

suffrage. But this very aggressiveness and arrogance will operate in the case of the liquor traffic as they did in the case of slavery.

Affairs may become worse before they are better; but they will become better through growing worse.

The moral enormity of slavery was the chief subsidiary cause of its overthrow. The moral enormity of the liquor traffic will sustain the conscience of the nation in making an end of the political power of the whiskey rings. As it is possible that the moral argument against slavery might not alone have secured its abolition, so the moral argument against the liquor traffic might not be enough to arouse the people to the enactment of Constitutional Prohibition as a National measure. But slavery was overthrown because it poisoned the leading political parties and attempted to control the National Government. The abolition of slavery became, and so may the abolition of the liquor traffic become, not only a moral, but a political, and, at last, a military necessity.

The dram-shop oligarchy in the United States now consists of some 200,000 brewers, distillers and dealers, united by common interest and a formal organization, and commanding a capital estimated at \$1,200,000,000. The seat of its power is in the sediment of civilization. The enormous profits of the liquor traffic may make it as desperate as slavery was in defending its alleged rights. The drink bill of the United States is now not far from \$1,000,000,000 every year. This is more than the nation expends for meat or bread or public education, or for all three of these together. The dram-shop oligarchy is already as powerful, if not as audacious, as the slaveholding oligarchy was.

The attempt of the liquor traffic to secure a national constitutional amendment, for ever prohibiting National Prohibition, will undoubtedly prove a suicidal policy. If, in some closely-contested National election, the liquor traffic should foster riots, or be so insane as to take up arms in defence of its alleged rights, as slavery did, its destruction would be incredibly hastened. It is not impossible that some closely-contested election, municipal riot and the disturbance of State legislation may ultimately bring about, as they have already come near to doing in Maine, Cincinnati and Chicago, a collision between the corrupt elements controlled by the whiskey rings on the one hand, and the masses of respectable citizens, as represented by the authority of law, and by the army on the other. It may be that the power of the whiskey rings in the great cities will be broken in some street barricade war.

III. The hammer which breaks the lawless power of the liquor traffic will have insufficient force unless wielded by the National arm. To confine the sphere of political prohibition to the States is to forget that, in regard to importation, inter-State commerce, and law for