

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE,

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1834.

DEAR SIR,—

The sheet, to which this is annexed, is a part of the **SIXTH REPORT OF THE AMERICAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY**. It is addressed to men of reflection, who have the welfare of our beloved country at heart, and especially to all Legislators, Selectmen, County Commissioners and other Magistrates. It is thought to be an unanswerable argument against *licensing the sale of Ardent Spirit*.

This Pamphlet,—and the whole of the last, and Sixth Report of the American Temperance Society,—should be carefully read by every individual, that the argument, if sound and conclusive, may lead to the correction of public opinion with regard to the most enormous evil which afflicts humanity—*the licensed traffic in the destroyer of thousands of our fellow citizens, and the instigator of nine tenths of all the crimes which are committed in our land*. In no way, it is believed, can more good be done for a little money, than by taking measures to place a copy of this, or of the whole Report in every family. For Town and County distribution this is put at the low price of two dollars a hundred, and is for sale by **SETH BLISS**, No. 5 Cornhill, Boston. Will you, and the friends of Temperance, have the kindness to engage in this labor of love, and oblige

Your friends and servants,

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE

AMERICAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

Boston. October, 1833,

L A W S

WHICH AUTHORISE THE TRAFFIC IN ARDENT SPIRIT AS A
DRINK, MORALLY WRONG.

THE American Temperance Society, at the commencement, took the ground that to drink ardent spirit is *morally wrong*; and in their Reports they have exhibited the reasons which demonstrate its truth. Millions in this country have embraced this truth, and are now acting under its influence. Its influence has also been extended to other countries, and great numbers in foreign lands are imitating our example.

The next position taken by the Society, was, that it is wicked to make ardent spirit, or to furnish it to be drunk by others. This too they accompanied by legitimate and abundant proof; and it has been embraced; as whole counties in which it is now a violation even of human law to sell it, and of a thousand churches in which there is not a man who prosecutes the business, and thousands of other churches that are struggling to throw off the mighty incubus, abundantly testify. It is shown also by the existence of more than six thousand Temperance Societies, embracing more than a million of members; pledged to abstain from the drinking of ardent spirit, and from the traffic in it, and also to use all suitable means to cause this to become universal. The means by which such a result may be expected, is the universal conviction that the drinking of ardent spirit, or the furnishing it to be drunk by others, is *sin*; an offence against God, and injurious to the temporal and eternal interests of men. Whatever tends to produce this conviction tends to promote the Temperance Reformation; and whatever tends to prevent the one, tends to hinder the other. Perhaps nothing now stands more in the way of producing this conviction, and causing it to become universal, than the fact, that the traffic in ardent spirit is authorised by law; and thus receives the sanction and support of legislation. This is a public testimony to the world that the sale of ardent spirit, and of course the drinking of it, are right; a fundamental and fatal error, destructive in its effects to the life that now is, and to that which is to come. The next thing to be accomplished therefore, is, by the universal diffusion of information and the exertion of kind moral influence, to produce throughout the community, the conviction, that the laws which authorise the traffic in ardent spirit as a drink, by licensing men to pursue it, are morally wrong; opposed in their influence to the laws of God; and that the public good, instead of requiring that some men should sell ardent spirit, utterly forbids that this should be done by any;

and that no men or body of men who understand, or have the means of understanding this subject, can be instrumental in making such laws without the commission of sin. And as such laws are *morally* wrong, they never can be politically right, or beneficial, or expedient. While Jehovah lives, righteousness, and that alone will exalt a nation; sin in any form, and especially if sanctioned by law, will be a reproach, and a nuisance to any people. That this is plainly and strongly the case with the traffic in ardent spirit, and that the laws which authorise it are morally wrong, and in their influence opposed to the will of God, is manifest from the following considerations, viz :

I. Ardent spirit is a poison, and the drinking of it is not needful or beneficial to men. Even the moderate use of it is positively hurtful; and is a violation of the laws of health, and of life. Of course no man has a *natural* right to furnish it; or to wish for laws which shall authorise him to do it. And no man acquainted with the subject can be instrumental in making laws which shall authorise others to do it, even in a savage state, without guilt. Such laws would legalize sin, and violate the law of God.

II. No man acquires a right to make such laws by entering into society; and no body of men by the establishment of civil government. The only legitimate object of government is to protect, and to benefit the community. It has no right, any more than individuals, to injure that community: or to pass laws which authorise others to do it. And if it does, it violates the divine will; and the individuals who compose it, will, at the divine tribunal, and ought at the bar of public opinion, to be held responsible for the effects. The personal responsibility of each individual for the influence which he exerts, is in no case merged in the general mass; or swallowed up and lost in the responsibility of the body. Each one is bound by obligations which he can never throw off, in whatever situation or capacity he may act, to honor God, and do the greatest good of which he is capable to mankind. In no case has he a right to injure others or be instrumental in making laws which will authorise them to do it. It would be having a right to do wrong, which carries on its face evidence of falsehood.

III. The authorising of men by law to traffic in ardent spirit as a drink, is inconsistent with the temperance of the community. Temperance is the moderate and proper use of things beneficial, and it is abstinence from things hurtful. Ardent spirit being one of the hurtful things, temperance with regard to this, is abstinence, perpetual, entire, universal abstinence. But by authorizing men to sell it, and professing to do this for the public good, legislators declare that to buy and drink it is right, and useful. This is not only false, but promotes intemperance. To use a thing which is in its nature hurtful is intemperance, no less really than to use a ben-

eficial thing to excess ; and is often more injurious ; especially when the use of it, as in the case of ardent spirit, even in small quantities, tends to a constant increase. To teach the doctrine then by legislation, that it is right to drink it, in any quantity, is to promote intemperance ; to inculcate a doctrine which tends to form intemperate appetites, and which lies at the foundation of a great portion of all the drunkenness in the world. It does immense injury in another way, by increasing the difficulty of convincing men that to drink ardent spirit, or to furnish it to be drunk by others, is sin. Many see no difference between what is legal, and what is right. With them, the standard of right and wrong is human law. If a thing is legal and they wish to do it they take it for granted that it is right. Show that it dishonors God, and destroys men, and is therefore wrong, they meet you with the fact that it is legal, and therefore conclude that it is right ; and thus they ward off the conviction, which they would otherwise feel, of its enormous wickedness and guilt. They tell you that it is allowed by law ; that they have gotten a license and paid for it ; that this is a land of liberty ; and begin to clamor about their rights to increase the taxes, demoralize the character, destroy the health, shorten the lives, and ruin the souls of men ; or else, which is more common, contend in opposition to facts that their business does not do this. "If it did," say they, "legislators would not license it. They know what is right, and as they have made laws, authorizing it, and as they expressly say, for the public good, it is right, legally, and morally right for us to continue to sell it,—all its consequences," which they acknowledge are tremendous, "and all that temperance people say to the contrary notwithstanding." This, were legislators right in authorising the traffic, would be true ; and it would present a barrier to the triumph of Temperance, which would be absolutely and forever impregnable ; and it would roll the burning current of desolation and death over man to all future generations. And the fact that legislators, as well as rum-sellers and rum drinkers act as if it were right, and as if the public good required that some men should continue the traffic, presents one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of the Temperance Reform. It prevents in the minds of thousands, the conviction of the demoralizing character, the deadly effects, the enormous injustice, the gross oppression, the high handed immorality, and the tremendous guilt of that desolating traffic. Were it not for the ramparts which legislation has thrown around it, the pressure of public indignation, as light and virtue increase, and facts are developed, would sweep it away ; or sink it into the abyss from which its fires, smoke, and stench, would no more escape to annoy and desolate the earth.

