

Did you ever hear of a liquor dealer taking the platform to defend his business on its merits as a social institution ?

Two years ago the editor of a leading paper, a genial, courteous gentleman, came to Lincoln to talk in favor of high license. His talk occupied two hours, and I talked a half an hour in reply. In opening his argument he said :

" Ladies and gentlemen of Nebraska, I do not come to deny that intemperance is the curse of the State, that it is sapping and undermining our social, civil and political institutions. All this is admitted." That was his starting-point, and he went on to say that the liquor business was bad, all bad, not a good thing in it, but it could not be prohibited ; people would sell, and it was better to restrain, and get a little money out of it.

The Government has not stopped men from stealing by laws prohibiting stealing, so it had better license them to steal if they will divide the proceeds with the city, is the logic of his plea boiled down.

A few weeks later, Judge Isaac Haskell, in the Academy of Music, in Omaha, took the license side, and I the prohibition side of the question. He said at the beginning, " I despise drunkards ; I hate drunkenness ! It is the curse of this country." He went on to say : " People always have drank ; they always will drink. You cannot prohibit the sale, you had better license and regulate it and get some money out of it." The Church cannot exterminate the devil, so it had better go in partnership with him, and divide up the souls of men, is the argument.

In Wisconsin a gentleman by the name of Wooster, an attorney, was once discussing the license question. He said, " I believe just as honestly as my friend Finch does, that alcoholic liquor is a damnable beverage." Then he went on to say that people always had drank and always would drink. During my reply I said, if alcoholic liquor is a damnable beverage, then it follows that the traffic in a damnable beverage must be a damnable traffic, and a man who will advocate a damnable traffic in a damnable beverage must be—and there I left the audience to infer what the conclusion must be, and the man got mad.

Whenever you force the advocates of the dram-shop, in this country to first principle they always disavow their connection with the fruits of the traffic, and preface their statement with, " I am a temperance man." Why do they not say, " I am a beer man ; I would rather have a boy who would get drunk ; I would rather have a wife who would get drunk ! " One is led to ask, if there is a redeeming feature about their