

warned from that of hell, and whose unblushing forehead we now shrink to see, as she prowls through the streets for her prey. Give me back the life of this youth who died the drunkard's death—and dread his doom—and who now, while his mother by the body rocks on her chair in speechless agony, lies laid out in a chamber where we dare not speak of comfort, but are left to weep with those that weep, "dumb, opening not the mouth." Relieve us of the fears that lie heavy on our hearts, for the character and the souls of some who hold parley with the devil by the forbidden tree, and are floating on the edge of that great Gulf Stream which sweeps its victims onwards to moat most woeful ruin.

Or this in a different vein:—

"We have gone down on a Sabbath-day to do duty in some of the wretched localities of the old town, when we could hardly hear our own voice for the uproar in the neighbouring apartment. We stopped on one occasion in the middle of a baptismal service, to ask the parent to lay down his child, and follow us to prevent murder in the next room, where the screams of women, the sound of blows, and of men struggling on the floor, and terrific cries of murder, were awful noises to one accustomed to calm and quiet Sabbaths. We have pulled the whiskey-bottle from below the pillow of a dying mother, where it lay concealed, while the Bible was ostentatiously displayed above. We have gone to pray with a dying woman, and found her, within an hour of eternity, mad with drink; and we shall never forget the horror with which, although accustomed to see death in all shapes, we gazed on that terrible and revolting scene—drunken woman round the bed, and a woman drunk and dying on it, who raised herself up on her wretched pallet to spend the last remains of life in damning us to our fate."

Although the apathy alluded to in the following passage may in part be accounted for from a sense of helplessness, the fact of its existence has always struck us as strange, compared with the fervor and efforts often expended on objects where the difficulties are as great and the evils less:—

"When we consider how few there are who have not some friend, or dear and near relative, who has cost them many an anxious thought—it may be many a bitter tear—and, if Christians, many a long, and earnest, and agonized prayer to God, this apathy appears most wonderful. There are few families who have not felt this more or less deeply. We congratulate the reader if his own be an exception. But that many hearts are bleeding in secret—that many parents go mourning to their graves—that many brothers are weeping over a sister's sin—that many sisters are praying over a brother's depravity—that many wives are soaking their lonely pillow with tears—that many mothers are keeping their sud watch at night, to let in a son whose shame they would hide from others—is known to God, and to some of us intrusted with the sorrows of domestic trials. The angel of death has spread his wings over this land, and the plague is in many a house of which the public dream not. Now, we have not found—what we certainly might have expected in such circumstances—a strong horror and hatred of the cause which has been the ruin of those we love. One would think that a pious and affectionate parent would almost hate the very sight of what had proved the bane of his happiness, and the grave of his dearest affections. . . . In sympathy with that feeling, we have seen a mother turn with loathing from the sea. Her cottage stood on its shore. In the magnificent expanse of ocean, now gleaming in the sunshine, or foaming in the storm—this, the grandest of God's works, in vain appealed to her taste, and more than that (for she was a devout Christian,) to her devotion. She had an only son; and, as she stood one day at her cottage door, she watched him in his boat upon the deep. By some mismanagement it was upset. She saw her boy in the water—she saw him struggling for life—ah! she saw him go down before her eyes—and for many a year she loathed the sight of that beautiful ocean;—down in its depths her hopes lay buried; it had snatched her boy from her arms, and left her heart and her home a desolation. And when we have seen those who had a far more bitter loss to lament, in the ruin wrought by this vice on those they love, show, in their own practice, and the free use of these stimulants, no sign either of fear, or sorrow, or aversion, we have sat astonished at their apathy, and wondered why they sympathized so little with the feelings of that mother, as we remember her at her cottage door, and while her lip trembled and the tears started in her eye, pointing us to the very spot which had changed sea, and earth, and home, and all to her."

So far all must go along with Dr. Guthrie, and further still— as where he argues that no considerations of revenue or of private interest should be suffered to stand as barriers against the removal of this evil. To one of his remedies also—"that the drunkard should be dealt with as a man who commits a great crime against society"—we accede as just in principle, though it might be perplexing and inefficient in operation. But when he comes to his other and chief remedy, we have nothing to offer but dissent and difficulties. Here it is—the reader has often seen it before:—

"We believe that dram and drinking shops carry on a trade which is essentially vicious, and, therefore, that the law should step forward, not to open, but shut them—not to license, but to put them down;—granting a license to no house for drink to be consumed on the premises, save to such a number of inns and hotels as are required for the accommodation of travellers and strangers. This furnishes a clear principle. It is a grand thing to get hold of a principle, and when we have got it, it is a grander thing to go through with it."

What is the "principle" of which Dr. Guthrie has here "got hold?" It is not that drinking should be legally a crime—for "strangers" are still to drink in inns, and residents in private houses. It is merely that persons shall not be permitted to drink in "licensed" houses—i. e., in houses distinguished from other houses by paying a tax to Government, and being under surveillance of the police.

The root of the mistake, as we presume to consider it, here made by Dr. Guthrie and others, is in a delusion as to what "licensing" virtually is. They speak of it as a facility and encouragement offered by the State to the sale of spirits; whereas it is a burden and discouragement. The law does not "step forward to license" the butcher and baker, and yet the spirit-dealer would be glad to be in their place. He is dealt with more hardly than other traders, because the State thinks that his trade is one that can be righteously taxed, and that requires limitation and supervision. Founding not merely on reasoning, but on the history of varied, and repeated, and recent experiments, our position is, that this principle, which is restriction—"licensing"—being a mere technicality—has been carried as far as it wholesomely can. Dr. Guthrie's position is that "we should go through with the principle"—that is, that the law should prohibit.

Now, waving all other questions, we must say it is not fair either to the public or to the cause, to keep out of sight the fact that this policy of prohibition has been tried on a large scale, as well as often on a small—always with utter failure and immense mischief. For about seven years (1736-43), there were only two licensed spirit-retailers in all England—and yet the consumption of spirits within that period greatly increased, accompanied with evils and disorders unknown before. After a seven years' trial, conducted with so much rigour, that 75 persons punished under the law, died in the jails of London alone; the Legislature repealed the act, acknowledging that nothing had been accomplished but mischief. To forget this and similar facts in our history—to go on speaking and printing as if the prohibition policy had never been tried or never failed—is something like a mockery of the public, and a mischief to a good cause.

Another fallacy in present favor is to talk, when convenient, for the purpose of the moment, of the use of drink, and not merely the abuse, as a vice. I will be seen, from Dr. Guthrie's "remedy," which permits "strangers" to get drunk in inns, and everybody in their own houses, that this is not always the ground taken; but that the ground is sometimes taken and sometimes shifted, only shows the loose mode in which the well-meaning agitators proceed. It is easy to see reasons of convenience in this inconsistency. If the ground of drinking being in itself a crime, is taken, then the way is well cleared for the trial of absolutely repressive measures—but the Association would require to commence by bringing in as guilty mine in every ten of its own members. If the crime is to be held as consisting only in the abuse or excess, then this and similar difficulties are got over; but many of the most favorite arguments of Dr. Guthrie and others, dissolve away. For instance, he unhappily asks (p. 16)—"Are not houses of abandoned character declared illegal?" Yes, but by reason and religion, that vice is always and every where a vice, with no distinction (as Dr. Guthrie makes in the case of drinking) of extent, person, or place. And, to complete the unhappiness of Dr. Guthrie's allusion, he forgets what an entire dead-letter—how universally and glaringly disregarded—is the prohibition he introduces as an argument and encouragement. All this blundering