

Few, if any, moral or social opinions, in the history of reform, have made more rapid progress than that of the constitutionality of the legal prohibition of the liquor traffic. This is especially shown by the division list on the Permissive Bill of May 12th, 1869, as compared with that of 1864. On the former occasion, the ayes were only 40, while the nays were 297, leaving a majority against the Bill of 257. On the last division, the ayes were 94; the nays 200, leaving a majority against the Bill of only 106; being a diminution of the hostile majority of 151. The votes by the members for Ireland and Wales in favour of the Bill were thirty-two, against it only twenty-two; being a majority of ten in favour of the measure.

In 1867, there were 3,337 petitions in favour of the Bill; in 1868, 4,000; in 1869, 6,413, with 859,915 signatures, and only two petitions, with 5,595 signatures, against it. This righteous demand of the nation for protection against the greatest curse which blasts the community shall continue to wax louder and louder, till any Government that will refuse this just request shall be swept from office by a whirlwind of the people's wrath.

The beneficent results that have accrued from even partial and transient restrictions of the liquor traffic give a hopeful augury of the very great benefit which would result from its entire suppression.

Dr. Lees, in his argument for prohibition, enumerates many of these examples. During a temporary stoppage of distillation in 1812-13, crime decreased one-sixth. In consequence of Father Mathew's success in Ireland, crime was reduced to the extent of one-third, as compared with preceding years, and one-half as compared with succeeding years. In the city of Dublin, the number of prisoners, in 1840, was reduced from 136 to 23, or five-sixths. Over one hundred cells were empty, and one prison was shut up. In five years, 1835-39, during which there were 59,770,892 gallons of spirits consumed, there were 64,520 cases of serious crime and 59 executions for murder.