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Contributors

United Kingdom Alliance.

Publication/Creation

Manchester : United Kingdom Alliance; London : James Clarke, [1868?]

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THE ALCOHOLIC CONTROVERSY.¹

From 'Fraser's Magazine,' September 1868.

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IN the present controversy concerning the Drink Traffic, which seems likely, ere long, to come to a critical struggle, it may be of interest and not uninteresting to read the following words of Sir Walter Scott,² penned in the year 1817, as the result of his observations on rural Pauperism.

'There is a very natural desire to trust to one or two empirical remedies, such as general systems of *education*, and so forth. But a man with a broken constitution might as well put faith in Spilsbury or Godbold.³ It is not the knowledge, but the use which is made of it, that is productive of real benefit. . . . There is a terrible evil in England, . . . to wit, *tippling-houses*. . . . In Scotland there are few. A man, therefore, cannot easily *spend much money* on liquor; since he must walk three or four miles to the place of suction and back again, which infers a sort of malice prepense of which few are capable: and, the habitual opportunity of indulgence

not being at hand, the habits of intemperance and of *waste* connected with it, are not acquired. If *financiers* would admit a general limitation of alehouses over England to one-fourth of the number, the money now spent in that manner would remain with the peasant, as a source of self-support and independence.'

Sir Walter Scott was an acute and impartial observer, as free from fanatical extremes as an earnest and active mind can possibly be. We do not attribute to him any peculiar and unusual discernment, as indicated in this passage: nay, before ending this article we may be able to show that magistrates and squires who reside on their estates are by no means slow to observe the same facts. There they get a closer insight into farmers and peasants, not to say a healthier sympathy with them. But the richer classes who dwell in towns have but few personal relations with the poorer, and are either too busy or too proud to look into their domestic circum-

¹ *The Permissive Bill (for Local Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic)*, as introduced into Parliament by Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Thomas Bazley.

Pamphlets on the Liquor Traffic, by the Rev. Professor Kirk, Edinburgh.

Argument for Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic, by Dr. F. R. Lees.

Parliamentary Debates on the Drink Traffic, from *Meliora*, 1865.

A Model Manufacturing Town (Bessbrook, County Armagh). From *Meliora*, 1867.

² *Life*, chap. xxxix.

³ Apparently two advertising quacks of that day.

stances. It is not a rare case, that when resident country magistrates have refused licenses for new drinking-shops (perhaps at the earnest request of the neighbourhood), other magistrates at the Quarter Sessions overrule the refusal, and force the shops on the reluctant people.

But we desire to point more definite attention to Sir Walter's words. He does not speak merely of coarse and visible drunkenness, which is sure to be deprecated even by those whose fortunes thrive upon it. He speaks also of the *expense* of liquor to our labourers as in itself a grave evil, and, indeed, as a chief cause of pauperism. This is undoubtedly the fact, and is too much overlooked. If the peasantry drink beer at all, a quart a day, say 5*d.*, is the least that any of them are likely to drink, and that is nearly 3*s.* a week, to be taken out of wages which barely average 10*s.* or 11*s.*, and in certain years and counties have sunk to 8*s.*, and even 7*s.* And a large number of labourers, without being at all aware of excess, drink a shilling's worth of beer every day; while the florid complexion thence arising may even make them seem healthier. But the necessary consequence of losing thus even 3*s.* a week is, that peasants can save nothing. They live up to their wages; have difficulty in affording anything to a weakly wife, or a sick child; have no ability to pay for schooling; nay, when the family begins to increase, the father cannot afford to lose the few pence which the elder children are able to earn; hence he keeps them away from school, even if it be provided gratuitously. On the first stoppage of employment, or any attack of illness falling on himself, he is suddenly destitute, and his whole family become paupers. The same is very largely the case with 'moderate drinkers' in the towns, where wages are higher and rent dearer. Moreover,

the teetotaller not only has more resources in casual illness, but he is less likely to encounter disease. Nothing is more obvious than that the men who are by no means drunkards, but only regular drinkers, are led into occasional excess, which deranges the health. Life insurances are now cheaper to teetotallers than to moderate drinkers; a fact to which there is no reply. It shows the latter class to be less healthy than the former; indeed, their constitution is more inflammable, so that they do not well recover from accidental severe hurts. It is notorious that brewers' draymen, florid and round of cheek, have no toughness of constitution; and their wounds do not heal well. Thus illness is both commoner and likely to become less tractable, as a result of the drinking which, in general estimate, is moderate, and quite clear of drunkenness. And wherever *piecework* is established (which is evidently desirable, both for worker and for employer, when possible), the 'moderate' drinker is sure to earn less. A Scotch employer recently furnished to Professor Kirk an illustration of this, from the case of a workman who took the pledge of abstinence and kept it for eight weeks. On referring to the wages' book it appeared that during those eight weeks the man earned 13*l.* 14*s.* 8*d.*; while in the eight weeks preceding he earned only 10*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.*; and in the eight weeks following, only 10*l.* 15*s.* That is, as an abstainer he earned just 3*l.* more, or 7*s.* 6*d.* a week, than as a moderate drinker. Add to this, for drink saved, 5*s.* more, as an average, and we may estimate as a not improbable bonus on teetotalism, 12*s.* 6*d.* a week: say 30*l.* a year. Such is the source whence our co-operators draw their capital; which, when they have set up a common store, saves to them the whole difference between wholesale price and that of doubly retailed

goods. Hence a new fund for saving. Sir Walter had no possible foresight of this movement; he wrote in the humdrum days of 1817, when the nation had hardly gained breath from the great French war and the convulsions of trade which its cessation caused. Nevertheless he saw clearly how *expenditure* on drink is related to pauperism.

He saw, further, the intimate relation between a multiplicity of drink-shops and freer drinking. Nothing can be clearer or more decisive than his argument. Very few have what he calls a 'malice prepense' for drink. Few will take the trouble to go miles to get it; and when once the habit is broken they cease to desire the liquors. Sir John Davis last year stated in a public meeting that every great Asiatic religion, *except* Christianity, has proscribed intoxicating liquors. He estimated that 800 millions of the earth's population (Buddhist, Brahminist, and Mahomedan) live under this religious prohibition: and whatever allowance we make for the indulgence in opium, hashish, bang, or fermented milk, it seems unreasonable to doubt that several hundreds of millions are totally without alcoholic drinks or other narcotics, in cold as well as hot climates. But the experience of even Scotland alone suffices to establish, *first*:—that people who are reared without facilities of the drink grow up without cravings for it, or any need of it whatever, as diet; *next*, that the very same people, or rather their children, are in not many years infallibly corrupted (in the present low stage of our moral development), if daily plied with a manifold presentation of the fatal liquors. This was with Sir Walter a fact, long before the word teetotalism arose, or the question of total abstinence had been publicly debated.

