

land. Its leading features were propounded to the British Parliament as far back as 1834 by an intelligent and influential Parliamentary Committee. In his evidence before that Committee, Mr. Wakely, M.P. for Finsbury, and Coroner of Middlesex (who, prior to being appointed to the latter office, was a determined enemy of total abstinence) suggests a Prohibitory Law. "I have lately (he says) seen so much of the evil effects of gin drinking that I am inclined to become a teetotaler. Gin may be thought the best friend I have. It causes me to hold annually a thousand more inquests than I should otherwise hold. But, besides this, I have reason to believe that from 10,000 to 15,000 persons in this Metropolis die annually from the effects of gin-drinking, upon whom no inquests are held. Since I have been Coroner, I have seen as many murders by drowning, by hanging, by cutting the throat, in consequence of drinking ardent spirits, that *I am astonished the Legislature does not interfere*. I am confident that they will, before long, be obliged to interfere. The gin seller should be made as responsible as the chemist or druggist."

II. "But this law is *unconstitutional*." What principle of our noble constitution does it violate? It is confessedly more difficult to carry out a measure of this kind in the neighbouring Republic than with us. There are difficulties arising from their complex political system which we know nothing of. But even there, is the plea of unconstitutionality considered valid? I appeal to the highest judicial authority. When the Maine Law was framed, the then Chief Justice said: "If any State deems the retail and internal traffic in ardent spirits injurious to its citizens, and calculated to produce idleness, vice or debauchery, I see nothing in the constitution of the United States to prevent it from regulating or restraining the traffic or from *prohibiting it altogether*, if it thinks proper."

III. "Certainly this law is a most tyrannical one—it interferes with private property, it invades personal liberty—it is perfectly intolerable that I am not to be allowed to drink what I choose and that policemen should enter my house to destroy my goods. This is a free country." Friend what is all this tirade about? No one wants to touch what you have honestly got. This law never dreams of forcing an entrance into your house and wresting from you any article of furniture or food. You may drink as much as you have a mind to. You may injure yourself and beggar your family as much as you like, but you must not injure others. You have no right to act the horse leech to your neighbour, to seize on his person and property. Keep within your own private circle and the law will not harm you. It is a fine thing however to hear men speak of liberty being such a precious jewel to themselves, who are busy depriving others of it, making them the slaves of one of the basest of vices revetting chains about them, the iron of which enters into their very soul. This is surely "using liberty for a cloak of maliciousness." One feels disposed to cry out with Madame Roland, the illustrious Girondist, "Oh Liberty! what crimes have been perpetrated in thy name!"

Liberty, like property, has its *duties* as well as its *rights*. It must not degenerate into licentiousness. France did not appreciate this distinction during her first Revolution. You know the consequences. No man has a right to live entirely as he pleases irrespective altogether of the interests of his fellows. As members of Society we are imperatively required to *consult* for its welfare, and to avoid whatsoever would prove injurious. This principle lies at the very basis of the social compact. "No one liveth to himself." You would not approve of indecent pictures being exhibited and grossly immoral publications being circulated. You think it perfectly proper the law should interpose to prevent such a trade. You do not object to legislative interference in regard to brothels, and lotteries and gambling establishments. You think it right to pass a bill forbidding cemeteries and slaughter houses in the center of densely populated districts. You would never dream of preventing the strong hand of the law from seizing on the dies of the