

ings just as arbitrary and despotic as are to be found in Russia or Austria. We have the conscription by which, in time of war, the Executive may cause all persons of legal age to be assembled, and compel them to take knapsack and gun, and to abandon their families, to fight the battles of their country. Is there anything more arbitrary than that? One man comes up and makes the excuse that he is sick—he is told to go to the regimental Surgeon, and get, if he can, a certificate from him. He says he is earning \$16 a month, and hopes the state will pay him as much—\$7 is the reply. The man must go, for the public good requires it. If all men were good men, then, indeed, we should not want many of these stringent laws; but laws are wanted because many men care neither for God nor their neighbour; and society tells these men it will try to restrain them. In the case of passing counterfeit money, or as in that of highway robbery, the offender's personal liberty is adjudged inconsistent with the general welfare; or in the case of setting a man's house on fire, the offender's life is deemed inconsistent with the general welfare, and the law tells the criminal you shall be hanged by the neck till you are dead. Thus you see *salus populi suprema lex*. But we shall be told, well, what of it? What of it?—why, the inference I draw is, that if we may take away a man's property, family and life, we may surely shut up a grog-shop for the public welfare. Our opponents won't admit this—they think they have got us in the position of a man I saw pictured in a comic almanac. He was a very fat man, in a very little chaise, mounted on very small wheels, and he was drawn by a very large horse—rather he had been drawn, for the horse had broken the thill, had got away from the chaise, and was turning round looking at the man. Under the whole was written, *non sequitur*—it don't follow. But I submit it to you, ladies and gentlemen, whether it does follow or not. I think we are right—I think the grogshop keepers on this continent must cease to be the privileged class which they have been. Every other man was held to answer for his acts committed against the general good, but these people knew full well that they could not sell rum without mischief, and asked how can we continue to do it if we are to be held responsible for our acts. Their business they know is to convert good men into bad, good husbands into wicked ones, good fathers into demons; by the principles of the common law they were responsible. How were they to go on? To this our fathers have unfortunately yielded we will give you authority, and then you may go on in spite of the common law, so that the license laws are at variance with common law. I read in the newspaper, of a German in Chicago, whose wife, passing by a garden wall, was struck by a ball that came over it and killed her. The ball was thrown by some persons who were playing in the garden; the proprietor was not present, nor did he know who threw it; but he was held responsible, and the German recovered \$5000. This was the operation of common law; but alas! how many wives are destroyed—how many children ruined for time and eternity by the sellers of rum, and there is no redress. I am inclined to think they have revived in their favor an old English institution called benefit of clergy, by which if any man were arraigned for crime though it might be murder, he was enabled to escape in this way. A book was put into his hand, and if he could but read the penalties were not enforced against him. I think this despot principle applied for the benefit of rum-sellers, so that supposing any one of them was put on his trial, he may say to the judge, "Please your honour, I am a rum-seller," in which case of course he would be told to go free. I lately read of a man put into the dock who pleaded this benefit of clergy; but when the book was put into his hand, he could not read. However, his counsel raised some quibble by which sentence was postponed, and as the assizes were almost over, he could not be sentenced; and remained in prison till the next term.

Then he came up again, and now sure enough he could read; he had made good use of his time. The judges had never heard of such a case before; but they consulted together, and at last determined to give the man his benefit of clergy, but to punish the jailer who allowed him to learn to read in prison. By quibbling, rum-sellers try to escape, but the time is coming when all will be in vain—they must give up.

We in Maine hold the traffic in intoxicating liquors to be one of the greatest of crimes; but in Canada you authorize and permit it. You may think us fanatics, but what I tell you is precisely what we say, that the selling of liquor is the gravest crime a man can commit, and that before we have done with it, we will place it in the catalogue of the gravest crimes. I wish to impress your minds with the fact that in this we are right, and you wrong. What is a crime? That which the law makes one, whether it be a sin or not, for there are many crimes that are not sins, and many heinous sins which are not crimes; for instance, it was lately a crime in Maine to pass bank bills of less than \$5; but it was so absurd thus to legislate that nobody thought it a crime to pass a bill of lesser amount. Interference with the happiness of the people is crime, and when Legislatures are called on to make new laws, they never think of enquiring whether the offence is against God's law. They merely ask if it is opposed to the happiness of the people. Apply this rule to the traffic in intoxicating drinks, and I will venture to say, that it inflicts more mischiefs than all other evils put together—yes, more evils in a year, than all other evils for a quarter of a century. If this be true—and, alas! who will deny it?—are we fanatics, if we say we will place this act of liquor selling in its proper position in the scale of crime? I think, indeed, we should be, because in reality it has no proper place—no scale of crime is sufficiently low for it. In Maine we have a place called Downsville, where resides General Jack Downing, once, if we take his word for it, the confidant of General Jackson, but now cultivating his farm, and occasionally writing to the *National Intelligencer* at Washington. Once in describing a cool snap down in Maine, he said that the bark of the trees was rent, and the branches broken down, and the inhabitants alarmed by what at first they took for a rolling fire of musketry; but which turned out to be merely the popping of the nails drawn out of their frame houses by the frost. He said moreover that the thermometer was 40° below zero, and that it would have been colder, only the mercury could not get lower. So it is with liquor selling; it is below the point to which the thermometer can fall—it is below murder, or robbery, or all other crimes put together. We may be asked if we expect to educate public opinion to this point? I answer yes; but perhaps I should have said no, if we had not had, in a matter precisely parallel to it, a trade carried on for many years by good and pious men, but which we now, in England, America and France, stigmatize as piracy and punish with death. How was it with Wilberforce and Clarkson, when they denounced the slave trade? Driven by a mob from Liverpool, they were thrust out of Parliament, on the ground that £3,000,000 of British commerce annually was invested in the business. In England there was one Captain of a slave ship, so pious, that his memoirs have come down to us, and are most interesting for that reason. There was a clergyman, too, in New England, who once sent out a barrel of rum to buy a slave boy, who came over accordingly, and learned to read English. One day, passing through the kitchen, he saw the boy crying, and on asking him the reason, was told that he was thinking of his mother. Then, for the first time, his conscience smote him, and he made the only restitution in his power, by giving the boy a first rate education. In the same way I hope to see opinion changing on the sale of liquor. I may be asked, whether we mean to punish rum-sellers