

Civil rights and social duties in relation to the liquor traffic : a paper read before the members of the Manchester Friends' Institute, Friday, March 24, 1871, as the concluding lecture of the session / by Thomas H. Barker.

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CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL DUTIES

IN RELATION TO THE

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LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

A Paper

Read before the Members of the Manchester Friends' Institute, Friday,

March 24, 1871, as the concluding Lecture of the Session.

BY

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Salus populi suprema lex.



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CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL DUTIES IN RELATION TO THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

"Salus populi suprema lex."

THE special topic of this paper was rather suggested to than selected by me. I need, however, scarcely say that it is a subject perfectly congenial, so that whatever may be advanced will be the utterance of a sincere and earnest mind on a question that has not been hastily scanned, and will not be thoughtlessly dogmatised upon. It is my wish, however, and shall be my aim, to approach the question in the spirit of an earnest and reverent truth-seeker, not assuming to have explored all its depths, mastered all its difficulties, or exhausted what can be said, thought, or argued, *pro* and *con*. Permit me, then, to bring the humble contribution of one diligent and honest student, whose ambition is to be a co-worker with the noble pioneers of progress, who are hoping and resolving to accomplish a purer and higher civilisation.

The physiological action of alcohol, the seductive character of the drinking usages, the expediency of signing pledges of total abstinence, of forming Teetotal Societies, Bands of Hope, Rechabite Tents, Sons of Temperance Divisions, and Templar Lodges, are all points of deep interest, on which I might, did my special topic permit, have some definite views to submit and argument to urge. But all this wide class of collateral remarks and detail, though involved in the temperance question, and historically relating to the great movement, as a whole, I conceive to be rather outside of the strict line that this paper requires. It is not, therefore, as a teetotaler, not as a member of the Alliance, not even as an advocate of the Permissive Bill, that I present the

question to your calm consideration and candid criticism. I wish to ascend to a still higher standpoint, and to speak to you from a broader platform. As a citizen I address fellow-citizens; and as a member of society I appeal to the social instincts, the social interests, and the social duties of men of all classes and all grades. On this common platform, where we have rights and responsibilities in common, what I have to advance will be addressed to the conscience and common sense of men and women who can rise above sect, party, and class, to a noble appreciation of what appertains to our common humanity in its social conditions and civic functions.

I. And first, let me define what we mean by the liquor traffic, and point out its exceptional character.

The manufacture, importation, and vending of intoxicating liquors of all kinds, for individual gain or for national revenue, form, what we hold to be an exceptional, an illegitimate, and pernicious traffic, contrary to social order, sound morals, and national prosperity. Such a traffic ought, therefore, not to be legalised or tolerated in any civilised community. Unless we can make good this position, broad and sweeping as it is, we must fail to lay an adequate foundation upon which arguments and appeals can be based, for that culminating conclusion to which we wish to carry this essay—the right and the duty of the State to prohibit and suppress the liquor traffic. It will scarcely be denied by any one, however thoughtless or flippant he may be, that there are some kinds of traffic that society has a right to interfere with and prevent. We might take this position as granted, and as indisputable; but we will fortify it by two or three brief quotations from sources outside the strictly Temperance and Prohibition sphere of authority. The late Lord Macaulay, in 1848, delivered a speech on the Ten Hours Bill, the argument of which must be held as equally or even more satisfactory and conclusive, when applied to the Liquor Traffic. Lord Macaulay said:—

“There is a great deal of trade which can't be looked upon merely as traffic, which affects higher than pecuniary interests; and to say that Government ought only to regulate such trades is a monstrous proposition from which Adam Smith would have shrunk with horror. Higher than pecuniary interests are at stake here. It concerns the commonwealth that the great body of the people should not live in a way

that makes life wretched and short, which enfeebles the body and pollutes the mind. It must be admitted that where health or morality are concerned, we are justified in interfering with the contracts of individuals."

If so much can be said of the pernicious tendency of overwork in factories, how much more will it apply to that traffic in liquors which, according to universal observation and testimony, tends to make life wretched and short, by enfeebling the body and polluting the mind.

