

*James.*—But, father, will the law be as successful as its friends expect?

*Papa.*—My dear boy, the law has already had a fair experiment, and it is so well liked in Maine, that at the last election it was re-affirmed by a very large majority; and as to its success, it is far greater than even its most sanguine friends had ever expected.

*James.*—Yet, papa, are there not very strong objections to it? I think I have heard that it is opposed to constitutional right, by which I suppose is meant, that it is wrong in principle—wrong in itself.

*Papa.*—O, to be sure, the law is held to be wrong by some people, chiefly by the classes I have before alluded to, and I dare say there are some very honest people who think that it infringes man's natural liberty; but I think I can suggest a few considerations to your mind, which will remove all doubt as to the perfect rectitude of the principle of this famous statute.

*James.*—I will be much obliged to you, and I promise to give your reasons very serious attention.

*Papa.*—I suppose you have read the United States Declaration of Independence, and you will have observed that it sets out with the maxim, that all men being born equal, have a natural and indefeasible right to their individual liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness in the way they may deem best; providing, of course, that in the exercise of these rights they do not encroach upon the liberties or rights of others; a declaration which—*en passant*—is, unfortunately, in sad and awkward contrast with the institution of slavery still upheld by law in the Southern States; but that is not our business at present. Now, the opponents of the Maine Law assert that it infringes these natural

rights, and on their own grounds it is therefore only necessary to prove, that the practices which this law prohibits are subversive of the rights of the community generally, in order that its principle shall be sustained. To prove that the liquor traffic occasions drunkenness—that drunkenness occasions crime, indigence, pauperism, and all species of public immorality, is quite unnecessary—this has long been admitted;—to prove that the prevalence of all this vice and immorality weighs down the energies of the community, and entails heavy burdens upon the sober and industrious, need only be mentioned to secure assent; and thus by two steps we arrive at the incontrovertible conclusion, that the rum traffic is a gross violation of the rights of men, and the Maine Law stands vindicated. But one or two more remarks will not be amiss; and I wish you to bear in mind, that the principle of the Maine Law is nothing different from that of all other good laws. LAW is in its very nature a limitation to the intentions of unscrupulous men, who would pursue their ends regardless of the injury they might inflict upon individuals or society at large. So the laws which prohibit gambling, forgery, counterfeiting money, smuggling, theft, arson, &c., and those which restrain gross immorality of other kinds; so the laws which prevent the sale of unwholesome food; so those which restrain the establishment in cities of manufactories whence an effluvia detrimental to health might proceed; so the sanitary regulations which during the presence of an epidemic are enacted and rigidly enforced, suppressing the sale of some kinds of meats and vegetables which are supposed to contribute to the spread of the disease. From this enumeration you will perceive that even honest occupations are