IV. Laws which authorise the licensing of men to traffic in ardent spirit, violate the first principles of political economy, and are highly injurious to the wealth of a nation.

The wealth of a nation consists of the wealth of all the individuals that compose it. The sources of wealth are labor, land, and capital. The last is indeed the product of the two former; but as it may be used to increase their value, it is considered by writers on political economy, as one of the original sources of national wealth. Whatever lessens either of these, or their productiveness when employed upon each other, lessens the wealth of the country. Capital may be employed in two ways; either to produce new capital, or merely to afford gratification, and in the production of that gratification be consumed, without replacing its value. The first may be called capital, and the last expenditure. These will of course bear inverse proportions to each other. If the first be large, the last must be small, and vice versa. Without any change of the amount of wealth, capital will be increased by the lessening of expenditure, and lessened by the increase of expenditure. Although the manner of dividing makes no difference with the present amount of national wealth, it makes a great difference with the future amount; as it alters materially the sources of producing it, the means of an equal, or increased reproduction.

For instance, a man fond of noise and excited agreeably by the hearing of it, pays a dollar for gunpowder, and touches fire to it. He occasions an entire loss of that amount of property. Although the powder maker and the merchant, may both have received their pay, if it has not benefited the man, to him it has been a total loss; and if the sale of it was no more profitable than would have been the sale of some useful article, it has been an entire loss to the community. And if by the explosion the man is burnt, partially loses his reason, is taken off for a time from business, and confined by sickness to his bed, must have nurses, physicians, &c. the loss is still increased. And if he never recovers fully his health, or reason, suffers in his social affections and moral sensibility, becomes less faithful in the education of his children, and they are more exposed to temptation and ruin, and he is never again as able or willing to be habitually employed in productive labor, the nation loses equal to the amount of all these put together. And if his example leads other men to spend, and to suffer in the same way, the loss is still farther increased; and so on, through all its effects.

And even though the powder maker and the merchant have made enormous profit, this does not prevent the loss to the community; any more than the enormous profit of lottery gamblers, or counterfeiters of the public coin, prevents loss to the community. Nor does it meet the case, to say that the property only changes hands. This is not true. The man who sold the powder made a profit of only a part even of the money which the other man paid for it; while he lost not only the whole, but vastly more. The whole of the original cost was only a small part of the loss to the

buyer, and to the nation. The merchant gained nothing of the time, and other numerous expences, which the buyer lost; nor does he in any way remunerate the community for that loss.

Suppose that man, instead of buying the powder, had bought a pair of shoes; and that the tanner and the shoemaker had gained in this case, what the powder-maker and the merchant gained in the other; and that by the use of the shoes, though they were finally worn out, the man gained twice as much as he gave for them; without any loss of health, or reason, social affection, or moral susceptibility; and without any of the consequent evils. Who cannot see that it would have increased his wealth, and that of the nation, without injury to any, and have promoted the benefit of all.

This illustrates the principle with regard to ardent spirit. A man buys a quantity of it, and drinks it; when he would be, as is the case with every man, in all respects better without it. It is to him an entire loss. The merchant may have made a profit of one quarter of the cost, but the buyer loses the whole; and he loses the time employed in obtaining and drinking it. He loses also, and the community loses, equal to all its deteriorating effects upon his body and mind, his children, and all who come under his influence. His land becomes less productive. The capital of course produced by his land and labor is diminished; and thus the means are diminished of future reproduction. And by the increase of expenditure in proportion to the capital, it is still farther diminished, till to meet the increasingly disproportionate expences, the whole is often taken, and the means of future reproduction are entirely exhausted. And as there is no seed to sow, there is of course no future harvest. This is but a simple history of what is taking place in thousands of cases continually; and of what is the tendency of the traffic in ardent spirit, from beginning to end. It lessens the productiveness of land and labor, and of course diminishes the amount of capital; while in proportion, it increases the expenditure, and thus in both ways is constantly exhausting the means of future reproduction. And this is its tendency, in all its bearings, in proportion to the quantity used, from the man who takes only his glass, to the man who takes his quart a day. It is a palpable and gross violation of all correct principles of political economy; and from beginning to end, tends to diminish all the sources of national wealth.

"Oh," said a merchant in a large country store, "it is a horrible business. When I set up my store at this corner, there were within a mile, a great number of able, thriving farmers; but now about half of them are ruined; and many of them were ruined at my store. And there is not a store in the country that sells ardent spirit, but what tends to produce similar results. Oh, it is a horrible business." And are not the laws which sanction it horrible

laws? Do they not tend by their whole influence to render the business respectable, to perpetuate it, and permanently to produce such results? results none the less horrible because produced according to law; and which stamp the law that sanctions the business which produces them, with the dark, deep and indelible impress of vice?

Nor was it by any means the greatest of the evils, that those farmers were ruined. In many cases too, their children were ruined; and the community was deprived of the benefits which they might otherwise have conferred upon it. Nor was this all, but many of them were thrown as a public burden into the alms-house, to be supported by a tax on the sober and industrious. Another part were corrupting the children and youth, and demoralizing society by the influence of their loathsome and pestiferous example. Was not that merchant then prosecuting a business which, toward the community, was palpably unjust? And are not the laws which sanction it, equally unjust? What moral right have legislators to pass laws, which enable men *legally* to injure their fellow men, to increase their taxes, and expose their children to drunkenness and ruin?

And what was the effect ultimately on the merchant himself? We say *ultimately*; because it does not follow, even if he for a time increased his profits by selling spirit, that it would ultimately promote his benefit. A passer of counterfeit money, may sometimes increase his present profit; but it does not follow that it will ultimately promote even his pecuniary interest.

The permanent, valuable customers of that merchant, were constantly diminishing, as their ability was diminishing to purchase his goods, or to pay for them. Their farms were growing up to briars and thorns, the enclosures were falling down; their buildings were in ruin, their implements of husbandry scattered, or worn out; their children were at the grogshop or the scene of revelry and dissipation, and their whole interest was withering under the indignation of the Almighty. Of course, should they buy they had next to nothing with which to pay. Many died insolvent, and the merchant not unfrequently lost in bad debts from his rum customers more than his profits. And as the value of property around him diminished, as is generally the case around those death-fountains, the value of his custom diminished.

Said another merchant, who has made a great estate, but never sold a drop of spirit, "When you shut up a grogshop, or tear it down and build on the spot a respectable store, it is surprising how rapidly property in the neighborhood begins immediately to rise."

