

some years ago by Capt. Brenton, when giving his evidence before the Committee on Drunkenness, that "spirits are more dangerous than gunpowder!" From what quarter may we not summon witnesses? Are they military or naval officers? They assure us that, in almost every instance, the disorderly conduct which renders punishment necessary is traceable to the use of intoxicating liquors? Are they merchants, or manufacturers, or builders of palaces or railroads?—They tell us of losses continually sustained by the unsteadiness, negligence, and insubordination of drunken clerks and workmen.—Are they physicians? They describe horrifying cases of delirium tremens, and show us how the cholera, as it passes along from town to town, always sweeps off the drunkards. Are they lawyers? They point to the strong boxes on their shelves, containing title-deeds which once belonged to sober men, and now belong to those whose fire-water maddened them on to ruin. Are they clergymen? They refer to death-beds of anguish and horror inexpressible, and the bitter wailings of penniless widows and orphans—made penniless by the intemperance of their natural protectors. Are they judges? Every charge complains of the increase of crime. Are they juries? Their presentments, year after year, give the same unvarying testimony. Are they officers of police, jailors, governors of lunatic asylums and penitentiaries? They bear witness, as with one voice, that three-fourths of the crime committed in every country, and three-fourths of the pauperism, and consequently of the expenditure incurred by society to punish the one and sustain the other, must be laid to the charge of the bottle and the glass. You build prisons—and intemperance fills them. You establish poorhouses—and they are occupied by the families of inebriates. You erect lunatic asylums—and one-half of their inmates have been prepared for those melancholy abodes by the use of strong drink. What is worse, you license men to sell the brandy, the whiskey, and the rum, and thus secure a continual succession of inhabitants for the prisons, the poor-houses, and the lunatic asylums.

Crime has been mentioned. The worst of all crimes—those springing from the fiercest passions of human nature—and perpetrated

in the most horrible manner, are the fruits of intoxication. Is it an atrocious highway robbery? or the murder of a father by his son—of a son by his father—of a husband or a wife? A thousand to one but alcohol is the exciting cause. It is estimated that in the United States one murder at least is committed every day under the influence of intoxicating drinks.

Government, as the organ of society, cares for the health, the property, the life of every member of the community, and plans and strives to build up a prosperous people. But strong drink is the great obstruction. It stands in the way of all patriotism. It thwarts the best intentions, blasts the brightest hopes, mocks and balks the wisest efforts, and spreads desolation all around. I do not wonder that a German author, writing recently on this subject, has given to his work this title—"*Alcohol is Satan's blood.*" I do not wonder at the expression used by the Swedish peasantry, who, as they go from distillery to distillery, putting out the fires and stopping the work, say to the owners—"You shall make no more *hell-broth.*" "A touching incident," says a Swedish clergyman, in a letter written about four months ago, "has taken place in my neighbourhood. Some poor country people have determined to go on foot to the King (360 miles.) 'We must beg him,' they say, 'to take away the brandy; we are most of us lost drunkards, and when the rich proprietors and farmers force upon us brandy, as payment for our labour, then we have not strength to withstand the temptation.' This thought has occurred to the poor men themselves. Their words seem to me inexpressibly affecting. It is an awakened conscience which cries out loud during the intervals between the fits of intoxication. It begs for mercy and deliverance from the evil. I could weep to hear them."

Let me now proceed to observe, that legislative enactments for the regulation and control of the sale of intoxicating liquors have proved an entire failure.

Before entering on this part of the discussion, I will briefly advert to the Temperance reform. The agitation commenced about twenty-nine years ago, and quickly spread through the United States—thence to Great Britain and her Colonies—and afterwards