

## SHALL THE TRAFFIC IN WINE AND BEER BE EXEMPT FROM PROHIBITION.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The phase of the Temperance Question on which I am expected to address you to-night is always an important one, but is especially significant to the people of this Dominion at the present hour. You are, if I understand aright, confronted by a determined effort on the part of all parties who are pecuniarily interested in the traffic in alcoholic beverages, and by some, it may be, who would be glad to diminish the consumption of intoxicants, to exempt from the Prohibition legislation which you have put in your Scott Act, what are called the lighter intoxicants, wine and beer. The demand for this exemption is based on two assertions. First, that these fermented liquors are harmless; and second, that the encouragement of their use will diminish the consumption of distilled liquors. Both of these assertions are without the slightest foundation in fact, and are contradicted by an unvarying experience. I come before you to-night to endeavor to show that your opposition to this exemption need not arise from a mere fancy or conceit, a bug bear created in the imagination of Temperance fanatics, but can be based on facts susceptible of the clearest and most complete demonstration. I therefore ask your attention to a statement of facts only.

I. Look at the record of the years when fermented drinks had full sway, before distillation was known. At just what time alcohol was distilled from fermented liquors cannot now be determined, but it is quite certain that it was not earlier than the thirteenth century, and also that until near the middle of the sixteenth century it was confined to the shelves of the apothecary. But distillation, we must bear in mind, never created alcohol, it simply set it free from the water or other fluids with which it was combined. But in order to its being set free it must of necessity have been in the combination. The quantity that is in the fermented liquor is, by distillation, given to us unmixed with other elements that were in the combination, but only the quantity created by fermentation. This is not only a fact demonstrated by chemistry, but is also the lesson taught by history.

It is less than four hundred years since what are called ardent spirits, *i.e.* distilled spirits, brandy, rum, whiskey and gin, began to be used as beverages. But at the least it is over four thousand years since man began to drink fermented beverages, and to be made drunken thereby. Is it reasonable to say that it is only four hundred years, and to drinkers of distilled beverages that drunkenness has been harmful, and that thirty-six hundred years of the use of and drunkenness from fermented beverages were harmless? But those who try to persuade us that fermented liquors are harmless now, do in effect say it, while the historic argument is against them. History is made up, and we cannot ignore it. Its record is accessible, and all who have eyes and use them in reading it, cannot fail to see that drunkenness in most ancient times, and produced wholly by the use of fermented beverages, bore all the characteristic marks of the drunkenness of modern times, produced by using distilled liquors.

All the drunkenness mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, and characterized therein as inciting to licentiousness and crime, producing poverty and disease, clothing a man with rags and shame, preventing his entrance into the kingdom of heaven, and calling down upon him and upon the land which tolerates it, the wrath of God—all of it without exception, from Genesis to Revelation, was drunkenness produced by fermented beverages. That which biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder, was not brandy, nor rum, nor gin, nor whiskey, but wine. That which made prophet and priest "err in vision and stumble in judgment," was "wine or strong drink." Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Media, and Persia, whose foundations reach beyond all records, were never conquered by the sword until their manliness, patriotism and morality had been undermined by drunkenness and the debaucheries incited by drunkenness—and all this was caused by fermented drinks, thousand of years before distillation was ever dreamt of. The famous debauch of Belshazzar, by reason of which Cyrus entered Babylon and slew the king in his cups, was a debauch on wine. Persia, in its turn, becoming demoralized by the habits which wine generates, yielded to Alexander, who for a time, listening to the warning of his physician, spurned the intoxicating bowl. "Remember, O king," said the physician, "hemlock is poison to man, and wine is like hemlock." But at last the great soldier yielded and lost his life. "Here," said Seneca, "Here is this hero, invincible by all the toils of prodigious marches, by all the dangers of sieges and combats, by the most violent extremes of heat and cold, here he lies, conquered by his intemperance, and struck to the earth by the fatal cup of Hercules." Egypt, which knew how to manufacture a fermented drink from barley as well as from grapes, has preserved the story of her shameful drunkenness in the paintings with which her artists have decorated the walls of her tombs. Men and women are seen glorying in their shame. Masters are represented as being carried home from their banquets in sottish unconsciousness, or women wholly helpless from intoxication, dependent on their slaves to keep

them in decent appearance. The whole description they thus give of themselves justifies the assertion of Josephus that "they are the most debauched people."