Suppose that the merchant first referred to had sold only to productive consumers; and such articles, as in the consumption

would more than have replaced their value ; as was the case with the shoes, as is the case with needful clothing, provisions, and other useful things. The property of the farmers would have been constantly increasing, and of course the value of their custom to the merchant, and of their wealth to the community. Their children with increased advantages, might more than have filled the place of their fathers, and thus, without injury to any, the good of all been promoted. The enormous taxes, for the support of paupers, and the prosecution of criminals, with which the community were burdened, might have been prevented ; and also the peculiar exposure of the rising generation to drunkenness, death and hell.*

So with all farmers and all merchants, and all other classes of men throughout the country. The traffic in ardent spirit is a curse to the whole community ; a cancer on the vitals of all the sources of national wealth. Even if the present profits of those who sell to unproductive consumers were more, vastly more than those who sell only to productive consumers, as the property of their customers diminishes, and of course their ability to purchase, their future profits must be less. On the other hand, the ability of productive consumers, who replace what they consume with something of greater value, constantly increases ; and of course their value as customers. They can purchase next year, not only as much as they have purchased this, but more ; equal to the value of the addition which they have acquired, or a proportion of it. And thus what they consume becomes a source continually of increased reproduction, not only to them, but to the nation.†

On the other hand, what is consumed but not replaced by something of a greater, or an equal value, is ultimately lost—and is, to that amount, a loss to the country. Whatever causes an increase of unproductive consumption therefore, causes a decrease of national wealth. And this evil attaches in a high degree and to an enormous extent, to the traffic in ardent spirit. If the property which the consumers pay were burnt, all would acknowledge it to be a total loss ; though the merchant and the distiller and the grain grower might all have received their pay. But it would in that case be a loss vastly less than it is now. It is now not only an entire loss, but it diminishes, as we have seen, beyond almost any thing else the sources and the power of future reproduction. It is therefore not only a source of great present loss, but also a prevention of vast future gain. It diminishes in both ways, the wealth of the nation, and to an amount, equal,

1. To the whole sum which consumers pay for ardent spirit ; estimated by those who are best acquainted with the subject at about \$50,000,000 annually.

* Appendix E.

† Appendix F.

2. The loss of all the time which it occasions.
3. The diminished productiveness of land, labor and capital.
4. The loss of health and reason ; and all the expenditures which it occasions.
5. The cost of supporting the paupers, and prosecuting the criminals occasioned by it.
6. The property lost in consequence of it by casualties on the land and on the ocean.

7. The shortening of human life and the consequent loss of human labor ; amounting in all, as all acquainted with the subject admit, to a sum much greater than the cost of the liquor. One hundred million dollars a year is a sum far less than is lost to the United States by this destructive traffic. And yet this, and the diminution of future gain which it occasions, would in one generation amount to a sum greater than the present value of all the real estate in the country. And this loss, to a vast extent, is borne by those who are least able to bear it, the laboring classes of the community. It may not be amiss to advert for a moment to the beneficial uses to which this money might be applied ; uses beneficial to the individuals, and to the nation. It would purchase

4,000,000 sheep at \$2,50 each	- - -	\$10,000,000
400,000 head of cattle at \$25 each	- - -	10,000,000
200,000 cows at \$20 each	- - -	4,000,000
40,000 horses at \$100 each	- - -	4,000,000
500,000 suit of men's clothes at \$20	- - -	10,000,000
1,000,000 boys' do. at \$10	- - -	10,000,000
500,000 womens' do. at \$10	- - -	5,000,000
1,000,000 girls' do. at \$3	- - -	3,000,000
1,200,000 barrels of flour at \$5	- - -	6,000,000
800,000 do. beef at \$10	- - -	8,000,000
800,000 do. pork at \$12,50	- - -	10,000,000
3,000,000 bushels of corn 50 cts.	- - -	1,500,000
2,000,000 do. potatoes at 25 cts.	- - -	500,000
10,000,000 lbs. sugar at 10 cts.	- - -	1,000,000
400,000 do. rice at 5 cts.	- - -	200,000
and 2,000,000 gallons of molasses at 40 cts. a gallon	-	800,000

It would also build,

1000 churches at \$5,000 each	- - -	\$5,000,000
support 2000 ministers of the gospel, at \$500 each	-	1,000,000
build 8,000 school houses, at \$500	- - -	4,000,000
furnish 500,000 newspapers at \$200	- - -	1,000,000
and establish 5,000 parish libraries at \$600 each,	-	3,000,000

—and all in a single year. This might be repeated, year after year, making in one generation of thirty years, thirty times the above amount.

Who then in our land need to be poor, or wretched ? And what

need to hinder this land, as soon as its population might wish, from becoming Immanuel's land ; its peace flowing as a river, and its righteousness and blessings as the waves of the sea ?

But the loss of property, great as it is, and enough to stamp the laws which authorise the business that occasions it, with everlasting execration, is still among the least of its evils.

V. The traffic in ardent spirit as a drink impairs the health of the nation. Health depends on one great law ; viz. The action of certain agents, upon their appropriate organs in the human body, which agents and organs, "the product of the Divine hand," are so perfectly adapted one to the other, that in view of all their consequences to endless being, their author himself pronounced them to be, "very good ;" perfect, good enough to satisfy the mind of Jehovah. Light, for instance, was made for the eye ; air for the lungs ; and food, nourishing food and drink, for the digestive organs ; causing by their operations the functions of vision, respiration, nutrition, and the various movements on which health and life depend. But for what organ in the human body was ardent spirit made ? There is none.

What organ in the human body needs its stimulus in order to perform in the most perfect manner, healthy action ? There is none. What gland can extract from it the least portion of nutriment, or any thing which can contribute to health, or be in any way useful in the animal economy ? There is none. The anatomist, the physiologist, the chemist and the physician examine with the minutest care every part throughout the whole body, and they can find none. God has made none, and there is none. Nor is there an organ whose healthy action is not disturbed by ardent spirit ; and which does not instinctively reject it. The blood by its circulation conveys to each part of the body the materials of which it is composed, while each organ by its Creator is endowed with the power of selecting from the mass what it needs for nourishment, and the performance of its appropriate functions, and of rejecting the refuse to be thrown out of the system. "The blood is therefore a sort of common carrier, conveying from part to part what is entrusted to it, for the common benefit." When *obliged* to carry spirit, it presents it on its way, as it does other materials, to each organ ; and each starts with mighty effort, not to welcome and receive, but to *repel* it. And if not crippled by the overpowering force of the enemy, it succeeds ; and rejected, not suffered to stop, because it is worthless, the carrier, though vexed with its burden, is obliged to take it on to the next ; rejected by that, it must carry it on, till, rejected by all as a common nuisance, "it is seized upon by the emunctories, the scavengers of the system, and unceremoniously excluded." This is not for any want of kindness in the system toward friends, but because ardent spirit is an enemy

a mortal enemy. It would be treason to harbor it, and suicide to use it. Nature, through unerring laws stamped by the Divine hand, true to herself and her God, is incapable of such an offence; and till poisoned and perverted by the enemy, will never submit to it. On every organ it touches, spirit is a poison; and as such it is chased from organ to organ, marking its course with irregularity of action, and disturbance of function; exciting throughout the system a war of extermination, till the last remnant of the intruder is expelled from the territory. Till vital power is prostrated the enemy can never have a lodgment. And if, through decay of organic vigor, by the mighty force of the intruder, or the long continuance of the war, and by perpetual successions of new recruits, it cannot be expelled, the work of death is done; the last citadel of life surrenders, and the banner of universal ruin waves over all. Thousands of such conquests are made every year, and of territories more valuable than all the material wealth of creation. Before, the prospect was like Eden; and after, a land of sepulchres, with uncovered, putrid carcasses of drunkards, sending up in clouds their poisonous exhalation, wafting contagion and death through the land.