More still, he discerned, that the crooked policy of the king's exchequer was at the bottom of the

whole evil. He wishes that '*Financiers* would admit a general limitation of ale-houses over England!' He would have them cut down to one-fourth of the number, but the Exchequer did not like to lose the duty. This is the disgraceful fact, which may try to hide itself, yet creeps out in too many ways; not least, in our introduction of spirit-shops into India, undisguisedly for the sake of revenue, and to the disgust of intelligent natives. The modern *gin-palace* was unknown until near the close of Sir Walter's life; and it is only the *ale-house* which he censured. The greater enormities of spirit-drinking so shocked well-meaning legislators, that they tried to counteract the pest, by multiplying beer-houses, in spite of all the mischief which they had previously done. It is difficult to imagine that the experience of the past was *forgotten*; but two sinister influences combined in 1830 to suffocate or counteract experience. The one came from the political economists, who were already strong among the parliamentary Liberals. The economy of that day aspired to be a deductive science, based on a few simple axioms (and as such James Mill presented it), so as to be nearly independent of experience. Its professors seemed to themselves to have a calculus far loftier than that of the common statesman, and imagined that it ought to dictate to politics: moreover, some of them struck out the idea that free trade in liquor was the true cure alike for excess of drink and for adulteration. To obtain free trade in spirits was impossible; for every one was groaning over the new gin-palaces; but the notion was started, and was sincerely believed, that a great multiplication of beer-houses in which spirits could not be got, would draw people off from the spirit-shops. At the same time, compe-

tition (a principle then assumed to be a pure good¹ without evil) was to give to the public a sound, wholesome, cheap beer, which would put to shame the variously cooked stuff sold by the clients of the great brewers, who, by the favour of the magistrates, it was said, had been allowed to monopolise the licensed trade. To this influence of the political economists was added a second, at the force of which we must guess as we can, for an executive does not always avow, or perhaps even know, all its own motives. But certain it is, that when a mass of new beer-houses arose, which, without permission of the magistrates, could get licenses by merely paying for them to the excise office, the Exchequer had an immediate new harvest, first from the licenses, next from the increased consumption of malt. Indeed, in the great debate of 1736, a member of the Lower House pointedly said that the unbounded liberty of setting up drink-shops had not proceeded from their evils not being foreseen or generally felt; but, by an error in politics, we had made it the interest of *THOSE* to multiply such houses, *whose business it was*, and *who alone had the power* to restrict them. Sir Walter Scott saw in 1817 that the gains made by the Exchequer were the unmanageable difficulty to those who wished to reduce the number of drink-shops; and the same thing remains a fact to the present day. His was far too solid an intellect to be led into a flimsy theory, such as is now often advanced under Liberal professions—that common people *ought* to be strong-minded, and will only be cosseted into *moral weakness* if the Legislature will not let them be tempted. Multiplied endless fact proves that a grave fraction of the population has *not* moral strength

to resist, and, if it yields, is not only itself lost, but becomes a pest and curse to others. What sort of pedantry is that, which, calling itself enlightened statesmanship, practically says:—Men *ought* to have self-control; and if they have not, so much the worse for them; let them perish (and inflict endless miseries on their families, endless loss on society) rather than that the State should care to lessen their temptations. No one is anxious to restore lotteries, which were suppressed solely on this very ground, that the temptation was too great for persons of weak mind. Evidently it is the duty of the wiser to protect the less wise, equally as of the stronger to protect the weaker. The State (peculiarly anxious perhaps to save the tills of tradesmen and desks of merchants from shop-boys and clerks who might be led to dabble in lotteries) attacks the trader who makes a gain by other people's vice; and this is the only successful mode of interfering. Just so, it was early discerned that to punish the drunken was of little avail (in fact, it is but one more fine on the innocent *family* of the drunkard); hence fines were also inflicted on the unlawful *sellers* of intoxicating drink; quite independently of the question whether their sale had actually caused drunkenness, on the simple ground that all such shops were intrinsically a nuisance; yet all that was contemplated was to keep down their number, since total suppression was universally regarded as physically or morally impossible. Moreover, to sell *too much* liquor to a man was always a legal offence, and is to this day; a circumstance which, in an economical point of view, stifles a trade. Nothing can be more ridiculous to an economist who

¹ When the customer is a bad judge of goods, sharp competition makes adulteration almost inevitable; and of all customers, drinkers are the worst judges of the article.

sticks to his science, than to say that a seller must be anxious not to sell 'too much' of his wares, or must trouble his conscience with the buyer's judicious use of them. And he is right, if the trade be of a normal kind, and gain be its object.

The law evidently treats the trader who sells *too much* of the intoxicating liquor as the *guilty cause* of intoxication. This seems not harsh only, but utterly unjust, to some, who will have it that only the *buyer* is to blame. We must, therefore, spend a few words on the topic. Much metaphysical jangling is often wasted on the word Cause; and as the word is unavoidable, it is well to insist on its popular and necessary meaning. We deal with a social and political question, and must employ the word in that practical sense which alone can enter politics. In Greek the man is αἰτιος (causative, responsible, perhaps *guilty*) who is αἰτία (a *cause*) of something undesirable to society; and so must it be with all nations. To judge of a man's guilt, we have to deal with causation popularly, not metaphysically. Events never depend on a single cause. When a man fires a train of gunpowder, he is *one* cause of explosion, the quality of gunpowder is *another*, the atmospheric medium is a *third*; but the man was not ignorant of the properties of gunpowder, hence we throw on him the whole blame, and treat him as emphatically *the* 'cause,' if the explosion be hurtful. So when European traders sell brandy to North American savages, knowing that the red men cannot resist the temptation of the 'fire-water,' no moralist can avoid pronouncing the sale inhuman, and that the seller is the cause of all the evils which follow. To plead that he sells *only for his own gain*, is anything but a justification; it rather makes the deed more formidable, more hostile to the human

