

The following is taken from "The Present Needs of a Temperance Reform," by Jesse H. Griffen. We select the portion on "License," which is not dwelt upon in the other articles in this paper. The writer says :

License laws are not necessarily restrictive. Hack drivers, expressmen, vendors of vegetables, etc., are licensed, not that less accommodation should be given for the transportation of passengers or merchandise, or that fewer vegetables should be sold, but for the protection of their business. But I will be told that licenses to sell liquors are not like these, and are only granted to a certain class of individuals. True ; and if there was no other objection to our liquor license system, this one feature should condemn it with every American citizen. The creation of a privileged class—as is contemplated in any such license system—by selling to a few the privilege of indulging in acts which others are prohibited from doing began with monarchies, belongs to monarchies, and is antagonistic to every fundamental principle of Republican government. But some may claim that "high license" is restrictive ; but what does experience teach ? It generally at first reduces the number of places where liquors are sold, but in no case has it permanently reduced the quantity of liquor sold nor the evils of intemperance. After the high license system had been in operation in Nebraska more than a year the President of the Brewer's Association in that State said, although they opposed the enactment of the law, they now found that as much beer had been sold, and as it gave them more responsible customers, there had been less trouble in making collections, and it had been a benefit to their trade. The Nebraska *Methodist*—a paper that advocated the adoption of the law—after a year and a half of trial, said : "A \$500 or a \$1,000 license has no more effect upon intemperance in Nebraska than a tax on brimstone would have on the condition of lost souls."

If a "high license" system should be adopted for the city of New York that would close up one-third of the ten or fifteen places frequently to be found on a single block where liquors are sold (or, for instance, the Sixth Ward of the city of Philadelphia, where there is a saloon for each seven voters), we would at once hear the claim that "high license" had done wondrous things for temperance. But can any sane person seriously believe that it would reduce the quantity of liquor sold ? Experience in other places teaches that it would only close the places where the least was sold and the least harm done, and give the others more patronage.

But some tell us "high license" would close up the lowest drinking saloons and "make the business more respectable." (?) Would this be any better if it did ? Nay, it would be worse. Whatever gives to any vice an appearance of respectability only makes it so much more alluring and dangerous.

My eyes are pained whenever I pass the low, vile dens, where whiskey passes over the filthy counter and sanded floor ; yet these places give me but little concern in comparison with the gilded saloons, where the poisonous draught is served in fancy goblets over the marble slab ; where Satan lurks in games of chance, or cards, or dice ; or, with melodious sounds, to drown the "still small voice" of the monitor within, and lead the mind from virtue's paths away ; seeking for their victims those who would soar far above the temptations of the low grogery. If there is any class of dramshops which we can afford to tolerate, or for which there is any justification, it is the dirtiest of them all ; for if there is any argument that justifies the toleration of a single dramshop anywhere, it is that we have among us a class of persons who, through the indulgence—and with the sanction—of the State, have destroyed their manhood, and cultivated such a depraved appetite, that to now deprive them of all opportunity to