To sanction by law the recruiting and equipping of such an enemy, and the sending of him out to desolate the fairest portion of God's heritage, is an outrage upon all principles, not only of patriotism, but of humanity, which bids defiance to parallel in the history of legislation. It is an outrage almost too gross for sober consultation. It would seem to be hardly possible, in view of its fruits, that it should be tolerated, we will not say in any christian, but in any civilized State. Even paganism, under the first rays of civilization, has almost instinctively denounced it.* And were it not for the pestilential moral atmosphere which it produces, and the deteriorating and stupifying effects which that atmosphere occasions, its continuance would seem to be hardly possible; or its removal need any thing more than its own doings.

It is now known from the evidence of facts, that more than one in ten over wide regions of country, who have used ardent spirit, and more than one in five who have mixed and sold it, have, themselves, become drunkards, and so wicked as often not to live out half their days. It is known also from the highest and most abundant medical authority, that more than one in five of the men who have habitually used it, have been killed by it; and that multitudes who were never intoxicated, and never thought in time past to be intemperate, by the habit of using it, even moderately, have shortened life many years; and that it tends in its whole influence from beginning to end, to induce and aggravate disease, and to bring all

* Appendix G.

who drink it to a premature grave. There is no reason to doubt, that of the last generation in the United States, it cut off more than thirty million years of human probation, and ushered more than a million of persons, uncalled, into the presence of God.

The last year its deadly influence has been still more strongly marked, especially over those regions which have been visited by the Cholera. In the city of Albany, with a population of about twenty-five thousand, of whom three hundred and thirty-six, over sixteen years of age, died of the Cholera, of the five thousand members of Temperance Societies there were only two deaths; showing that such persons were not one fortieth part as liable to death, by that disease, as other persons. Of the rest of the population one in sixty died, while of the members of Temperance Societies, only one in twenty-five hundred.

Of about six hundred who were brought to the Park Hospital in the city of New York, but about one in five called themselves even temperate drinkers. And many of them, after they recovered, were soon intoxicated. The number was extremely small, who died of that disease, who had not for two years used ardent spirit. Some such cases there were; but they were strongly marked exceptions to the general rule. Said a distinguished gentleman in that city, after paying special attention to this subject, "facts abundantly authorise the conclusion, that had it not been for the sale and use of spirit, there had not been Cholera enough in the city of New York to have caused the cessation of business for a single day."

And says another gentleman of that city, "a quantity of spirit was taken from a certain store in the morning, and distributed to a number of grogshops. In the evening the workmen assembled and received their accustomed quantity. The next morning one and another, and another were carried by my door to the hospital, and in the afternoon were taken to the Potters Field. And so from day to day, disease and death followed round after ardent spirit, seizing upon those who drank it, and hurrying them to destruction, till so obvious and striking was the connection, that some even of the sellers, seared as were their consciences, said, This will never do; the way from the grogshop to hell is too short;" and abandoned the business. Others shut up their shops and fled. "In my neighborhood," says another gentleman, "there was not a retailer left; they were actually afraid to encounter the dangers of their own business." It made the arrows of death fly so thickly around them, that they dare not risk it. Had they been sure that those arrows would strike only their neighbors, they might have been willing to stay and drive the business. But when there was danger that the shafts from their engines of death would strike themselves, they closed their doors and fled. How many lives had

been spared, how many families saved from ruin, and how many evils averted from the community, had they never returned, and their cholera manufactories remained closed forever.

How many who were consigned the last summer to an untimely grave, and we fear to a miserable eternity, had now been in the land of the living, and prisoners of hope, had none been found reckless enough to keep such establishments open. But some there were who professed to be friends of humanity, who continued with a steady hand to deal out the poison. And as their customers might not live to come again, they sold them instantly, on the spot, what they would buy. When the husband fell, and the children were seized, they sold his widow the cause of death; and when the neighbors came to bury the children, their widowed mother, with what the rum-seller furnished her, was found intoxicated on the floor. On the day that was set apart for humiliation, fasting, and prayer, that God would spare his people and not suffer the destroyer any longer to smite them, one, lest praying, though it should not make him leave off sinning, should at least for a day deprive him of its gains, kept his liquor store open, and sold to all who would purchase, till the time for public worship. He then hastened to be in his place, and join, apparently, with devout gravity, in supplication to the Lord, that he would keep off the Cholera; and when public service was closed, he hastened again, as if to make up lost time, to his store; and spent the day in furnishing a chief cause of Cholera to all who would buy. If he did not produce as much Cholera on that day as on other days, it may be attributed, not so much to his prayers for its prevention, as to the time which they hindered him from furnishing its cause. And if prayers are answered, not according to words, but to deeds, instead of having lessened the number of the dying and the dead, his may have increased it; and they may increase too the awfulness of his retribution, when he who, on probation sells death, shall, without repentance, reap also death.

Were retailers of spirit in their own persons and families to bear all the evils which they occasion to others, they would soon close their business. Or were these evils all concentrated on the heads of legislators, they would cease to make laws which should authorise the business that produces them.

Instead of "An act, entitled an act, to regulate the sale of spirit for the public good," any longer disgracing the statute book and vitiating the community, they would see that the proper title for every such act, when determined by its consequences, is, "An act for the destruction of mankind." But would it be any more dreadful for the man who sells ardent spirit, or the man who makes the law which authorises the sale of it, to endure these evils, than it is for the community?

Suppose a man who buys a gallon of a man authorised by law to sell it, should under its influence go into the family of the man who made the law, and for a few days take the direction, and do what he now does in his own family ; break the looking-glass, turn over the tables, strike the children with the tongs, and their mother with the chairs ; and to save their lives, make them flee, naked and barefoot, through the snow, to the neighbors for help ; and suppose that this is a common fruit of the law which authorises the business ; would he make such a law again ? And would he not raise both hands, his voice, and his heart, to have that which he has made repealed ? or so modified as no longer to sanction such a business ?

Or suppose again, that the intemperate appetites which the legal traffic forms, and the cases of drunkenness and death to which they lead, instead of being, as they now are, scattered through the community, should all be in the families of the legislators, of spirit venders and their nearest friends ; and that they should have to endure all the sickness and sorrows, and heart breaking wretchedness, which they occasion, and which they will occasion to endless being, would they any longer sanction the cause ? or would any one, because he could do it legally, perpetuate it ? Though the evils would be no greater if they were all endured by them than when endured by others, yet who can doubt but that they would be great enough, and be felt to be great enough, to stamp the cause of them, and the sanctioning by law of the business which produces them, with everlasting abhorrence. Who can doubt but that the licensing of such a business would cease at once, universally and forever ? Oh, if that would cause it to cease, and nothing else can, what an unspeakable benefit would it be to the world, and what an inestimable saving of property, character, health, reason, life and soul, to all future generations, could these evils, past, present, and to come be all concentrated, and poured out, for a time, in one dark, desolating current on the heads of legislators and venders of spirit. But the Committee, with all their hearts, would deprecate such a thing ; and rejoice with inexpressible delight, that a fellow feeling for others' woes will certainly, unless this cause be abandoned of God, lead to the same glorious result.