race. Other motives are local, partial, transitory; but the love of gain is unlimited in time and space, and indiscriminating in its pursuit of customers. If a man sell to Indians a poison cunningly disguised because he hates their tribe, and wishes to exterminate it, we judge the sale to be a terrible crime, yet it is a crime which the perpetrator may never repeat, nor desire to repeat; its mischief may be all in the past. But trade expands itself indefinitely in proportion to its own success. The gains, when large, are not consumed forthwith, but a sensible part is reserved as new capital to extend the sale. The great principle of active trade is, as far as possible, to lower price in order to increase the *quantity* sold. A trader who thinks it his duty to restrict his sale of an article from moral considerations, has little chance of gain from that article; and if he sell nothing else, his scruples of conscience are likely to make him bankrupt. This is so evident, that when we hear of men entering the trade of selling spirits to Indians or opium to Chinese, we infer at once that they are not troubled with moral scruples. We know that though conscientious men may have inherited such a position, no conscientious man would voluntarily enter it. Such a traffic is essentially bad; sales ought not to be carried on by such machinery. Nor is any agency, in time and guise of peace, more formidable to a State than the conspiracy of powerful capitalists against the virtue of individual citizens. A rich man is permitted to corrupt a woman to his own vicious desires by the offer of money. Legislators may abhor his act, but they have never taken in hand to enact any severe or proportionate punishment. But a conspiracy between a trader and a second party to corrupt a woman for convenience to the purse of the

former and the passions of the latter, has always been a high misdemeanour, severely punishable. There is at least some limit to the evil which the animal passions of one man may work; but there is no limit to the operations of avarice, which is incessant, eternal, and grows with its own successes. And the enormous resources which great firms of capitalists wield, enable them, by various agencies, to deceive, and allure to ruin, many thousands of inexperienced or weak victims.

There is some difference of opinion, what is the *natural* tendency of men towards opium, spirits, and other narcotics. Many have said that we are universally and naturally prone to like such things, so that it is always a self-denial and a sort of asceticism to resist it. Others, on the very contrary, maintain that all these articles are naturally disagreeable to us; that we at first reject them, and are brought to like them only by artifice and custom. Between these contrasted beliefs stand persons who say that some children naturally like, others naturally dislike them; also, those who maintain, that the taste of the child is to reject, and of the adult to desire them. But in the midst of this difference there is complete and absolute agreement, that either all, or nearly all, persons of both sexes may be trained not only to like intoxicating drugs, but to be dependent on them, to count them as necessities of life, to covet them more than food; in short, to lose all power of resisting their temptation. It is hardly too much to say, that every child born into the world might be trained to like opium, or absinthe, or proof spirit, by clever tempering and sweetening. When a delicious flavour of noyau, orange-flower, or other fruit is added to a liqueur, what young lady does not soon think it exquisite, though at first she complain that the spirit burns her?

Notoriously, by the frequent use of such liqueurs the palate becomes deadened, the love of the sweet and fragrant declines, the craving for the scalding sensation increases. Utterly nasty as is wormwood, the taste for spirituous absinthe has become frightfully common in Paris. Opium drunkenness is almost unknown to us in England. We may hear it rumoured of this or that individual, alive or dead; but it does not obtrude itself, we are not accustomed to it. We shudder at the reports, though Sir John Bowring says it is not so bad as spirit drinking. But because no 'vested interest' in opium chewing or laudanum sipping is yet established here, they will help us to take a fresher moral view of trade in narcotics. Let us suppose some enterprising confectioner to compound new sweetmeats and new drinks, peculiarly delicious, but with a very slight twang of opium, not enough to overpower the nicer flavours, but just enough to give a *character* to the stuff. He might then warn all customers to ask particularly for A.K.X.'s Honey Drops, and by the arts of advertisement might give great currency to his mixtures, with no small benefit to his purse. But when it was perceived that a taste for opium was thus little by little imbibed unawares, what should we think of his trade? Should we admit the excuse, that opium *in quantities so small* does no harm? No: for the question would vehemently press: Is society to allow itself to be stealthily inoculated with the taste for this drug, for no better reason, than that a trader wants to enrich himself by it? The taste, once imbibed, may be like infection by a pestilence. The argument that a man has a 'natural right' to sell what he pleases would not be listened to for a moment. If for any reason the sale of opium was needful, we should say, 'Let it be confined to the chemist; or let it be otherwise put under

strict regulation.' The idea of a 'free' trade, whether for the convenience of opium eaters, or for the enrichment of sellers, would not seem to us endurable. If upon this came evidence, that some half-dozen persons had become infatuated with the new taste, and had lost self-control under its allurements;—if only one person were exhibited as a wretched lost creature, no better than a lunatic, from opium eating;—the law would plainly say to the confectioner, 'You are the *cause* of this terrible result. You shall not be punished for the past, but you are prohibited in the future, and will be counted guilty as a poisoner if you repeat it.' To say, 'My customer took the drug willingly,' is no defence: no one may help another to suicide, nor to insanity. But by reason of the insidious nature of these drugs, the customer is deceived as much as if he were an ignorant child. Each new sip makes him less and less aware of what is creeping into him. As Dr. Johnson is reported to have said to a lady, 'Madam, I can be abstinent, but I cannot be moderate;' so, there are many men who lose themselves after the first or second cup. The sorceress could not have turned the crew of Ulysses into brutes, if they had totally refused to sip; but, since the first taste sapped the vigour of their will, we pronounce Circe, who laid the snare and caught them in it, the chief agent of their degradation.

Dr. Lees, in his very comprehensive and exhaustive attack on the liquor traffic (even if to many his definite inferences seem overstrained), has brought together a prodigious mass of fact and argument, which too few of our public men can have read, yet none may wisely overlook or despise. In his *Sequel*, p. 44, he has (what might hardly have been expected of him *à priori*) a defence of the individual publican to which it may be difficult for

the upholders of the existing system to reply. He puts a case not rare in our large towns,—that a man drops into a series of drink shops as he passes them in his walk, and takes a cup of liquor in each. Tapster A causes to the man an agreeable excitement, which tapster B increases. The third glass from tapster C makes him either comfortable or elevated: in fact he is now quite 'refreshed,' and if he were wise he would pause. But the drink has wholly taken away his wisdom. Even if, when he left home, he sternly resolved not to go beyond three cups, no power of self-control remains. How is tapster D to know this, when the unhappy victim enters his door? The man does not stagger nor utter ribald words; he may perhaps seem in high spirits or flushed, but to refuse him a dram is what no one can claim of a seller. This fourth cup lands the man on that puzzling *neutral ground*, which the police call neither drunk nor sober. He has nearly reached the crisis at which he is most dangerous; for his moral checks are gone, he is like a steam-engine without its governor: he may be carried into any deed of violence by unbridled impulse: his physical powers for evil are not yet sensibly impaired, yet no one has a right to arrest him. He enters the shop of tapster E and gets his fifth cup, which carries him over the line of neutrality into flagrant and very dangerous drunkenness. Now *at length* it becomes unlawful to give him more liquor. Yet if (luckily for the community) he reach tapster F without committing some frightful crime, the sixth cup which is there administered (the only one of all for which the seller is punishable), makes him harmless; too unsteady to strike a blow, hardly able to keep his feet, an object of compassion more than of terror. Dr. Lees sarcastically regards F as our benefactor, for having struck down a

