

prohibition will answer, that they refuse to join in any effort, either to procure such a law or to have it effectually carried out if enacted. It is not easy to see satisfactory reasons for such a course. The old proverb says that half a loaf is better than no bread, and the usual rule of wise men is, if they cannot get what they think the best, then to try for the next best. And, besides, if a carefully-drawn license law, framed according to the views of those who, while they disbelieve in prohibition, are still anxious to limit the sale as far as possible, should prove to be inadequate to the necessities of the case, this would furnish a reasonable ground of argument for Prohibitionists. And, until this plan is fairly tried, the Prohibitionists have no right to insist that it would fail to answer the purpose. Yet this is what is constantly asserted. Frequently I have heard the pleasant figure used, "The only way to clip the wings of the fowl is to cut them off close behind the ears." But this is assertion and pleasantry, not argument. And when we are asked to violate the fundamental principles of liberty as they are acknowledged by all writers on government, I submit that the necessity for such a departure from the ordinary rules of procedure must be shown with the utmost clearness and certainty. A dissertation upon the evils of intemperance, however eloquent, will not answer in this case.

8. The extravagance of many advocates of Prohibition does much to weaken the confidence of men in their course. They go so far as to charge all the sins and sorrows that result from drunkenness upon the persons who refuse to join hands with them in seeking to stay the evil by prohibitory laws. And this has been done, not merely by crack-brained exhorters or occasional newspaper cranks, but by the deliberate action of men assembled in a State Convention. Such action is alike foolish and wicked. Its only tendency is to alienate the men whose favor and help it is desirable to gain. There are numbers of persons whose words and acts, and the whole course of whose lives, are one continuous protest against intemperance, and yet, because they do not see the way clear to join in the effort to forbid all sales of intoxicating drinks, they are pronounced to be equally guilty with the wretches, who, for the sake of gain, supply the slave of drink with that which means to him the ruin of body and soul. My friend, Dr. Crosby, for example, is, on this principle, just as bad as the keeper of the lowest "dive" in the slums of this city! Fanaticism and unreason could hardly go further: to confound what at furthest can only be an error of judgment with what is a mean, selfish pandering to a gross and open sin, persisted in simply through a love of filthy lucre, is a recklessness for which there is no excuse. And one has good reason to suspect the discretion of those who welcome such helpers, and the soundness of the cause which calls forth such monstrous declarations.