VI. The traffic in ardent spirit, tends to derange the intellect, and to corrupt the morals of the nation.

In all cases in which ardent spirit deranges healthy functions of body, it tends also to disturb regular action of mind and to corrupt the feelings of the heart. It injures the one, not less than the other. This is the effect not only of a very free use of it, but of all use of it. It is its tendency from beginning to end, in proportion to the quantity taken, and to the power of the system, to withstand its natural effects. As it courses its way through the blood-

vessels, it enters even the capillaries of the brain, that tender and delicate organ which forms the link between matter and mind, irritating, poisoning, and stupifying that heart and soul of mental vigor. A man buying according to law, of a man who sells that which legislators by law sanction, and drinking only as much, reasoning as legislators do, "as the public good requires," becomes so blockish that his neighbors and his acquaintance begin to whisper one to another, "What is the matter of ——? how he has lost his mind. Not long ago he was one of the first men in the neighborhood, but he is becoming an idiot." What is the matter? He has been doing what legislators, by the high sanction of law, say is for the "public good," *drinking regularly*; not to intoxication, that would be bad, the law forbids it; but only as much and as often, as in his estimation, judging from his feelings at the time, did him good; only enough, this time, to make him feel well, and the next to make him feel better, and so on, "*for the public good*," till he has become, not only a blank but a blot in creation; and has set an example adapted to blast the excellence and wither the prospects of his children, and children's children, to the end of time.

The use of ardent spirit tends also to derange healthy mental action, in another way, by its irritating effect on the nerves. And this leads, in many cases, to total insanity; as the records of every lunatic asylum in Christendom testify. The drinking of it, the vending of it, and the laws which sanction it, all, by their natural and constant effects, tend to weaken the understanding, blunt the perception, and derange the intellect of the nation.

They tend also to harden the heart, sear the conscience, pollute the affections, and corrupt the morals of the people. Hence the wonderful fact, that three fourths of the crimes which are prosecuted, are committed under the influence of spirit; not under its influence when taken to intoxication, but when taken moderately, and often in no greater quantities than the law contemplates. That use of it, which the law sanctions, by its violation of the laws of nature and of God, is carrying on continually a process as extensive and as criminal as its effects, of bodily and mental, physical, intellectual and moral deterioration; tending to change gigantic strength to pigmy weakness; celestial order to infernal discord; and heavenly purity, light and love, to hellish pollution, darkness and hate.

Through sin, man has already in himself the elements of disorder, the seeds of death. This makes them vegetate, grow rank, and produce a speedy and superabundant crop. It generates impure thought; and excites unhallowed feeling. It kindles polluted desire, fires abandoned purpose, and fiendish malignity.

The harmony established by the divine hand between the mental and moral powers, the appetites of the body and the passions

of the soul, having by transgression been broken, and reason and conscience often through sin been brought into vile and hateful subserviency to appetite and passion, ardent spirit increases that subserviency, renders it more entire and perpetual. It operates on all the powers of man, but satan-like, on different powers, in totally opposite ways. The understanding, already too weak, it weakens still more; the conscience, too torpid, it renders more torpid still; and the heart, already hard, it makes still harder; and the affections polluted, it pollutes still more. While the appetites, already too keen and headstrong, it makes still more so; and the passions it vitiates, strengthens and inflames. The man, already reckless, it makes still more reckless; saying, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Thus it comes in, with its whole influence in every stage of its operation, to aid the great adversary in the destruction of men. Depravity it depraves, pollutes even pollution, and makes vileness itself still more vile. All the mischiefs which sin and Satan have occasioned in the soul, it increases; while with a mighty force, it counteracts all the beneficent designs of Jehovah for its deliverance from sin and hell, and its restoration to the dignity and beauty of his image; the light and purity, the bliss and glory of heaven. Thus, by a twofold process, throughout its whole course, increasing voluntary wickedness, and counteracting the means of divine appointment for its extinction, it is working out the eternal damnation of men.

Here is the philosophical reason, the *rationale* of the facts, that ten times as many in the United States who drink ardent spirit, in proportion to the number, are idle as of other men; ten times as many who drink it commit crimes, as of those who do not drink it; and ten times as many in proportion to the number, who do not drink it, become hopefully pious, embrace the gospel and confess the Saviour before men, as of those who do. The opposite in all respects to godliness, and its grand opposer, it is unprofitable unto all things, destructive to the life that now is, and also to that which is to come. Whether we look at the body or the soul, at time or eternity, in the light of principles and facts, we see upon it the broad image of death. This results from its nature, from the nature of man, and from principles deep in the government of God, all pervading, irresistible, and which will be as durable and unchanging as the eternal throne. So long as the traffic continues which violates them, the result, by laws established by the divine hand, must be death; and the legislation which sanctions it, have inscribed upon it in broad capitals for creation to look at, **OPPOSITION TO THE LAWS OF GOD.** And its consequences, with a voice like the noise of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, will break on every ear in creation, saying, "The way of transgressors is hard." Father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, children, all are

sacrificed ; God, Christ, heaven, the soul, eternity, every thing dear and every thing momentous for both worlds are madly spurned away in that state of mind which this foul spirit is, from its nature, adapted universally to produce. Can there be a doubt but that the vending of it to be drunk, and the laws which sanction it, are *wicked* ; and tend to array a mighty influence against the influence of the Son of God ?

Only a small quantity, taken so prudently as to leave a man the possession of his reason and the control of his limbs, is, nevertheless, adapted to bar the mind to good and to open it to evil. Motives to the one it weakens, and to the other it strengthens. In direct and palpable violation of what the Saviour inculcates, as the proper desire and daily petition of every soul under heaven, it leads men into temptation and delivers them to evil. Taking “day by day,” not “daily bread,” but poison, and of the most deceitful and malignant kind, that Divine Agent who loathes it, and all its effects as an utter abomination, and who would otherwise illuminate and purify and save with an everlasting salvation, is grieved away. The unrighteous and filthy not only remain, but become more unrighteous, and more filthy ; till, having been often reprovèd, and hardened their necks, they are suddenly destroyed, and God saith, “without remedy.”

Over wide regions of country, where the facts are known, and a part of the people abstain from the use of ardent spirit, and from the traffic in it, and a part do not,—as the Committee behold ten times as many in proportion to the number, of one class enlisting apparently under the banners of Immanuel, as of the other ; and see the number from one, as light increases, constantly and rapidly increasing, and from the other as constantly and rapidly diminishing,—they cannot but feel, that the laws which sanction the traffic and use, and proclaim them to be right, are radically and morally wrong ; offensive to the Saviour, and hostile to the temporal and eternal interests of men. And they cannot but most respectfully and kindly, earnestly and perseveringly entreat the legislators of our country, by the rich mercies which he has so bountifully bestowed upon it, and by the agonies which he so freely endured for our race, and the glories which he so graciously proffers them, no longer to sanction these iniquities ; or say by legislation that they are either useful or right. As He poured out life to redeem them, and would have all men come to the knowledge and love of his truth, and be his obedient and glorified people, they would beseech legislators no longer to do what tends so powerfully, extensively, and fatally to hinder it. As there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and a new burst of praise breaks forth at the proclamation of a soul born of God, what must be the grief, the indignation and wrath in that world at the continuance

and encouragement of what is known, with all who come under its influence, to tend infallibly and forever to prevent it. If those who have been wise to turn men to righteousness shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever, what shall they be who have been instrumental in preventing it, and sinking those who might have risen from glory to glory, into the blackness of darkness forever.