dangerous madman. The duty of F, according to law, was simply to turn the man into the street, which is just the worst thing he could do for the public; and of course we cannot lay upon F the duty of leaving his own business and running for the police. In short, of these six drinksellers, E alone seems to be reasonably punishable; but who can claim that E should accurately discern the stage of derangement which the man had reached? The drink indeed may have been served, as it constantly is, by an inexperienced young girl. Evidently no penalty can be inflicted on any of the six, except the last, who has effectually carried the wild beast off his feet, and done more good than harm.

The inference of Dr. Lees is, that no control *can* be kept over sellers who sell *for their own interest*, as traders must; and (if we understand him) all necessary sales should be made by a seller who has no interest in extending the sale, no gain depending on the *quantity* sold. This can only be managed by putting sales into the hand of *public agents*, who receive a fixed salary from public funds, and are not allowed to accept gifts or fees. Of course such agents must proceed under strict INSTRUCTIONS; and it becomes a delicate and important, yet still a secondary question, what those instructions are to be. It is not Dr. Lees' wish that, under any circumstances, the liquors should be sold 'as beverage;' but it is evident that that topic *must* come under public discussion if the Bill reach that stage, whatever Dr. Lees, or the powerful Society for which he writes and speaks, may desire. But our readers may need to have it pointedly impressed on them, that these gentlemen, when they talk of prohibition, do not mean prohibition of the *use*, nor prohibition of the *sale*, but only prohibition of the *traffic*. TRAFFIC

is necessarily for the gain of a private trader, who cannot take cognisance of public morality; SALE may be carried on by the State, centrally or locally, which would not seek to gain, would have no motive to adulterate, nor to enlarge the quantity sold, while it is solemnly bound to study the public morality. We add, that neither do they object to private brewing clubs, or anything but public traffic in the liquor.

We are not here arguing for, we are only expounding, the aims and views of the United Kingdom Alliance (the Grand Alliance, as Lord Brougham has named it), of which Sir Walter Trevelyan is President. The Bill which they promote, in the original draught contained clauses to regulate the sale of liquor by public agents, but it soon appeared that opponents would get enormous advantage by attacking this novel system instead of defending that which exists; hence, these clauses were cut away. But after the present system shall have been effectually condemned by permitting any local mass of ratepayers to vote the traffic out of existence, the other side of the question will be taken up by the persons interested in it; or, indeed, during the passage of the Bill, the adversaries who find themselves unable to stop it, may introduce, as amendments, clauses analogous to those of the original draught. It is therefore misunderstanding, where it is not slander, to represent that this Society is endeavouring to 'oppress a minority,' or to enforce their own notions on others. They see an evil, confessedly of prodigious magnitude, which the Government and the Parliament have long fostered; the sight has aroused them to activity. Nothing can be debated in Parliament without a definite scheme, no zeal can be excited in the millions without a broad principle. Their scheme is the 'Permissive Bill,' their principle is total

prohibition of the traffic. If the Parliament and Ministry will carry any other Bill *effective in repressing the evils*, the wind will be taken out of the sails of agitation, and if any of the agitators are fanatical, they will be powerless.

If the Alliance continue to gain strength as it has done, if its great popularity with the newly enfranchised voters portends early success in Parliament, a party may arise among the gentry and in Parliament itself, which will move for a part of that at which the Alliance aims—viz., to forbid all sale of intoxicating liquor *for drinking on the premises* except to actual inmates of an hotel, and (with very severe regulations to prevent evasion) to real diners. In short, the bar and the tap-room may be destroyed. This is the most obvious course, and at first sight the only reasonable one. The Maine Law does not forbid citizens from importing wine, beer, or spirits. (This also is a point which, it would seem, few indeed of its English assailants understand.) A hamper of wine may come freely through the custom-house, direct to a private house, in the original package unbroken; families who choose, can have all these liquors for domestic use, and this liberty has not hindered the vast public benefits which are claimed for the Maine Law by General Neal Dow, who attests that it has suppressed impure houses, cleared out the nests of rascality, made the worst streets in Portland respectable and safe, emptied the jails, and reduced pauperism almost to zero. Now (it may be argued), this confesses the evils of the trade to result almost wholly from its retail branch, and especially from 'drinking on the premises.' For ourselves, nothing would better please us than to see our upper classes collectively embrace this belief, if only they will proceed to act upon it. But if we are to judge of the future by the

past, they will not act upon it, except in hope of stopping some impending measure which is still less acceptable. For even in 1830 it was augured that to insert in the Beer Act, 'to be drunk on the premises,' was a mistake; and since 1834-5, the greatness of the mistake has been visibly far beyond the worst which had been dreaded. Nevertheless, the third part of a century has passed; the deadly clause has not been rescinded, much less replaced by the opposite '*not to be drunk on the premises*;' in fact, nothing has been done but to multiply drinkshops of both kinds.

A short outline of our past legislation may here conduce to clearness of survey. In the reign of Edward I., the birth reign of the modern Parliament, it was enacted that taverns and alehouses be closed at the tolling of curfew. Wine was sold in the tavern, as well as beer; and in the reign of Edward III. only three taverns were allowed in London. But alehouses were under no restraint, and became a wide nuisance; until, under Henry VII. (1497), an Act was passed empowering two justices of the peace to suppress alehouses at their discretion. Under Edward VI. new laws, of greater stringency, were passed against the traffic, with preambles declaring the gravity of its evils. Nevertheless, with the development of trade and increase of capital, things appear to have got worse and worse, until Parliament, under James I., declares that the odious and loathsome sin of drunkenness is of late grown into common use, being the root and foundation of many other enormous sins, as bloodshed, stabbing, murder, fornication, adultery, and such like, to the great dishonour of God and our nation, the overthrow of many good arts and manual trades, &c. &c. In the reign of Charles I. the officers of the Crown appear energetically to have done their duty

against alehouses, but the magistrates were less zealous, perhaps being in league with 'vested interests.' The sermons of the Puritans show how widespread was the evil during the Commonwealth; but with Charles II. a saturnalia of profligacy was opened, and Parliament, following a precedent of the late reign, made the king's Exchequer permanently an accomplice in the drink trade by granting to it a new tax on beer. The Lord Keeper COVENTRY in 1623, charging the circuit judges, had denounced 'alehouses and tippling houses as the greatest pests in the kingdom.' He declaimed bitterly on the delinquency of the justices of the peace; announced that he once discharged two justices for setting up one needless alehouse, and that he 'would be *glad* to do the like again, upon the same occasion.' No such utterance has come from any minister of the Crown, from the fatal day when the Exchequer took 'hush-money' from the drink trade. In the reign of Charles II. permission was also given to distil brandy from wine and malt, and a new germ of evil was planted—the spirit trade.