The *Edinburgh Review*, in an able article, July, 1854, says:—

"But, further, there are some trades to which the State applies not restriction merely but prohibition. Thus the business of coining money is utterly suppressed by the laws of all civilised states; thus the opening of lotteries is a commercial speculation forbidden by the law of England. If it be asked on what grounds the State is justified in annihilating these branches of industry, it must be answered as before, that society may put down what is dangerous to itself—*salus populi suprema lex*. Any trade, employment, or use of property detrimental to the life, health, or order of the people is, by English law, a *public nuisance*. And, in suppressing it, the State assumes the right of sacrificing private interests to the public good. And this not only when the detriment is physical or economical, but also when it is moral. Thus unwholesome graveyards are shut up, and noisome vitriol works pulled down, for their physical noxiousness; private coining is made illegal for economical reasons; slave-trading, lotteries, cockpits, bear gardens, gambling houses, brothels, and obscence print-shops are prohibited on moral grounds. Now the liquor traffic, and particularly the retail branch of it, is a public nuisance in all these respects—physically, economically, and morally. By its physical consequences it causes death to thousands; reduces thousands more to madness or idiocy; and afflicts myriads with diseases involving the most wretched forms of bodily and mental torture. Considered in its economical results, it impairs the national resources by destroying a large amount of corn which is annually distilled into spirits; and it indirectly causes three-fourths of the taxation required by pauperism and by criminal prosecutions and prison expenses; and, further, it diminishes the effective industry of the working classes, thereby lessening the amount of national production. Thirdly, viewed in its moral operation, it is the cause (as we have previously shown) of two-thirds of the crime committed; it lowers the intelligence and hinders the civilisation of the people; and it leads the men to ill-treat and starve their families, and sacrifice domestic comfort to riotous debauchery."

We might multiply these quotations to almost any extent, from all who have thoughtfully and intelligently written on social politics, or on politico-economic subjects. But we proceed with our statement, by remarking that liquor selling is an "exceptional traffic" by general consent; there being no party, no statesman, no third-rate

politician, and even no single man engaged in the liquor traffic, who pleads for free trade in alcoholic articles. Until lately there has been a lingering doubt in some bewildered or superstitious minds, who have thought that possibly beer and wine might be left to the ordinary laws of supply and demand. But even that impression has faded away, and no licence for the retail sale of wine or malt liquors can now be issued, without magisterial sanction and discretion, supposed to be exercised in the interests of public morality and of social order. All our future legislation must, therefore, be based on the principle that the State, as representing social and moral interests, has a perfect right to interfere with, and limit, or, if need be, to suppress the liquor traffic, for the protection of society from otherwise inevitable evils and intolerable burthens. The liquor traffic, unlike the bread trade, has no primary right of existence by common law, usage, or recognised necessity. It has merely a statutory basis—a parliamentary sanction—a special legal privilege and protection, within certain defined limits as to days, hours, persons, places, licence fees, police inspection, and magisterial discretion and supervision. The liquor seller merely enters into a limited contract with the Government of the day, who virtually claims the monopoly of this vicious and perilous traffic in fascinating liquors. This monopoly is farmed out by the excise, under the discreet supervision of the magistrates at brewster sessions, the consideration being the payment of certain licence fees and certain duties on the articles to be vended, with a guarantee that no drunkenness shall be encouraged or allowed. The Government manage to clutch some twenty-five millions sterling out of the transaction, whilst the public is fleeced directly and indirectly, in the cost of the liquor and the costly consequences of its sale and use, to the aggregate extent of over two hundred millions annually.

