opposed to making any attempt to execute the Liquor Law say that seven thousand Irishmen will rise up to defend the rum-sellers should they be attacked. So far as the friends of law can now see, their only possible course is to form a third party that will hold the balance of power and compel the Republican leaders to change their policy. Notice was given