By the time of George II. the nation had become more and more corrupted, especially through the cheapness of spirits. At length the magistrates, the nobility, the bishops, and a large part of the Commons took alarm, and very severe duties and license money were imposed, expressly to make gin and other spirits dear, so as to arrest their consumption. Pulteney, as leader of the opposition, strongly objected to the Bill; and Sir Robert Walpole, the minister, is said by his biographer to have looked coldly on it, though he yielded to the strong feeling of the House. The local constables of London did not carry out the Act faithfully, and the Ministry took no pains to displace them. The drink-sellers are also

said to have eluded the law, by putting spirits into the wine. (The very same thing happened about thirty years ago in the State of New York. 400,000 persons there signed the pledge against drinking ardent spirits. Over 10,000 persons apparently abandoned the trade: but they merely 'strengthened' the wine, and the futility of such a half measure was proved.) A violent struggle followed, from 1736 to 1741, which came to a head under a new Parliament. Sir Robert Walpole was displaced, and Pulteney came into power. In 1743 he carried the Commons with him, in repealing the law of 1736; but against vehement resistance from the Lords. All the bishops present, nine in number, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, voted against it, and with five lay lords entered their protest on the journals; nevertheless the repeal was carried by the urgency of Ministers, and the price of gin was again lowered. This did not improve the public morals. Things got worse until 1750, when the people themselves became aware into what an abyss they had fallen, and from many quarters petitioned for restraint. The 'Tippling Act' was then passed, which, with changes in detail, virtually remained until 1828. In that year began the now existing legislation. Its professed object was to consolidate into one Act the very numerous Acts which encumbered the statute book. In a copy of the Act now before us we find no notice of a change in duties; but we understand that, as a part of the new system, the duty on gin was lowered, which suggested to 'enterprising capitalists' the erection of the modern gin-palaces. The visible mischief thence arising caused new alarm, and in 1830 (to counteract the gin) the free beer-houses were sanctioned. No; they were *not* 'free' to sell 'in your own jugs;' that privilege was reserved

as a bonus to the licensed houses; the clause to which we have already alluded ('to be drunk on the premises') was inserted, not purposely to promote immorality, but as a sop to the 'vested interests.' A single year showed the egregious folly of this legislation. Free ale-houses had been a pest in rural districts before spirits were known; were they likely to be less mischievous in a thick town population, where each man is lost in a crowd, and the vicious are under no shame from their neighbours; where neither squire nor clergyman, nor schoolmaster, nor magistrate, has the slightest moral influence over the mass of the people? The competition of beerhouses and licensed victuallers made both worse; for, to obtain custom, disreputable attractions were called in by some, and others imitated them from fear of losing custom. The magistrates, never severe enough, became laxer, because it seemed useless to be particular about the license, when any man could get from the Excise leave to open a beerhouse, which seemed as bad as the average of the victuallers: moreover, economists set up the doctrine, that the license was not to guard against public vice; for, what had the Government to do with that? its sole object in the license was revenue, as was proved in the new beerhouses. Government had no other functions than to protect persons and property. What did Government, as such, know about Virtue? Let it mind its own business, and leave Virtue to the individual and to the Churches. This poisonous, absurd, suicidal doctrine, the cardinal heresy of modern Liberalism in both worlds, has substantially tainted legislation and executive action at home and abroad, from the rise of political economy into parliamentary distinction to the present day. Especially it has been powerful under the reign of the middle classes,

from 1832 to 1868. In 1834 the terrible increase of evil, from the increase of the shops and the lessened control of the magistrates, enabled Mr. James Silk Buckingham to obtain a committee of the Commons to inquire into it. The Whig Ministry was pre-eminent in their contempt of him and his motion, declared their hostility to it, and treated temperance deputations somewhat rudely. Lord Althorp, leader of the Ministry in the Commons, told one deputation that Mr. Buckingham had a bee in his bonnet, that his aims were quixotic and absurd, and that there would not be a man in the House to second his resolution. O'Connell was still coarser in his contempt. And for what did Mr. Buckingham want a committee? Simply 'to ascertain whether any legislative measure can be devised to prevent the further spread of so great a national evil.' The motto of the Whig-Liberals concerning intemperance may seem to have been, *Vestigia nulla retrorsum!* The Legislature passes two Acts, each of which visibly and undeniably causes a great increase of drinking and of drunkenness. Common sense would say, 'Repeal those Acts, since they have been proved mischievous.' But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is yearly enriched many millions by the people's vice, replies, 'The idea is absurd and quixotic.' Mr. Buckingham persevered, and though the Grey Ministry was supposed omnipotent in the House, his facts were so overwhelming, and his simple earnestness so convincing, that, to every one's surprise, and not least to his own, he carried his motion against Whigs and philosophical Radicals and Economists by a majority of forty-seven in a House of about 200. The committee heard an immensity of testimony, and in its report next year (1835) it advised the gradual diminishing and eventual abolition of the liquor traffic.

Of course we all know that, ever since, everything to the contrary has been done; and in spite of education, in spite of Temperance societies, in spite of immense and most valuable financial reform, in spite of lightened taxation, more extensive markets, more intelligent workmen; in spite of a great increase in religious earnestness, nay, and although the teetotallers of the three Kingdoms are said to be between two and three millions, yet our drunkenness is apparently unabated, and our violent crime is worse than ever. The worst crimes are either caused by drink, or impossible without its aid; our pauperism ever increases, and is extremely alarming. In Liverpool one inhabitant in eleven, in Edinburgh one in ten, is now stated to be a pauper.