It will thus be seen that the liquor traffic is a privileged monopoly, grasped by capitalists and by that great officer of state, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. By universal consent and verdict it is not a trade that can be permitted to be free, either in a fiscal, a social, or a moral sense. It must be held under many checks and most vexatious restraints, with a view to limit and regulate it. But all

history, general observation, and daily experience prove that it has not been and cannot be "satisfactorily regulated." This is the conclusion to which thoughtful and intelligent minds have come or are coming, and to which nearly all earnest social reformers and temperance workers have already come. If any think that the expedients of licensing schemes have not been exhausted, and that they can frame a licence law that will meet the necessities of the case,—that will satisfy the demands of capitalists engaged in the traffic, and conciliate the good-will and confidence of the public mind, and of those who feel a deep and patriotic interest in the sobriety of the nation, let them now bring forward their project. Let them not hide their clearer light and keep back their much needed wisdom. The people perish for lack of the knowledge that these sagacious men possess, but are keeping to themselves. The Government is now bestirring itself; the Cabinet has been pondering the great social problem; the responsible ministers are framing their policy and plans; and Mr. Bruce is putting the finishing touches to his long promised Licensing Reform Bill. Another and a supreme effort is to be made to regulate liquor selling. What Mr. Bruce's measure will be we cannot say, but this we can aver: That in proportion as it gives facilities for the sale of intoxicating liquors and withholds a power of veto from the people, by a direct vote, it will fail to promote sobriety and to stop drunkenness. If Mr. Bruce is more concerned to protect the so-called vested interests of the big brewers and distillers than to protect the interests of morality, of social order, and of national sobriety—and we fear that this will be found to be the case—then will his measure prove to be a delusion and a snare—another lamentable failure! There is too much reason to fear that the Government bill will not be marked by any great legislative qualities, that will commend it to the moral sympathy, the conscience, and confidence of the sober and thoughtful mind of the nation. He has not, it is to be feared, learnt the great art of plucking "the flower of safety from the nettle of danger" by a vigorous and courageous grasp. He will try not to alarm the susceptibilities of the Buxtons and the Besses; he will be afraid to give the

ratepayers the power to put down liquor selling in their respective districts, lest they should really avail themselves of the power, and put the veto *into* force too rapidly to be quite convenient to his friends, the brewers and distillers, and the "respectable" publicans. He no doubt shudders at the bare thought of what would be the terrible consequence to vested interests, and to the national revenue, if the people made an ugly rush towards anything so extreme and novel as national sobriety !

II. Leaving Mr. Bruce and the Cabinet, let us now inquire as to what are our civil rights in relation to the liquor traffic. Virtually, and by implication, we have already asserted our citizen rights, by defining the right of the State in relation to the liquor traffic. It is obvious that if the State has a right to interfere with, and to control or suppress any traffic or public system of social evil, each individual citizen has the same right, so far as his individual opinion, his political influence and electoral vote extend, to express, assert, and enforce that right. Is society injured by the liquor traffic ? Then every member of society is thereby more or less injured. No man liveth to himself ; no good citizen desires to live for himself alone. Has society a right to protest against a public evil and nuisance ? Then every member of society has an equal right to utter his or her protest. Has society a right to be protected from the invasions of the liquor traffic ? Then every family, and each individual member of society, has the same clear, indubitable, and undeniable right to be so protected, and to claim that protection. What we affirm of the whole we must affirm of the parts. What is true of the corporate body called "society," or "the State," must be true of the individual members of the body politic. To deny me a right to be protected from any public evil whilst I am a loyal member of society, ready to perform my duty to the State and made to share its burdens of taxation, is to deal treacherously with me, and to rob me so far of my civic rights. Those who deny me this right of protection have an equal right, if any, to deny every other member of society the same right of protection. And this comes to a virtual denial of the grand principle which underlies, and must underlie, all social compacts, all governmental functions and State securities :

the right of society to be protected from that which injures, and which, if uncontrolled, would undermine the foundations of order and destroy the social fabric itself. A doctrine or principle so insane, pernicious, and criminal as this would be, there are but few who would dare to give expression to. Certainly, no one out of Bedlam will say that for the benefit of a privileged class—the sordid interest of a few individuals—the liquor traffic must be sanctioned, protected, and perpetuated against the protests, against the will and interests of the rest of the community. But some may say, or they may think it, that on the ground of revenue the State cannot afford to give up its lucrative share of the plunder got from the liquor traffic. This, however, is a most shallow, immoral, and unstatesman-like view,—a most unchristian, and we might say atrocious claim. Nothing can justify the moral atrocity, as nothing can compensate for the stupendous folly of that criminal policy, which would seek a public benefit from private vices, and from the development and sanction of a system that saps the morality of the community, rots the foundations of society, and imperils the stability of the nation. The *Quarterly Review*, so far back as October, 1820, half a century ago, saw this as plainly, and expressed it as forcibly as we can, in 1871. Says the able writer :—