The Committee would not apply what they say, to the days of darkness and ignorance that are past, but only to the continuance of the evil in future, when, and where the facts on this subject are, or might be known.

What they ask of legislators is, that they will not by legislation hinder the progress of the Temperance Reformation, or sanction by law that which opposes it; but let its friends, in dependence on God, by the universal diffusion of information and kind moral influence, unobstructed by law, carry it onward from conquering to conquer, till there shall not be a drunkard, or a drunkard-maker, or a legislator who sanctions the business that produces either, under heaven.

This Reformation first had to meet the numerous and mighty army of moderate and respectable drinkers; but they soon gave way, and their ranks were broken; a million deserted the enemy, and came over in triumph to the temperance cause.

It next had to meet the more formidable array of church members, headed by many a deacon, not a few magistrates, and some preachers, in word at least, of the gospel. They were equipping the enemy, furnishing him with provisions and implements of war. As his numbers by desertion and death were diminished, they were with fearful rapidity raising up new recruits; and tempting those who had deserted and seemed for a time to have clean escaped from the destroyer, back to fight again under his standard. The battle here was more serious. The characters engaged gave importance to the conflict. But this mighty phalanx has also been broken. They are flying in multitudes, not away from, but to the ranks of Temperance, and becoming, many of them the first and the bravest, the most self denying and devoted in the promotion of the cause. Having before not only slain their thousands, but, unwittingly, fastened the poisoned arrow in the heart of tens of thousands more, they are doubly anxious softly to extract it, and point the agonizing and often dying sufferer to the balm in Gilead, and the physician there.

Under the Captain of Salvation the conquest has advanced, till it now meets, in open day, the thoroughly disciplined, and long tried bands of legislators.

The great contest, which is to decide whether this work of mercy is to go immediately and rapidly onward, to its consummation, is to be with *them*; not for the purpose of a conquest over them,

but for the purpose of reaching those who lie entrenched behind them ; around whom is thrown the mighty rampart of legislation, and before whom are drawn up in solid column, the mighty phalanx of legislators ; and who with such a front, bid defiance to those who would be their benefactors, and pour the swelling tide of mercies down upon them and their children after them through all generations to the end of the world, and onward to eternity.

The Committee would state explicitly, that they do not address legislatures as bodies, but they address legislators as individuals ; each of whom has a soul, and like each one of the people is responsible to the same high tribunal of public opinion here, and of unerring rectitude hereafter, and who, as a part of the people, is himself and his children after him, to bear the blessings or the woes of his legislation ; and they say to them, We have no wish for any contest with you ; we deprecate such a thing ; we see among you many of our friends, and when disbanded and acting as individuals, the friends and helpers of our cause. With thousands we rejoice in the aid thus afforded by your example and influence. But as legislators you are organized, and on the wrong side. You license the enemy ; and it is under your flag that he makes his depredations upon all that is dear and lovely in possession, and all that is fair, and excellent and glorious, in prospect. You have thrown around him the mighty breastwork of your sanction, and stand yourselves in front. It is only through your bodies that he can now be reached, and when the shafts strike him, the dense medium through which they pass breaks their force ; and with the shield of your sanction, their point is warded off, and execution prevented. While his shafts, dipped in poison, and nerved by legislation, are flying and spreading destruction on every side.

Legislators, Friends, called to be Benefactors, and to do good as you have opportunity, we most affectionately and earnestly, as the destinies of our country, of the world and its unborn millions are at stake, beseech you to remove yourselves, and your legislation out of the way. Let the fire of light and love break unobstructed, in its naked and all-subduing brightness, on the heart of the enemy behind you, and the victory shall be ours, shall be yours ; and the joy, the joy of all ; and the glory of all, be given to Him, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things ; while the fruits of the victory shall flow down with ever growing richness and fertility, fulness and beauty, to endless ages.

The only reason why it was ever thought proper to license any one to sell ardent spirit, and thus teach by law the propriety of the traffic, was the erroneous idea, that to drink it moderately is useful ; and therefore right. But as the drinking of it moderately, would strongly tempt men to drink it immoderately, and many, if it were sold to them, would be ruined, and become a nuisance to

society, legislators thought to guard against these evils, by providing that none should sell it except respectable men; and no more of them than the public good required; and that they should sell only to such men as would not be injured by it.

But as it is now known that all who drink it are injured by it, and that the public good, instead of requiring, forbids that any should sell it; and that licensing it, while it authorises, and perpetuates the traffic, does not and cannot prevent its evils, the whole foundation of that legislation which authorises and licenses its continuance is entirely swept away. It has nothing to stand upon; and were the traffic not upheld by the rum party, and those who hope to make money by it, it would fall of itself; and under the long accumulated and mighty weight with which it has burdened the community, it would sink to rise no more. Let legislators and all respectable men cease to sanction it, and the last relic which makes it even tolerable in a civilized community, will be removed. None will engage in it but the abandoned, who carry the mark of infamy on their foreheads, and who are hastening rapidly, to their own place.

But it is said, "The licensing of the traffic is a source of revenue to the State, and therefore the public good requires it." This revenue is much like that of the woman who sold her grain and her rags to purchase whiskey for her children. She said it was cheaper to keep them on whiskey, than on bread; and as it made a market for her rags, it was a source of profit; in governmental language, of revenue. Her garments and those of her children were soon nearly all rags, and all sold; when her revenue had become such that she and her children, as a public burden, were obliged, by a public tax, to be supported at the almshouse.

This well illustrates the principle and the effect of raising revenue from ardent spirit. What are the facts? In the county of Baltimore, Maryland, the support of pauperism, nearly the whole of which was occasioned by the sale and use of spirit, cost in 1830, more than \$20,000. From which, deduct between eight and nine thousand, the revenue obtained, leaving between thirteen and fourteen thousand dollars, in that single item, to come from the same source with the support of the woman whose revenue was so important, the pockets of the people. To this also ought to be added in balancing the account, the cost of crimes, idleness, dissipation, sickness, and the various other evils occasioned by it. And will not the people, for the sake of being relieved of the burdens, be willing to dispense with the revenue? Is there a man in the community, unless a rum-seller, or drinker, or one who hopes to make money, or obtain influence by the use of spirit, who will wish to retain it? If so, let him be called to bear in his own person and family all the evils which it occasions, and he will change his mind.

The warden of the prison in Baltimore states that 2322 criminals were the same year committed to that prison; and that 424 of them were intoxicated, when they were brought there; and that in his opinion, eight tenths of the whole were intemperate men.

The expenses of the city of New York in 1832, as stated in the Report of the Comptroller, were \$893,886 29,—\$685,385 74 of which were raised by a direct tax. The support of the criminal, pauper, and civil establishment cost \$315,782 98; and the Cholera, in addition to all public and private charities, and individual expenditures, cost \$102,57585,—making \$418,358 83; by far the greatest proportion of which, as well as almost innumerable other evils, were the fruits of about 3000 spirit venders, licensed to deal out the poison to about 210,000 souls. And what do these men pay as a compensation for the enormous mischiefs which they occasion? \$22,157. And, say a most respectable committee of gentlemen in that city, after investigating this subject, “We, the people, pay about \$400,000 more than we should if no drams were sold or drunk in the city. Suppose that only half of the expenses of Cholera were occasioned by drinking, and five sixths of the criminal, police, and pauper establishments; and one half of the salaries of officers, it would amount to \$302,099 15, which is now paid as a tax for licensed vices; over \$10,000 taken from the earnings of the people for every licensed grogshop which pays \$10 into the treasury.” What right have legislators to make laws, which in their operation thus tax the community, and take away the hard earnings of the people?