Infatuation, which has persevered against all experience, against remonstrance and outcry, and against the warning of a Parliamentary committee; which has thus sinned with its eyes open for thirty-three years together,—must arise from perversity of intellect. Apparently it cares more that a class shall be enriched, and the Exchequer have no trouble, than that a nation shall not rest on a basis of brutal proletarians. We must in justice add, that the Whig Ministry in 1839 willingly passed, in the Metropolitan Police Bill, a restriction of the *Sunday* sale of intoxicating drink to eight hours. Though a local Act, it was beneficial, and important as an experiment. Space does not allow us to detail intelligibly the see-saw Acts that have been passed or attempted concerning Sunday closing; and it is so very easy both to overrate and to under-rate legislation in this direction, that we cannot write concerning it concisely.

But we may briefly allude to movements in the House of Lords.

In 1839 Lord Brougham, who, when in the Commons, had strongly disapproved of the clause 'to be drunk on the premises,' moved to repeal the Beer Act of 1830. The Duke of Wellington supported the second reading of the Bill, and said, that very soon after the Beer Bill passed, the country became aware that there were great objections to the measure. From that time to the present he had invariably supported every remedial measure proposed; but, *from some influence or other*, every attempt, he said, had proved unsuccessful. Many other Lords spoke vehemently on the same side, and the chief objection of those who opposed was, that the gin-palace was worse than the beershop. Lord Melbourne did not oppose referring the Bill to a select committee; but said he could not pledge himself, or the Government in the other House, to the adoption of this Bill *or any other on the subject*. These words explain what was the influence hinted at by the Duke of Wellington—the intense obstinacy with which the Whigs, official and unofficial, upheld the shops, which, Lord Brougham declared, 'he was ashamed to avow, had grown up under the fostering care of Parliament, and threw baleful influences over the whole community.' In the close, the bishops (all but two) absented themselves from the voting—of which Lord Brougham caustically complained—and the influence of the Government prevailed to throw out the Bill. Twenty-nine years have since passed, and Lord Brougham,¹ despairing of Parliament, has for about ten years given his utterances on this subject to *the people*, chiefly in his character of President of the Association of Social Science. In 1854, an elaborate report was made to the Lords by a committee; to which we now refer, only because it distinctly declared the *multiplica-*

¹ The above was out of hand before Lord B.'s death.

tion of drinkshops to be the great cause of the frightful evils. It is deplorable to add, that as an appendix to the French Treaty, and with a view to bring in French wine, a vast addition has since been made to the shops. That even the mildest French wine is stronger than beer, seems to have been forgotten; but far stronger liqueurs are now salable and sold at the confectioners', which (if we may believe painful reports) give a taste for strong drink to ladies and to women-servants.

After this outline of legislative proceedings, it may be instructive to consider the history of events outside of Parliament. England is perhaps necessarily destined to receive moral impulses from her colonies; which, otherwise fundamentally like her, are so much less rigid and have so great opportunity of experimental action. The republican freedom of America had given to the spirit trade uncontrolled development and had produced evils on a still greater scale than with us. Here therefore began the reaction in the heart of society. In 1826 the American Temperance Society was organised in Boston, pledged to abstain from ardent spirits. Many thousands of drunkards were reclaimed by this movement. The intelligence of it excited philanthropists in the United Kingdom as early as 1828 and the two following years; but, inasmuch as our rich men drink wine, not spirits, while the drunkenness of our poor was chiefly from beer, the American pledge appeared here unsuitable. This led to chemical inquiry, which showed that *all* the liquors contained the very same element, ALCOHOL; that this alone was that for which they were drunk, and this alone committed the moral and physical ravage. The discovery drove the more eager philanthropists to the doctrine of *total* abstinence from alcoholic liquors as beverage. But

when, through the power of the Whig majority in 1835, the advice of Buckingham's committee was treated as a dead letter, a less ardent school of moral reformers, adhering to the original American scheme, instigated a crusade against the use of spirits as a beverage. Abstinence from them was called 'Temperance.' Several of our bishops espoused the cause: our young Queen, soon after ascending the throne, gave her adhesion to 'Temperance.' More than 2,000 medical men added their signatures to a document, which went the whole length of teetotalism, declaring that no alcoholic liquors are needful as drink, and that total universal abstinence from them is greatly to be desired. The movement spread, but only like a fire of straw, and quickly vanished. The cause of this, we believe, was, the discovery in New York State (adverted to above), that to abstain from what were called 'spirits' might mean, simply to drink the very same quantity of alcohol in wine; so that this pledge was a nullity.

Meanwhile the other column of the movement went ahead. It had taken form in Dublin as early as 1829, under the celebrated Dr. Cheyne, Physician to the Forces, and the Rev. Dr. W. Urwick. In 1832 its influence was felt from Dunfermline to Bristol. In that year the word Teetotal, in its modern application, arose at Preston. It is said to belong to old Lancashire dialect, as a *reduplication* of Total. From Preston went forth ardent missionaries,—poor men, of whom JAMES TEARE is by far the foremost name,—preaching the new creed of total abstinence over the whole land. Father MATHEW some years later passed over Ireland, riding as it were on a wave of moral enthusiasm, the effects of which have never wholly been lost. That fervent population, regarding him as an apostle, accepted from him the

pledge in much sincerity; but were too weak of will to endure long against the eternal solicitations of the licensed trafficker. Enthusiasm delivered them for a little while from the slavery of habit, but was unable to impart abiding force and rational freedom; so that Father Mathew had to see and deplore the wreck of a very large part of his labours. Out of this mournful experience rose in many minds the conviction, that the mass of our people is in too weak a state, too infantine a stage of development, to bear exposure to this insidious enemy, which meets them at every corner; that moral dissuasion, however good and necessary, is insufficient; and that the removal of temptation is essential to any permanent success with the weaker members of the community; who are a formidable fraction of the whole. Suppose them but one-twentieth; that is, a million and a half persons in the United Kingdom. How dreadful is the thought, that legislators, knowing the weakness of such a mass of people, should say to a body of traders: 'Sell intoxicating liquors to those persons as freely as you please,—but *on two conditions*: you must stop short of making them drunk, and you must pay to the Queen ten shillings a gallon on all the proof spirit which you sell.' Every one with half an eye might see, that of these two conditions the latter was certain to be fulfilled, and the former to be neglected. It is just as, in the Acts of past centuries for carrying black labourers from Africa to the colonies, it was stipulated that they should be carried by their own consent, without fraud or force; fine words, but in practice a dead letter. Such a dead letter is the condition, that the trader may sell as much liquor as he pleases, *provided* it do not induce drunkenness. The proviso can be nothing but a salve to the legislator's con-

science, as long as the Exchequer is so deeply interested in the trader's gains. 'By an error of policy, we have made it the interest of those to increase the sale of drink, to whom belongs the function of restricting it.' Besides, if no one drank up to the point of visible drunkenness, is it not disgraceful and ruinous to encourage the labouring classes to waste their resources on drink, and remain for ever on the edge of pauperism? None of the artisans or townspeople, who have employment, need be poor, if they knew how to husband their wages and their time. Folly or vice alone keeps them poor. And can any minister of the Queen defend the principle of basing her revenue on that folly and vice which is the people's ruin? The system will not stand when voices in Parliament unshrinkingly denounce it.