“If the multiplication and management of public-houses really augment guilt as much as we have now supposed, the good they do to agriculture and the revenue by the sale of spirits is but a slender compensation for the evil they occasion. To connive at dissolute or desperate habits, because they may afford a temporary supply to an exhausted treasury, will be thought but a miserable shift for any minister, as long as any sense of right and wrong is left among us. It has not even the merit of a sound State expedient ; for private vices, when traced through all their consequences, will never prove, in the end, to be public benefits ; and we believe no prodigal heir ever disposed of his expectations so improvidently as a finance minister who, for any sum of ready money, virtually assigns the expectant virtue of his country.”

Later still, the editor of the *Times*, December 17th, 1853, clearly saw the criminal recklessness, and the ruinous policy of this system of raising revenue. The writer, it is true, limits his remarks to “ardent spirits ;” but every intelligent school-boy can make his own deductions and generalisations. What is true of ardent

spirits is equally true of all alcoholic liquors, whether called wine, ale, or cider. The writer says:—

“It is a peculiarity of spirit drinking, that money spent upon it is, at the best, thrown away, and in general far worse than thrown away. It neither supplies the natural wants of man, nor offers an adequate substitute for them. Indeed, it is far too favourable a view of the subject to treat the money spent on it as if it were cast into the sea. Yet, even so, there is something exceedingly irritating in the reflection that a great part of a harvest, raised with infinite care and pains on an ungrateful soil and in an inhospitable climate [referring to Sweden and Norway], instead of adding to the national wealth, or bringing the rich returns that, in this season of famine, it could not fail to command—is poured in the shape of liquid fire down the throats of the nation that produced it, and instead of leaving them richer and happier, tends to impoverish them by the waste of labour and capital, and degrade them by vicious and debilitating indulgences. A great portion of the harvests of Sweden, and of many other countries, is applied to a purpose, compared with which it would have been better that the corn had never grown, or that it had been mildewed in the ear. No way so rapid to increase the wealth of nations and the morality of society could be devised as the utter annihilation of the manufacture of ardent spirits, constituting as they do an infinite waste and an unmixed evil.”

Neither, then, for private gain, nor for public revenue, is it right or politic for the State to allow the liquor traffic to exist; and every good citizen is morally bound to claim, as a part of his civil rights, that the Government of the country shall protect him from a system of traffic so hurtful and so demoralising—so contrary to good government and to all just legislation. We claim it as our right to be protected from this great public nuisance, this fearful social scourge and terrible national curse. Any Government that cannot, or that will not, give the people this protection, is not a *bona fide* government, but a conspiracy or an organised hypocrisy. It does not deserve our confidence, and has no claim upon us for our respectful allegiance. It betrays its most sacred trusts, it impoverishes and destroys the people—the silly geese who lay the golden eggs. It is hand in hand with plunderers and “poisoners general,” who care but little for their country or their countrymen, so long as they can batten on the tears, the groans, and life’s blood of their hapless and helpless victims. But we have reason to hope that there are at least some members of the present Government, besides the Prime Minister, who are partially enlightened and patriotic on this question, and

who will not utterly refuse to concede to the people that just and righteous boon they crave, the removal of the temptations and corruptions of the liquor traffic. Let us hope that the better counsels will prevail in the Cabinet, and that at least our rulers, who cannot or dare not protect us from the organised liquor power, will give us the power, by "local option," to veto the issue of liquor licences in our respective parishes and townships. Less than this they cannot honestly offer us, and anything less than this will be a mockery of our misery and of our prayers.

