

It now remains for us to notice more particularly than we have heretofore done, though briefly, the two principal grounds on which the petitioners base their prayer for a license law:—

First—They claim that alcoholic beverages are a good, and not an evil—that they are food, or act as a substitute for food; that when taken in moderation, they sustain and nourish instead of impairing and destroying the animal economy. This, as one of the many debated and debatable questions of science and medicine, we do not propose here to discuss, but shall merely submit the latest, and we believe, the most reliable conclusions of science upon this subject, as expressed by the most eminent chemists and physicians.

1. That alcohol is not food; being simply a stimulant of the nervous system its use is hurtful to the body of a healthy man.
2. That if its use be of service, it is so only to man in an abnormal condition.
3. That ordinary social indulgence in alcoholic drinks, for society's sake, is medically speaking, a very unphysiological and prejudicial proceeding.
4. That this use of fermented and distilled liquors is often noxious; it should always be restrained; it should never be tolerated except in exceptional cases.

It is not denied that conclusions differing from the foregoing have been announced by other eminent scientific and medical authorities. But, suppose we should admit, which, however, we are not prepared to do, that these conflicting authorities in science and medicine as to the dietetic value and character of alcoholic beverages are so equally balanced, that we are unable to determine on which side the truth lies, we are then thrown back upon the common, and safer, and more reliable sources of information to guide us in the discharge of our practical duties as legislators. And here we find the evidence overwhelming, and all leading inevitably to the same conclusions, so that if the dietetic value of these liquors were much greater than it is claimed to be. Still in view of the "appalling statistics of intemperance," it would be the duty of the Government to interfere and prohibit a traffic, which, unless all history is false, results invariably in consequences so disastrous to the peace, order, morals, health, and highest prosperity of society.

*Second.*—Another ground on which it is claimed, the prayer of the petitioners should be granted is, that a license law would regulate and diminish the sale and use of alcoholic liquors. And this view of the subject is urged with so much earnestness and zeal, the Legislature might perhaps be induced to try the experiment if it had not been tried a thousand times and for hundreds of years before, and invariably failed to accomplish the promised results.

License laws to regulate the traffic in intoxicating liquors were in force in the Province and Commonwealth of Massachusetts for more than two hundred years after the first settlement. And yet the history of that long period shows that the evil of