Active writers of much good talent, deep in their own philosophy, are pleased to speak scornfully of the millions, for not having constancy and strength of will to endure temptation. Is this humane or wise? Is it statesmanlike—is it not rather criminally pedantic—to shut our eyes to the fact that few even of adults can resist fashion, example, evil habit? A community once corrupted has little vitality of self-reform. When the masses of the nation, discovering the cause of their degradation, implore us to keep temptation from themselves, from their neighbours, and especially from their children; and preserve their daughters from contamination and from drunken husbands, are we really to reply, 'This is not a PATERNAL Government: you are freemen; we cannot take care of your virtue, nor of your children's. It is your look-out, not ours.' Such an answer seems to us not *fraternal*, but enough to drive men to fanaticism. But the philosopher adds that virtue *ought* to be robust, and able to endure contact with fire

without being burned; and that a nation will become enfeebled in conscience if it be coddled into morality by being screened from temptation; and that it ought to be 'educated' into strength of mind. Education does not consist merely in book-learning or in theories. Excellent these may be, but they do not impart strength of will. The training of *habit* is the first thing needful; intellectual culture, superimposed on this, will do wonders; but if you first corrupt the habits and the tastes, your after education has but poor chance of success. Sir Walter Scott, in the quotation with which we opened, speaks with some scorn of education as an 'empirical' remedy. He would probably have been sharper still, could he have foreseen the supercilious airs with which our doctrinaires deride the notion that temptation should be lessened, and enforce the omnipotence of an education which the presence of the drinkshop impedes or makes impossible. Scotland has long had excellent educational apparatus, and has eagerly taken advantage of it; nevertheless, there, as everywhere else, corruption is commensurate with the increase of these shops. Besides, all this argument not only assumes that in a free nation the State has no function of caring for the public morals (a notion from which we cannot sufficiently express our deep dissent); it also overlooks the misery and loss which every mass of humble persons endures from the corruption and immorality of husbands or wives, kinsfolk and neighbours; from the rowdiness and violence, the ribaldry and profanity which surround them; from the increase of crime, pauperism, and taxation. To all these things the tranquil student has nothing to say but, 'Do not be so silly as to wish for OVER-LEGISLATION.'

But while our literary men thus display their sagacity, many of our country gentlemen act instead of

talking. Noblemen and squires, differing in politics, on seeing how ill things went on under the rule of Mammon, took the remedy into their own hands. Partly as magistrates by refusing licenses, partly as landlords by inserting in leases a prohibition of beershops, they have driven the drink traffic out of their estates. We have before us a list of 89 such estates in England and Scotland. It does not bring them down to the present date, and we believe others might now be added. Not to encroach too much on our limits, we transcribe the names of nobility alone: His Royal Highness the late Prince Consort (Balmoral), the Duke of Argyll, Duke of Grafton, Duke of Buccleuch, Marquis of Breadalbane, Marquis of Cholmondeley, Marquis of Westminster, Earl of Shaftesbury (Dorsetshire), Earl of Beverley, Earl Ducie (Tortworth, Gloucestershire), Earl of Harrington, Earl of Minto (at Minto and Ashkirk), Earl of Radnor (at Highworth, Wilts), Earl of Zetland (Upleatham, Cleveland), Earl of Stair, Earl of Dalhousie, Earl Fitzwilliam (near Rotherham), Right Hon. Lord Palmerston (at Romsey, Hants), Lord Walsingham (Norfolk), Lord Delamere (Cheshire), Lord Boyne (Durham), Lord Tredegar (South Wales), Lord Strathmore (Forfar), Lord Belper (Kingston, Notts), Lord Wenlock (Yorkshire), Lord Carrington (Humberstone), Lord Polwarth (Mertoun), Lady Macdougall (Makerston), Lady Byron (near Leamington). We must explain, that where persons held leases it was not always possible at once to make thorough work. Thus the late Lord Palmerston, at Romsey, suppressed beershops as fast as the leases fell in. Noblemen and titled persons have this advantage, that when as magistrates they refuse licenses on their estates, they are not 'snubbed' at the quarter sessions, and their decision reversed by other magistrates from a dis-

tance; but even they, on many of their estates, cannot for some years get rid of beershops. In the north of Ireland there is a considerable tract of country, in proximity to Dungannon, which covers 66 square miles, over the whole area of which no intoxicating liquor is sold, retail or wholesale. The total population is between 9,000 and 10,000. The system in all three Kingdoms has now gone on for so many years, that we can confidently say it has had a *fair trial*, and justifies certain important inferences.

In the first place, prohibition is no longer a mere theory; here is the thing itself in operation. To introduce it by law will not be an experiment in the dark. Next, as far as appears, there is no such discontented minority as might reasonably have been anticipated when one man imposes his will on a whole community. No petitions to Parliament, no indignation meetings, no outcry as of injured persons, reaches the public ear. Every account that we obtain is that of general content and general benefit, lessening of distress, lowering of rates, vanishing of crime; while the policeman is nearly or wholly needless. It may be that some are discontented, but in the general content and prosperity see the uselessness of complaint; yet the critic must have a truly wild notion of the rights of the minority who rises as champion of these hypothetical grumblers. He must esteem nothing but anarchy to be freedom. Thirdly, the U.K.A. has in these facts an excellent reply to the imputation that it wants to oppress a minority by a majority. If prohibition, enforced by one man on a whole community, is found to be so beneficial, so wise, that the community is glad of it, can any one call *the very same enactment* oppression, if imposed, after public deliberation, by a two-thirds vote of the people themselves? Further, these landlords are open to

the stinging charge of reserving to themselves a right of drink which they do not concede to the people. The Duke of Buccleuch, we warrant, has wine and beer in his own cellars. He can get a pipe of wine direct from France, and hogsheads of ale from Bass; but the poor man cannot get '*his* pint of beer,' about which our legislators whimper. Is then this 'one law for the rich and another for the poor?' Of course, everywhere the rich man more easily buys wholesale, or buys from abroad; as also he can travel and live in hotels, which the poor cannot. No poor man thinks this to be an unfairness. Moreover, if the poorer choose to combine, they can buy a barrel of anything, and divide it among them. But they cease to desire the liquor when it is entirely out of sight; and this is the moral excellence of *total* abstinence. The people as little thirst for it as do the Turks in remote villages.