III. A few words now as to our "Social Duties," in relation to the liquor traffic. By implication these have been somewhat anticipated by what has been advanced as to our social rights. Rights and duties are correlative and almost transposable terms. When we once ascertain what are our rights in relation to any great public question or evil system, we are not far from apprehending the responsibility resting upon us regarding the same. Even the ancient Pagan moralist, Plato, could say: "I have nothing in me more certain than this, that I must be as noble and good as it is possible for me to be." Christian citizens should at least try to rise to this attitude of goodness and nobility.

As good and loyal members of society, we ought at all times to be anxious to entertain and diffuse sound opinions in relation to the great questions and movements of the day. Clear and accurate thought respecting right action is the master power of the world. The men who think rightly, and who clearly express their thoughts, direct the wheels of progress; whilst those who think and speak fallaciously hinder, and mar, and undo the work that the world needs doing. It, is, therefore, most important that true views should be put forward by each and all of us, who labour and yearn for a higher civilisation and for a purer and nobler social life. We must cherish and assert our civil rights; we must do more, we must exercise these rights with specific and strenuous aims of a practical character, and with courageous and persistent resolution to overturn and overcome the difficulties that beset us. We must join hopefully and heartily with others who are like-minded, to utter our

protest, to organise our forces, and to concentrate our energies, striving manfully with a courage that cannot be daunted and a determination that will not be gainsaid or turned back. And, having put our hands to the plough of progress, we must never turn back, nor be weary in well-doing; having lifted the standard, we must never lower our flag; having entered into the strife, we must not cease our crusade until we have accomplished our warfare. In the face of great social evils, apathy is a crime, and despair is the one great sin that cannot be atoned for. If the liquor traffic is an evil institution, anti-social and anti-Christian in its character, pernicious in its tendencies, and disastrous in its results, we must make war upon it, and we must determine to uproot and destroy it. It will not let us alone, and we must not, we dare not, let it alone. If we do not destroy it, it will destroy us as a people and nation.

This is a part—and oh, how large a part!—of the great war between Heaven and Hell. It is a contest between truth and error, between the thrones of iniquity and of righteousness; between the demons of lust, avarice, cruelty, and all the other powers of darkness on the one side, and the angels of love, mercy, justice, purity, and godliness on the other side.

Can we doubt, then, on which side wise and good men ought to be found? If we dare and do hesitate on a question like this, are we not in peril? To doubt on such an issue, when once perceived, is to be self-condemned. The men of true and noble mind, of truth-loving soul, and of pure and quick conscience; the men of enlightened, intelligent, and generous and holy aspirations; all the true sons of temperance and of wisdom, sooner or later will take their right position, by an unerring instinct of “natural selection” and of “spiritual affinity,” the soul’s true divine election. They who love purity and goodness, mercy and truth, cannot miss their way, and can never be found fighting on the wrong side—fighting against God and humanity, against their own deepest and highest instincts, and the noblest attributes of a true Christian manhood. Truly good men, even if they have formed an incipient appetite for intoxicating liquor, and fancy that it is an essential ingredient in their cup of earthly happi-