The grand jury of the city and county of New York, after careful examination, say that they have come to the deliberate conclusion, that if this source of vice and misery were at an end, three quarters of the crimes and pauperism of the city would be prevented, together with an incalculable amount of wretchedness, that does not come under the cognizance of law. And they add, “*It is our solemn impression that the time has now arrived when our public authorities should no longer sanction the evil complained of, by granting licenses for the purpose of vending ardent spirit; thereby legalising the traffic, at the expense of our moral, intellectual and physical power.*”

Of 653, who were in one year committed to the house of Correction in Boston, 453 were drunkards. And the overseer states, that many of the others who were committed as vagabonds, might, with equal propriety, be called drunkards; and that his opinion is, that there were not ten among the whole who were not in the habit of the excessive use of ardent spirit; that intemperance is almost the sole cause of all the commitments, that those who were committed as pilferers were almost all drunkards, and that probably they would not pilfer if they could not procure rum with the articles which they have stolen.

Is it not manifestly vicious for legislators to sanction a business which produces such results? They are elected by the people, and sent to legislate for the purpose of preventing crime, not producing it. And a vast portion of all their time is now occupied in making laws to punish crimes, which their own legislation produces. And the people are taxed millions of dollars annually, to sustain the burden occasioned by that legislation. Will the people of this free country longer endure it? They punish the criminals, and legalise the traffic that makes them. Like the father, who, to prevent his son from swearing, swore that if he did swear, he would visit him with his wrath; and with about as much wisdom as the man, who, when asked what should be done by fathers to keep their sons from being ruined by ardent spirit, answered, "Why, they must drink it all themselves."

They build prisons, and license men to carry on the trade that fills them; erect lunatic asylums, and furnish their tenants; the people build almshouses, and the magistrates license pauper-making manufactories to fill them, augment fourfold the public burdens, and tenfold the personal and domestic wretchedness of the country. And when the people rise, as they now often do, and will more often in future, and vote that they will not have such nuisances among them, the county commissioners, or some petty officers clothed with a little brief authority, come in and gravely declare, that "the public good require them;" and thus again load the community with burdens. This is legal oppression, legislative tyranny; and it leaves behind it a deep and stinging sense of injustice. A few retailers have the profit of making paupers, and the people have to support them; and then when they complain of the palpable injustice, to be told, "The public good requires it!" This is too much; and it needs no spirit of prophecy to announce that the time is not distant when men born to be free, who have the power and the heart to be free, will not endure it.

A few men, for their own pecuniary profit, will not long be suffered, under the sanction of law, thus to burden the community.

Of 3000 persons admitted to the workhouse in Salem, Mass., the superintendent states, that in his opinion 2900 were brought there directly or indirectly by intemperance. The superintendent of the almshouse in New York states, that the number of male adults in the house is 572, of which there are not 20 that can be called sober men; that the number of females is 601, and that he doubts whether there are 50 of them, that can be called sober women.

In the city of Boston, for six years, there were upon an average, 247 commitments annually to a single prison, for drunkenness; and 95 drunkards were committed to the penitentiary, in a single month.

A distinguished jurist in the city of New York, acquainted with the courts, stated, that he could find but three cases of murder

committed in that city for fifteen years, except under the influence of liquor. Legislators hang murderers, and license the business that makes them; but not without becoming, if they know what they do, sharers in the guilt. They expend millions to prevent disease, and license the business which produces it, and renders it doubly fatal; but not without being accessory to the consigning of multitudes to a premature grave, and a miserable eternity.

Is it not true then, and may not long afflicted and suffering humanity lift up her head with exultation, that the time is approaching, when, in the language of the chancellor of the State of New York, “reflecting men will no more think of erecting and renting grogshops as a means of gain, than they would now think of poisoning the well from which a neighbor obtains water for his family; or arming a maniac to destroy his own life and the lives of those around him?” And may we not add, when reflecting legislators too, will no more think of sanctioning the one by law, than they would now think of sanctioning the other? And when there shall not be a christian legislator under heaven, whose countenance would not turn pale, and whose tongue would not cleave to the roof of his mouth, should he attempt to speak in favor of it. In the city of Washington, the revenue from the sale of ardent spirit was about \$6000; and the loss, as estimated by Judge Cranch, occasioned by it, was probably not less, all things considered, than \$100,000. Revenue then does not require the sale of ardent spirit.*

But it is said, and grave legislators sometimes echo the declaration, “It ought to be licensed, and the use of it encouraged, to make a market for the coarse grains, in order to promote the agricultural interests of the country.” But where the drinking of spirit prevails most, agriculture, other things being equal, uniformly flourishes least; and thus, like every show of argument on that side, it is totally opposed to facts; as well as to reason, religion, morality, patriotism, and even to humanity.

Many grain growers will not now sell to distillers. They deem it a crime to feed those fountains of death, yet their grains find a market, and they are often among the most prosperous men in their vicinity. It does not appear, that any more dismal prospect than that of others, is opening before their children.

In the year 1810 it was estimated that between five and six million bushels of grain were distilled in the United States. Suppose in 20 years it was doubled, and that in 1830, 12,000,000 bushels were thus destroyed; and that this, to the growers who of course obtained their pay, was worth 50 cts. a bushel, \$6,000,000. The annual cost of crime and of pauperism produced by the use

of ardent spirit has been estimated at \$7,050,000. Subtract from this the price of the grain, and you have from these two items alone, a loss of \$1,500,000. Say the Committee of the New York State Society, "Since the farmers have begun to open their eyes to the evils growing out of the turning of the staff of life into a substance to destroy it, and have made use of their coarse grains for bread stuffs, or to feed their cattle, they have steadily advanced in price." And they calculate that the change produced by the Temperance Reformation, now saves the State of New York several million dollars a year.

Let all farmers use their grains to increase the number and value of their horses, cattle and hogs; not to diminish the number and value of men, and they will find it to be, to themselves and their country, *great gain*.

Others say, "The object of licensing is not to encourage the sale and use of spirit, but to restrain and prevent it." To this there are two answers. The first is, it does not restrain and prevent it. It has been tried effectually, for more than half a century; and its fruits have been manifested in the living wretchedness, and in the dying agonies of more than a million of men. Notwithstanding all such restraints and preventions, the evil constantly increased, till it had well nigh proved our ruin. The other answer is, *the licensing of sin is not the way to prevent or restrain it, but it is the way to sanction and perpetuate it; by declaring to the community that, if practised legally, it is right; and thus preventing the efficacy of truth and facts in producing the conviction that it is wrong.*

But says one, "By saying that none except respectable men shall sell ardent spirit, and they only in limited numbers, we do not say that for them to sell it, is right. Would a law which should forbid men to ride horseback, upon worldly business, on the Sabbath, be saying, or would it imply, that for them to journey on that day for such a purpose on foot would be right?" Suppose it would not; but suppose also that legislators should go farther, and make a law, that as many as the public good should require, and should pay a dollar, should have a legal right to travel in that way, on worldly business, on the Sabbath; and that certain men should be appointed actually to license a number in every neighborhood for that purpose, and should license them, notwithstanding all reasons and remonstrances against it; would it not be saying, and by the whole weight of legislation, in opposition to truth, that it is morally right for those men to travel as the law prescribes? or else, that legal right and moral right are in this case, in opposition? And would it not be declaring also, in opposition to truth, that the public good requires this? and thus tend to increase the difficulties, by moral means, of convincing men that it is wicked? Who can doubt but that it would operate, and from the nature of the case

must operate in this manner? So with the laws that sanction and approbate the traffic in ardent spirit, and imply that the public good requires it. They teach a falsehood; not in time past understood and designed by legislators, but on that account, none the less false. Nor did their ignorance, and that of the community in those days of darkness, hinder its desolating effects.

