

the attention of the people of the United States for the last thirty or forty years. Next to our personal relations to God, there was no subject of more intense interest. I speak of the protection of the people from the traffic in intoxicating drinks. Those ideas now prevalent and carried out in Maine, are extending through the Union and the British Provinces, even to the Old World.—Every civilized nation has felt the evils of this traffic, and has set itself to limit the ravages inflicted by it. Every civilized government has enacted laws more or less stringent and severe against it, according to the experience of the people, but always ineffectually. The evil has been extending, and the results of the traffic are being experienced with tremendous effect all over the world.

Within thirty or thirty five years wise and good men in the States and Provinces, and in Scotland have endeavoured to create a public sentiment against the use of intoxicating drinks, and three millions have been induced to abstain from them. The cause has been making progress by several stages—each stage supposed by its friends to be the last. The men who began the movement thought only of restricting the people to a moderate use of liquor. Soon after, they announced the principle of total abstinence from distilled liquor, then from wine, and then again from all intoxicating liquors. It was then imagined that intemperance would totally disappear; but how greatly have they been deceived? A new generation was coming on the stage—boys of fourteen or fifteen were becoming men of full age every seven or eight years, totally unacquainted with the reasons on which the reform rested. They became an easy prey to temptation, and being led away by the error of the wicked, and while one generation of drunkards were being buried, another rose up and the ranks were replenished. Intemperance still prevailed. It was necessary to make another movement, and the question now arose, has not society the right to protect itself against the evils of the traffic? This was demanded on every hand, quietly and patiently, till at last the answer came from every quarter—yes! yes! society has the right, and having the right, must also have the duty to extend to the people of the country and to their children, protection against this terrible evil. We now, therefore, come to the last stage (the last according to the light at present possessed, though it is possible we may hereafter find ourselves mistaken, as our predecessors have done) and this last stage is the everlasting extirpation of the traffic in intoxicating liquors.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, how does it happen that we must collect together in such large numbers to stimulate each other thus to protect ourselves? If the influential classes would throw themselves into this movement—if the men, whose opinions are potential, would support it, the whole traffic would disappear like the cloud before the rising sun. But they will not do so, and this has been the case with every movement of reform since the time of Christ. Large masses of the people still think the temperance men mistaken. We say, however, that the reform we advocate is of more importance to the people, and more conducive to their welfare and happiness, than any other question, or all the other questions which can be started, except that single one of our personal relations to our Creator and the eternal world. Great numbers, however, think we are mistaken. If, say they, the temperance men were correct, would not the wise men and the educated men join them with all their power? As they do not, the inference is that the temperance men are mistaken. No! They have not joined us. The great and influential have stood aloof, but the inference is not that we are wrong, but that they are recreant to their duty, their country and their God. But, perhaps, we ought not to be too severe: there are men who are conservative by nature and habit—who shun mingling in the contest, and hesitate opposing the interests or prac-

tices of bad men. They are for going slowly and cautiously, reminding me of something amusing which I will tell you of. Some time ago, in the city of Portland, before the Maine Law had been enacted, we had a meeting almost as large as this, and efforts were made to stir up the people to refuse the use of intoxicating liquors. The first speech was made by a venerable clergyman, the representative of the progressive school. Whilst he warmly pressed on the people his arguments for action, every body could see from the animation of their faces, that he had their sympathies. The next was a member of the conservative School—also a clergyman—but caution and moderation were the burden of his story. He was as sincere as the first; but the people were not with him—you could see it in their down-cast eyes. At last, to illustrate his idea, he said to them—How often is it you see a waggon with a team of oxen, toiling painfully up the steep ascent of some hill, till at length they reach the top and prepare to descend. The driver then takes off a pair of the oxen from the thill, and yokes them on behind; so that by applying their heavy energy in the momentum of the vehicle, they may keep it from rushing too fast down the declivity. Which pair of oxen in such case is most useful, said the speaker—that which draws the wagon forward, where it would go by itself, or that which prevents it from hastily going to destruction? Why, of course, it must be the pair which is what we Yankees call tailing down. When he had done, the other clergyman started up:—"Ah, yes," said he, "that is all very well; but with this load of ours, we have always got a dead pull up hill, and don't want any one tailing down." Most useful reforms, and ideas of progress, have at first met with hostility. When a philosopher first announced that the sun was the centre of our system, and that the rest of the planetary bodies, including the earth, moved round it, you recollect how the wise and good men of that day compelled him, on his knees, and with his right hand upon the open bible, to retract what he had said—to deny what he knew was the truth. Yet on rising from the earth, "it does move, nevertheless," was his whispered exclamation to his friend. So when another philosopher discovered the method of creating a vacuum, by exhausting the air, he was compelled to deny that any vacuum could exist, for God, it was said, abhors a vacuum. I was lately reading an English book of much interest to me, describing the commencement of the English railroad between Liverpool and Manchester. A great array of wisdom and wealth was brought to the consideration of that project, and a Committee of the Legislature was appointed to hear evidence upon it, before which Committee there was brought the first Civil Engineer in the country. He told the Committee that if a railroad were constructed, he believed a train might be driven upon it at the rate of eight miles an hour, and perhaps, he added, of twelve miles. He was a shrewd man, who understood human nature as well as the nature of steam engines, and when he saw the surprise of the Committee at this statement, he hesitated, and then retracted the twelve miles an hour, and said on consideration he should say eight miles would be a safe rate of speed. When the subject came up in the House of Commons, the Chairman of the Committee alluded to this circumstance—the engineer, he said, had at first stated twelve miles an hour as the probable speed of the trains; but this he had been prudent enough to retract, and he added, that if he had been imprudent enough to insist upon twelve miles, the Committee would have reported against the whole project as the scheme of a madman. So it is with every project of advancement in the world. It is met with sneers of incredulity, and the men who bring it forward are stigmatized as enthusiasts—as men of one idea, who cannot be relied on. Influential gentlemen, educated gentlemen, denounce us as fanatical, as men of one idea. Well, in some sense we admit it. We have one idea, for our only ob-