ness and creature comfort, will be willing to recognise the voice of reason, and respond to the claims of duty, wherever it may lead or whatever sacrifice it may call for. Surely no righteous man, no pure woman, no one who professes to name the name of Christ, "who pleased not Himself," but whose great mission was to "seek and save the lost," and to "destroy the works of the devil," can ever take the side of the liquor traffic, which in our day has become the embodiment of, or the incentive to, nearly all that is socially corrupting and nationally destructive. Let us always remember that our social ties involve social duties. Let us not too proudly vaunt our "Individuality," our "Liberty," and our self-hood, at the expense of our social responsibilities, our citizen duties, and all the nobler Christian charities. We are, in a real and awful sense, our "brother's keeper." Liberty is only really good and right within the bounds of goodness, of righteous law, and of a holy life. Love, a generous sympathy and a genuine philanthropy, these are the essential elements alike of all true religion, of good citizenship, and of moral rectitude; and into this spirit of love our liberty must be baptized before it is true Christian liberty—the perfect liberty of "the sons of God." Any other liberty—any liberty that regards not the weal of others is not true liberty, but tends to licence, licentiousness, and to lust, either of flesh or spirit. If this liquor traffic be a lovely, and reputable, and worthy avocation, we must uphold, defend, and justify it. We must stand by whatever is right and good, however difficult and dangerous it may be. But where is the conscience, even of a liquor-seller, that dares to whisper that all is right in respect of the traffic? No Christian-minded man, however he may try, can so deceive and delude himself as to kneel down and ask his Heavenly Father to bless and prosper him in dealing out the intoxicating dram. They all know that it is a hateful, hurtful, and infamous business, and they all mean to get a fortune as quickly as they can, and then to retire from the bar and become decent and reputable, if not pious and heavenly-minded, before they die. Liquor sellers, as a rule, do not wish their sons and daughters to succeed them in the traffic; but they hope and strive to get them into something more respectable and reputable. There are,

however, some clever and excellent men, philosophic students and thinkers, who have so far puzzled themselves with indefinite and fallacious theories, as to their social rights and "Individual Liberty," that they cannot exactly see their way to the prohibition of the liquor traffic, either on the ground of civil right or of social duty. If these good men would take their stand for a few days behind a gin-shop counter, and would watch the whole process and results of the traffic; mark its blear-eyed victims; follow them to their wretched homes, so-called; trace their antecedents; hear their curses; see the deep, damning desolation produced by the liquor, they would revise some of their theories on individual liberty; and they would not find it so difficult to come to the honest conclusion that others have arrived at:—That liquor selling is opposed to true liberty, to civil rights, and to social duties; and that therefore it is the right and the duty of the State to suppress it, and of all good citizens to aid in accomplishing its destruction. The essence of just government,—of true political economy, and of all social morality, may be summed up in this aphorism: "In the relation of Government and subject, of community and member, the good of the community is the very primary object." This being admitted, as it must be, there is but one inquiry that is pertinent and prevailing: "Is the liquor traffic conducive to the good of the community?" Now this is a plain common-sense question; and the people themselves are best able to answer it. If Mr. John Stuart Mill, Professor Fawcett, or any other philosopher assumes to answer for the people, and will not allow the question to be submitted to the people, he thereby confesses that he is conscious that the people, if appealed to, would answer differently to himself; otherwise he would certainly not object to have the popular vote taken. The liquor-traffickers themselves are alike conscious of this, and dare not let the people, even their own customers, have a power of veto over the traffic; and the Government are also conscious of this, and it is to be feared it will falter, and refuse to concede this permissive power of local prohibition in its integrity, lest the people should be inclined to use it. But it is a just and reasonable demand, which cannot be with-

held—much longer. The people who now have the power to elect the men who make the laws of the land, cannot long be denied this liberty and power of control over a rotten and iniquitous licensing system, which has come down from feudal times, the handiwork of kings, lords, and commons, long before the great body of the people were fairly represented, or had any potent voice in shaping the legislation of the land. Those who seek the confidence of the people, and solicit their suffrages, must ere long listen to their growing demand for protection from the great and foul incubus of the liquor traffic. Their cry for protection comes up from the lowest depths of our social wretchedness; from thousands of the miserable victims of the traffic; from the desolated hearthstone of bereaved widows and orphans of the slain by drink; from fathers and mothers who have had the pride and hope of the family destroyed; from husbands whose wives have been victimised, and from wives whose husbands have been brutalised; from children whose parents have become drunkards; from Sunday-school teachers whose scholars have been seduced and corrupted; from ministers of religion whose deacons and church members have been drawn from the sanctuary to the tavern; and from all the judges of the land, who cry out against the unceasing, increasing, and appalling ravages of the drink demon. The mournful and mighty cry for deliverance must be heard, for it is piercing the sky and rending the rocks. It can never be stifled or hushed; but it must continue to reverberate, and to increase in volume, pathos, and potency, until the rulers of the land shall be compelled to listen to its demand and respond to its appeal.