“The law,” says Judge Platt, “which licenses the sale of ardent spirits, is an impediment to the Temperance Reformation. Whenever public opinion and the moral sense of our community shall be so far corrected and matured as to regard them in their true light, and when the public safety shall be thought to require it, dramshops will be indictable, at common law, *as public nuisances.*”

Suppose a law should be enacted providing that none should counterfeit the public coin, or be authorised to pass counterfeit money, in small quantities, except men of a certain character; and that no more of them should be permitted to do this, than certain other men, who might, or might not be interested in its circulation, should judge would be for the public good; and that they should not be authorised to pass it to drunkards, as it might injure them, would it not be saying, that for those men to do it, as the law prescribes, is right? Would it not present a mighty barrier in the way of convincing them, by moral means, that it is wrong? And suppose, in some rare cases, the license should be withheld from those who had passed it to drunkards, would that prevent the mischief? Apply this principle to any other vice. And that it does apply with all its force to the traffic in ardent spirit as a drink, which tends only to injure mankind, is most manifest.

But says another, If you do not license men of conscience to sell it, men of no conscience, in such great numbers, will sell it, that the evil will be overwhelming. But it is not necessary to license counterfeiters to prevent the community from being deluged with base coin. It is not necessary to license gamblers, or swindlers, in order to prevent the community from being overwhelmed with their mischief. No more is it needful to license men to sell ardent spirit. If wicked men, in opposition to the influence of moral means, will prosecute a wicked business, which corrupts our youth, wastes our property, and endangers our lives; the community, in this free country, this land of liberty, have the power and the right, without licensing iniquity, to defend themselves from its evils. *This opens the door, and the only door, which truth and duty ever open for legislation with regard to sin; not to license and sanction it, but to defend the community from its mischiefs; and in such a manner as is best adapted to deter the wicked from transgression, and promote as far as practicable their good and the good of the community.* And this is the change in legislation with regard to the sin of trafficking in ardent spirit, which the cause of temperance, or

patriotism, of virtue, and of God, now imperiously demands. Treat this vice, as other vices are treated, and there will be no difficulty in branding it with infamy.

Let legislators, chosen by the people and respectable in society, license any sin, and it tends to shield that sin from public odium; and to perpetuate it, by presenting for it a legal justification. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just; even they both are an abomination to the Lord."

Let all sanctioning by law of this abominable traffic be forever abandoned; and if the rising indignation of a deeply injured, and long suffering community does not sweep it away, and men are still found base enough to continue to scatter the estates of their neighbors, to fill our almshouses with paupers and our penitentiaries with convicts, to make wives more than widows, and children doubly orphans; to decoy our youth, and sink them to a premature and an ignominious grave,—the people, if they choose, by the arm of legislation can undertake the holy, righteous, and indispensable work of *self defence*. And as all political power is in their hands, it will be found to be a work which is practicable. The wisdom of legislators chosen without the aid of ardent spirit, and the patriotism of statesmen who do not use it, or rely upon it for support; but who rely on the righteousness of their cause, the good sense and virtue of their constituents, and the gracious aid of their God, will be abundantly sufficient to the exigency of the case. If necessary to protect our property, our children and our lives, and there is no other, or no better way to do it, how perfectly easy and how perfectly just, whenever the people generally shall desire it, to indict at common law the keeping of a grogshop as a public nuisance; or to provide by statute that those who make paupers shall support them; and those who excite others to commit crimes shall themselves be treated as criminals. And in the necessary, the magnanimous, the glorious work of legal self defence from an evil, which, in defiance of public sentiment, of reason, religion, humanity, and of God, would roll over earth a deluge of fire, and annihilate the hopes of the world, legislators may expect, in proportion as the subject is understood, the united and cordial support of all good men.

The point to be decided, to be decided by legislators of these United States, to be decided for all coming posterity, for the world, and for eternity, is,

Shall the sale of ardent spirit as a drink be treated in legislation, as a virtue, or a vice? Shall it be licensed, sanctioned by law, and perpetuated to roll its all pervading curses onward interminably? Or shall it be treated, as it is in truth, a *sin*? And if there shall in future, be men base enough to continue to commit it, shall the community, in self defence, by wise and wholesome

legislation, as far as practicable and expedient, shield themselves from its evils; and if these evils must, through the wickedness of men, continue to exist, let them fall as leniently as the public safety will permit, alone on the heads of their authors?*

On the decision of this question, to a great extent, hangs the endless destiny of countless millions. In England, Ireland, and Scotland; Sweden, Denmark, and Russia; Germany, India, and China; Africa, and the islands of the sea, men are now awaking from the slumber of ages, and on this subject are following our example. They look to us, ask for information, acknowledge their obligations to our priority, and cheer us onward. Their voice seems to rise as on the wings of the wind, and to cry from the four quarters of the earth, Ye who were blessed with the power, and heart to be free, and to commence the world's emancipation, stop not, or falter till it is finished. Aid not by example, or business, or laws, what you labor to remove. Sanction not, by legislation, the continuance of the burden under which creation has so long groaned, and which she is now agonizing to throw off. Cheer her, and help her; or at least let her have the full benefit of her own efforts, the efforts of her friends, and the aid of her God; and through the grace of Him that worketh all in all, His people shall be free, eternally free; and the glory shall be given to Him, to whom it is all due, forever.

* In 1773, it was represented to the Legislature of Massachusetts, that spirit, distilled through leaden pipes, was unwholesome, and hurtful. A law was therefore passed that no person should use such pipes, and no artificer make them for the purpose of being used in distilling, under penalty of one hundred pounds. Assay masters were appointed, who were put under oath, to examine, and prove to the best of their abilities, all pipes that were used in distilling, and if any one was found to contain alloy of lead, or base metal, they were to give notice to the distiller, who was forbidden to use it afterwards, under penalty of one hundred pounds. (Mass. Laws. Vol. II. p. 1001. Boston Ed. 1807.)

Why might they not use leaden pipes, if they were cheaper than others, and by using them they would make more money? Because they were injurious to health, and endangered men's lives. They were therefore forbidden to use them under penalty of one hundred pounds. But what was the injury done to health, and what the loss of human life, by the use of leaden pipes, compared with that occasioned by the sale of ardent spirit? And shall legislators forbid the one, and licence the other? Can they continue, after the poisonous nature and destructive effects of ardent spirit are known, to license the sale of it without great guilt? If they do continue to do it, will they not, at the divine tribunal, and ought they not at the bar of public opinion, to be held responsible for its effects?

Let the people, who have long been suffering its destructive effects, judge.