

acquired such a tyranny, that in the presence of liquor, or even where there is a probability of obtaining it, they lose all control of their appetites, and many voluntarily seek protection therefrom, even within the walls of an asylum or a prison.

We are met at the outset with a remonstrance against the injury that would be done to the vested rights of the trade by legal prohibition. It is true that vast sums are invested in this business. The great brewers and distillers have grown enormously rich by the manufacture, and have entrenched themselves in the strength which the influence of great riches gives. But is their private interest to stand in the way of the welfare of the nation? By long immunity the traffic has grown to enormous magnitude and increased the difficulty of its suppression. But its very magnitude has also increased the necessity for that step, and if the problem be earnestly grappled with it may be solved. It were better and cheaper a thousand-fold to buy out the entire liquor interest, and thus deliver the land from this curse and crime, rather than let it groan beneath its burden for years to come. Doubtless, the diversion of so much capital to other and more useful industries would cause temporary confusion, as did the repeal of the corn-laws, the disendowment of the Irish Church, and other sweeping reforms, but it would also be attended with great and permanent benefit that would far outweigh any transient disadvantage.

We are met, at every attempt to suppress the traffic, by an outcry against the *unconstitutionality* of legal prohibition. We are told that it is an invasion of the liberty of the subject—of his sacred rights as a free-born Briton. But no man has the right to injure his neighbour, either with or without his consent; and whoever engages as a principal or accessory in the liquor traffic is guilty of an offence against society, and especially of a grievous wrong against the victims of that traffic. The fact that no one has the natural right to sell this death-dealing poison is implied in the Government license system, which arbitrarily confers the legal privilege—the moral right it cannot give—on a certain limited number for a certain sum of money,