

country, all our city governments forbade the sale of certain articles of food which were always found in our markets in ordinary conditions of public health. These municipal regulations said not a word about the personal habits of the people as to food, but they forbade the sale of such articles as were deemed inconsistent with public health. In connection with this question of prohibiting the liquor traffic, a great deal is said in this country about personal liberty, and it is urged by able men, and even by lawyers, that the suppression of the traffic would be an arbitrary exercise of despotic power; and it is insisted that it would be a violent interference with a great trade, involving a vast capital and employing a great many men and affording means of sustenance to a great many people. The prohibition of the liquor traffic involves no principles of law and no exercise of power that is found in many, if not all our statutes. It is the duty, as it is the undoubted right, of government to require to be done whatever is necessary to the common good, and to forbid whatever is believed to be inconsistent. This objection to prohibition on the ground that it is inconsistent with personal liberty is never heard in my country among intelligent men. While we value personal, civil and religious liberty as highly as any other people, we understand that there is really no such thing as a personal liberty that is inconsistent with general good. 'The welfare, the safety of the people, is the supreme law.' That is a principle of law as thoroughly established in this country as it is in mine, and no person can claim any liberty whatever that is inconsistent with it. No one can do anything or have anything or be anything that is inconsistent with the general good. That is the 'supreme law.' There is no principle of law more firmly established than that. In every day life there are many illustrations of that principle carried out to the extremest limit. Taxes are inexorably required of us; our property is confiscated in that way to any extent that the authorities may choose to require. A man is brought up before the court, the case is heard, the verdict rendered; a forced contribution (fine) is levied, and after the hearing he is sent to jail for months, or for years, or for life, as the case may be. There is no plea put in for him that his personal rights are touched upon. He is sent to jail because his personal liberty is inconsistent with the general good, and only for that reason. Another is before the court; the verdict is rendered; the judge says the sheriff, hang this man, his life is inconsistent with the general good. *Salus populi suprema lex.*"

Prohibition of any trade is an extreme measure and cannot be justly resorted to except the public good requires it. Some trades are useful, but dangerous; others are useful, but liable to abuse. These are regulated and restrained by license, by which it is sharply prescribed how they shall be conducted. The manufacture and sale and keeping for sale of gunpowder is one of the former; the keeping and driving carriages and carts for hire is one of the latter, and slaughter-houses are another. The manufacture and sale of obscene books and prints is inconsistent with the general good; it is not regulated and restrained by license, it is forbidden. Lotteries are forbidden. Gambling houses and houses of ill-fame are forbidden. Many other things, not harmful in themselves are forbidden under certain circumstances. A man may not drive his strong, fast horse through the streets of a city. Nor may any one set fire to his chimney and burn it out in a city; in the country he may do it. In order to determine, then, whether prohibition of the liquor traffic may be resorted to justly, it is only necessary to ascertain whether it is or is not consistent with the general good.

John Wesley said: "Liquor sellers are poisoners general; they drive the people to hell like sheep; their gain is the blood of the people." Earl Chesterfield, in 1727, said, in the House of Lords, in his speech on the gin bill: "Vice, my lords, is not to be licensed, but forbidden. Instead of encouraging the sale of these liquors, which degrade and brutify the people, we ought to burst the phials which contain them, and repress the dealers in them,—those artists in human slaughter." Mr. Senator Lot M. Morrill, said, on the floor of the United States Senate: "The liquor traffic is the gigantic crime of crimes. It inflicts upon society more evils than come from any other crime; more evils than comes from all other crimes. No one, so far as I know, has ever denied that all this is true. Is there any compensating good coming from it to the State or the people that should restrain us from resorting to prohibition?"

A leading New York paper stated the case sharply and tersely when it said:

"Directly or indirectly this country spends in the liquor traffic, every

year, a sum exceeding half the national debt. The cost of that traffic to the country, direct and indirect, is greater than the profits of all its capital not invested in real estate. It costs every year more than our whole civil service, our army, our navy, our Congress, including the river and harbor and pension bills, our wasteful local governments, and all National, State, county and local debts, besides all the schools in the country. In fact, this nation pays more for liquor than for every function of every kind of government."

How is a question of that magnitude to be lightly put aside? There is certainly spent for drink annually more than eight hundred millions of dollars, and the entire sum raised by taxes of all kinds—National, State, county, town, and school district—is stated, on the authority of the Census Bureau, to be not more than about seven hundred million dollars.

The journal continues:

"But the cost of the liquor drunk is not by any means the whole cost of the liquor traffic. An official report, prepared with much labor by the Bureau of Statistics of Massachusetts, under authority from the Legislature, states that eighty-four per cent. of all the crime and criminal expenses in that State comes directly through the liquor traffic. There are at least one in twenty of the able bodied men of this country who are rendered idle by their habits and incapacitated for work, and these persons, at the ordinary wages of workmen, would earn, if industrious and fairly employed, over two hundred millions of dollars annually. The proportion of persons in hospitals, who reach them because of excessive drink, is very large, but cannot be definitely ascertained. A traffic that costs in actual payment and in loss of productive labor more than half the national debt every year is not to be ignored by the economist. It may be assumed that the entire wealth of the country has risen from \$30,000,000,000, in 1870, to \$50,000,000,000 in 1880, about one-half being in real estate. Probably it does not average profits exceeding four per cent. year., taking bad investments with good; but, at that rate, the yearly interest on all personal property of all kinds is only \$1,000,000,000, and the direct and indirect cost of the liquor traffic must be greater. * * * The time has gone by in this country when a serious discussion of a question that involves such a vast expense to the country can be prevented by bullying, intolerance, insolence, or ridicule. * * * It is certain that the entire savings of the people and all additions to their wealth are not twice as much as the sum expended for liquor and because of the abuse of liquor."

The liquor traffic earns nothing; it creates no value, it adds not a dollar to the national wealth, nor in any way to the welfare and prosperity of the country. The money obtained by the trade is not earned as honest industries earn money—by giving a valuable return for it. It obtains money from those who earn it by their labor, giving in return for it what is only of no value, but far worse than that—something that leads to poverty, pauperism, wretchedness and crime, which disinclines men to honest industry, and finally unfits them for it. This traffic, like war, wastes the products of industry and kills the worker, or so mutilates and maims him that he is unfitted for work; and then he and his family and dependents are pensioned upon the honest industry of the country. It is like a conflagration; it destroys, leaving only the blackened ruins of all which it attacks. It is like pestilence, ravaging any community where it is tolerated; cutting down the brightest, bravest and best. It destroys more than sixty thousand of our people every year, cutting short their lives upon an average, more than ten years each. It makes wretched, beyond power of expression, more than five hundred thousand homes, which, but for it, would be peaceful, prosperous and happy. It threatens the existence of our institutions, which cannot live except among an educated and refined people, because more than all other influences for evil it reduces men to ignorance, brutality and savagery.

Have I overstated or in any way misstated? Is such a trade to be established and protected by law, or shall it be forbidden, and by sufficient pains and penalties suppressed as inconsistent with the general good.—*Neal Dow in the North American Review.*

ARE THE CHARGES TRUE?

Why don't the liquor traffic come out and tell us of some of its virtues? It is wonderfully sensitive about the personal liberty of the drinker and all