But does anyone tell us that we are chimerical and fanatical; that our aim is utopian, and that we can never succeed; that we are beating the air, and that our time, our energies, our funds, and all our high hopes and grand endeavours are vain, and can have no solid fruition, no adequate or worthy result; that the vice of drinking cannot be repressed; that the liquor traffic cannot be practically prohibited; but that most men will continue to drink, and that some men will continue to make and supply the drink. Well, even then, our high endeavour shall not have been in vain, but shall return in benefit

and blessing on ourselves. Better, a thousand times better, that we struggle against a giant evil, even though we fail, than that we learn to look on in apathy and make no brave and heroic effort to save our fellow creatures from destruction. By this very effort we at least save ourselves from sinful complicity, and, it may be, from being drawn into the maelstrom of prevailing dissipation and ruin; we save ourselves from rushing headlong over the precipice of destruction; we save our own souls alive, and prove that we are not "dumb driven cattle," but that we are trying to be "heroes in the strife." An able and noble writer on political economy, W. T. Thornton, in his great work "On Labour," page 35, says:—

"Endeavours on behalf of the necessitous are labours in the Lord—labour which is never thrown away. Yet, better that it were thrown away utterly than that it should not be exerted. Better, far better, go on to the end of time, expending our ingenuity on chimerical schemes, or attempts to discover the undiscoverable, to remedy the irremediable—better thus waste our energies, thereby at least keeping up within us some glow of ennobling sympathy, than that despair of doing aught further for others should render us thoughtful only for ourselves, should so deaden our sensibilities as to permit of our making the most for ourselves of such happiness as lies within our reach, blind to the right and deaf to the cry of misery on all sides surrounding us."

But we do not and dare not for one moment despair of the future success of this great effort in the direction of temperance reform and national sobriety. Unless we are greatly mistaken, it is the great political question before us, and which even the present generation must and will solve. It is not now the question of a handful of "fanatics" and "teetotal zealots." Our bishops in Convocation, our judges, our statesmen in and out of the Cabinet, our social reformers, and our scientific philosophers, have had it forced upon them, and are becoming inspired to speak about it. The President of the British Association, Professor Huxley, a few months since, at Liverpool, said:—

"Since I have walked through your great town of Liverpool I have seen fully as many savages, and as degraded savages, as in Australia—nay worse. I declare it has been shocking to me, walking through your streets, to see unwashed and unkempt brutalised people side by side with the greatest refinement and the greatest luxury. . . . Talk of political questions? . . . The man who can see, I think, will observe that in these times there lies beneath all these questions the

great question whether that profligate misery which dogs the footsteps of modern civilisation shall be allowed to exist. . . . I say I believe that is the great political question of the future. If you could only see the right way of doing it, I could know no nobler work than to go with you in that object."

In conclusion, let me make an appeal on behalf of this temperance cause, in all its broad, grand, national, and commanding aspects and aims. We can each do something, say something, and give something to broaden and expedite the movement, to hasten the time of its triumph, and swell the stream of its blessings. "As on the floor of the Pacific Sea little insects lay the foundation of firm islands, slowly uprising from the tropic wave, so you and I, in our daily life, in house or field or shop, obscurely faithful, may prepare the way for the republic of righteousness—the democracy of justice that is to come. Our own moral efforts shall bless us here, not in our outward life alone, but in the inward and majestic life of conscience. All the justice we mature shall bless us here, yea, and hereafter; but at our death we leave it added to the common store of humankind. Even the crumbs that fall from our table may save a brother's life. You and I may help to deepen the channel of human morality in which God's justice runs, and the wrecks of evil which now check the stream be borne off the sooner by the strong, all-conquering tide of right, the river of God that is full of blessing."

Let us not wait until the stream of social influence, the tide of public opinion, sweeps us into the movement, like as dead fish float with the current they can no longer swim against. But let us *now*, with a virtuous resolve and a patriotic impulse, take our true position, to assert our civil rights and perform our social duties in relation to the liquor traffic.

"Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause brings fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave men choose, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied."