

This discussion as early as 1846 carried the question of substituting the policy of prohibiting dram-shops by law instead of licensing them into municipal and State elections; and resulted in 1850 in the election of a legislature favourable to prohibition.

The 'Maine Law,' it should be observed, absolutely prohibits the sale of distilled and fermented liquors as a beverage, but authorizes the municipal officers of the several towns and cities to appoint an agent to sell the same for medicinal and mechanical purposes. It also allows the sale of cider and wine made from fruit grown in this State, although another enactment, popularly known as the 'Nuisance Act,' imposes severe penalties on the sale of any kind of intoxicating liquors, even though they be called cider or native wine for tippling purposes.

The manufacture of rum or alcohol to be sold in quantities of not less than thirty gallons, to town agents, is allowed on certain conditions; but at the present time I am not aware that there is any distillery in this State.

Although public sentiment was reasonably prepared for the 'Maine Law' when first enacted in 1851, yet an Act which suddenly prohibited a traffic that had always been authorized very naturally excited bitter opposition at the outset. In spite of violent opposition in every town, in spite of the failure of many prosecuting officers, and even jurors to discharge their duties faithfully, in spite of an organized political opposition at the polls in 1852, 1853 and 1854, to secure the election of a Legislature favorable to a repeal, the law was well sustained and even grew in favor, and was having a perceptible influence in breaking up the liquor traffic and restraining the evils of intemperance. Unfortunately in the early part of 1855, in dispersing a mob which had gathered in the city of Portland on the occasion of some procedure under the 'Maine Law,' one man was killed. The enemies of the law seized upon this to influence the public mind against the prohibitory system, and at the State election in September, 1855, succeeded in choosing a Legislature which in the winter of 1856 repealed the 'Maine Law,' and substituted the most stringent license law ever placed upon the Statute Book. This license law, however, proved a failure; and at the State elections in 1856 and 1857 legislators were chosen by a large majority, which in 1858 re-enacted the prohibitory law. Before it went into effect, however, the question of prohibition or license was submitted to the people, and the vote stood for prohibition, 28,864; for license, 5,912. The vote was very light.

The beneficial influence of the re-enactment of the 'Maine Law' was at once apparent, especially throughout the rural parts of the State. The opposition to it obviously grew weaker from year to year, and although there were frequent attempts to secure a legislature favorable to its repeal, yet they always failed. The temperance sentiment of the State became so preponderant in nearly all the counties as to secure a large part of the municipal and prosecuting officers; and jurors came to regard violations of the liquor law in the same light as violations of other statutes. The influence of the law as a temperance educator, even when only partially enforced, was