The drunkenness which prevailed in Rome, was fearful in extent, indecent in its public manifestation, licentious in its influence, and generally, demoralizing physically, mentally and morally. The Bacchanalia became so monstrous in its drunkenness and consequent licentiousness, that the Senate put down the festival fifteen hundred years before distilled alcohol was known. Pliny says, at the close of his Treatise on wine, in his Natural History: "We purchase, at the greatest pain and expense, this liquor which deprives man of his reason, renders him furious, and is the cause of an infinite variety of crimes. \* \* \* \* \* Thence arise their paleness, their pendulous cheeks, their ulcerated eyes, their trembling hands, incapable of holding a full glass without spilling a portion of its contents." Delirium Tremens, or as it is called, "sleep agitated by furies," was also common, and was accompanied by loss of memory. "And this," he adds, "this is what they call seizing the moments of life! Whereas, in reality, whilst other men lose the day that is gone before, the drinker has already lost the day that is to come." Seneca's testimony is to the same effect: "No language," he says, "can convey an idea of the evils, torments, and disorders which the wine drinkers suffer." And Gibbons, speaking of the days of Rome's decadence, shows that such drunkenness was not confined to the higher classes, but that there issued from the stately palaces containing the baths of Caracalla, crowds of dirty and ragged plebeians, without shoes and without a mantle, who loitered away whole days in the street or Forum to hear news and to hold disputes; who dissipated in extravagant gaming the miserable pittance of their wives and children, and spent the hours of the night in obscene taverns and brothels in the indulgence of gross and vulgar sensuality.

In the ninth century of our present era, seven hundred years before distilled spirits were used as a beverage, drunkenness, with all its attendant horrors was raging to a fearful extent in Germany. Rabanus Maurus, a German preacher of that period, said: "Amongst the vices, feasting and drunkenness especially reign, since not only the rude and vulgar people, but the noble and powerful of the land, are given up to them. Both sexes and all ages have made intemperance into custom; \* \* \* \* \* and so greatly has the plague spread, that it has infected some of our own order in the priesthood, so that not only do they not correct the drunkards, but become drunkards themselves."

In England, in the sixth century, drunkenness from beer drinking was common and was attended by riot and bloodshed. In the eighth century complaint is made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the bishops and clergy not only do not prevent drunkenness, but indulge themselves to great excess, and force others to intoxication. The Danes were even heavier drinkers than the Saxons. The guards in their army were often overcome by drink, and all are familiar with the story of King Alfred's introducing himself in the guise of a minstrel into the camp of Guthrum the Danish General, and finding his soldiers steeped in drunkenness. Accounts of Norman times are little less than accounts of debauchery through drink.

This historic testimony might be brought down even further, to the very time when ardent spirits so largely superseded in many localities, the use of fermented drinks. But these suffice to show that centuries before distillation was known, or if known, before it was employed in the elimination of Alcohol, the use of Wine and Beer produced just as disastrous results as any intoxicants produce now, and that, if experience is good for anything, the plea that Wine and Beer are harmless drinks now, has nothing but the shallowest false assumption to rest upon.

II. But we are not shut up to this evidence of the remote past. Facts lie at our hand, are constantly manifest in our daily experience, which assure us that the use of wine and beer as beverages causes evils which call loudly for the prohibition of the traffic in them. The safety of the community is imperilled by the crimes which are thus created, and the burdens of taxation are made additionally heavy and grievous by reason of the diseases and poverty which they cause. If it be deemed merely sentimental to legislate in the interests of philanthropy, certainly no one ought to object to legislation in self-defence, to make our home secure, and to diminish taxation and waste.

Dr. Bock, of Leipzig, put the facts tersely in one line, when, in an article on the "Moral Effects of Food and Drink," in the *British Medical Journal*, 1879, he said: "Beer is brutalizing, wine impassions, whiskey infuriates, but eventually unman." Horace Greeley, whose intelligent observation and knowledge as a conductor of a New York daily paper for many years enabled him to judge accurately in the matter, said:—

"They greatly mistake who in this country hope to live longer by drinking wines or malt liquors than they would expect to if addicted instead to distilled spirits. True, there is less alcohol in the same quantity of the fermented beverages, but the same quantity will not content them. Deceive themselves as they may, it is the alcoholic stimulus that their depraved appetites exact, and if indulged at all, they will be indulged to the constantly receding point of satisfaction. The single glass of wine or beer per day which sufficed at the beginning will soon be enlarged or repeated. It was enough to start the blood into a gallop yesterday, but falls short to-day, and will not begin to do to-morrow."