The pamphlet quoted at the head of this article ('A Model Manufacturing Town') gives a full and graphic account of the town of Bessbrook, erected by a benevolent Quaker, John Grubb Richardson. Its population is nearly 3,000, most of whom work in his flax mills, but some of his workers live in neighbouring farmhouses, or in the town of Newry. The buildings in Bessbrook are chiefly dwelling-houses, with the mills; there are also co-operative stores and a few good shops, no two of the same trade. These shopkeepers profess to sell at the Newry prices, and are liable to ejection if Mr. Richardson find them dishonest. These and other details concerning schools, library, reading-room, and dining-room, are of much interest; but we are here concerned only with the main point—the key of the whole—that no intoxicating drink enters the town. Were this admitted, its companions must quickly follow—the pawnshop, the jail, the police-barrack,

things now unknown in Bessbrook. Surely, with such experience under mere private arrangements, which may in a moment be overthrown by a new proprietor, a case is made out for securing these advantages by law and making them permanent. To allow every parish to vote down 'drinking on the premises,'—that is, to extirpate tap-rooms and bars—leaving the trade for strictly domestic supply untouched, may prove (as the U. K. A. believes it will prove) insufficient to stay the plague which is abroad. But it is the *least* change which can have a chance of success, and it is difficult to understand what is to be said against it that can deserve a moment's attention. Excursionists, if they *will* have brandy, must take it in their pockets, as they very often do. Who can with a grave face say, that national welfare is to be sacrificed to their convenience?

It may be impossible to say that the practical doctrine of the teetotalers is new; indeed, it is with them a strong fact, that the most eminent men, not only of the more remote past, have held the doctrine, but also of more recent times, since chemistry and physiology have assumed their modern forms. The doctrine laid down by the late Dr. Cheyne, of Dublin, Physician of the Forces, a highly distinguished man, and of Dr. Carrick, a celebrated Bristol physician, when applied to for information in 1832, scarcely differs in practical result from that which Dr. James Edmunds and Dr. H. Monroe now enunciate. The writer of these lines can attest that in 1824, the then eminent Dr. Kidd of Oxford distinctly laid down, that total abstainers (*ceteris paribus*) had tougher constitutions than even very moderate wine-drinkers. Nevertheless, among the mass of medical men, both then and now, equally as in the community at large, the prevalent doctrine con-

cerning beer and wine, though not concerning spirits, was and is, that they are *nourishing*, add *force* as well as *warmth*, that they aid digestion, and in our climate may fairly be called necessities. Spirits were believed not to nourish, but to add heat to the system, and perhaps force; yet not to be necessary, except perhaps in damp climates. That all this is unscientific, appears, the moment we learn that beer and wine owe their characteristic properties only to the alcohol in them. (Beer, of course, may give us some benefit from its hop, which gentian, camomile, or quassia, would give nearly as well; port wine may act on us from its logwood: but no one drinks the liquors pleasurably for these qualities.) All these matters have been now carefully reconsidered from high vantage ground. In laying results before the reader, it would be most improper here to dogmatise, as if from our own knowledge. We do but chronicle the history of opinion and the development of facts.

In the early years of this century it was unhesitatingly believed, here and in America, that brandy and other spirits kept a man warm in severe cold. The lumberer of Maine, who worked for hours up to his waist in water, and then floated on his raft down the creek, took frequent sups to warm himself. The humble stage coachman on the outskirts of London, who crawled six or eight miles in two hours, and stopped at every public-house in hope of picking up a passenger, used to swallow a dram at each, for the same purpose. The sailor thought grog of service to warm him in the cold, and cool him in the heat. A great shock to this belief came from the first Arctic voyage of Captain Ross, and from those of Parry which followed. Undeniable trial showed that spirits *chilled* men, and were most dangerous. Coffee and tea superseded them under

Parry, and the same change was introduced in the long-stage coaches. To allow the control of valuable horses, and risk the lives of passengers, to a coachman who took drams, was in itself too bad; but the intelligent coachmen of the new order discovered of themselves that the supposed warmth of spirits was a delusion. We now know that Russian experience is decidedly to the same effect; and so many have been the opportunities of testing the fact, that we stand on ground superior to that of minute science. Nevertheless, in an unhappy hour, Liebig, by some error of analysis or of physiology, pronounced that alcohol affords carbon to the lungs for generating heat. The error was soon discovered by others. The fact that alcohol, when imbibed in even the smallest quantity, is breathed out unchanged, is recognised by the smell, and can be collected from the breath quite pure, is enough to refute it. It is not 'burned in the lungs.' Experimentalists also allege that, on collecting the breath, *less* carbonic acid is found in it after taking alcohol than before, which denotes that the alcohol has *lessened* animal heat; and the same is confirmed by placing the bulb of a thermometer under the tongue. It is not for us to assert or deny that so delicate experiments have been performed accurately. We read (but do not pretend to verify the statement) that Sir Humphrey Davy first performed the experiment with the thermometer, and the celebrated chemist Dr. Prout that on the carbonic acid of the breath; moreover, that Dr. J. M. McCulloch, among others, has verified both experiments, which, it is said, are very easy. A disagreeable inference may be drawn from the eagerness with which Liebig's statement was jumped at by wine-loving doctors, and from the persistency with which it is announced dogmatically to this day. Of course, it is in direct col-

lision with Arctic experience, to say nothing of the counter scientific evidence and opinion. We may add that Dr. Anstie, who opposes teetotalism in the *Cornhill* and elsewhere, distinctly concedes it as proved, especially since the researches of Dr. Sidney Ringer, that when the body is at its normal standard of temperature, a draught of alcohol *chills* it.

A second controversy is evidently difficult, and still unsettled;—whether alcohol adds *force*, or, in more popular phrase, whether a man is *stronger* after it. There is ambiguity in our tests of strength. Power to perform a great feat—as of lifting an enormous weight—is ill called strength, if a man soon collapses after it. Power of continuance must be also considered. Dr. W. B. Carpenter has brought together important and interesting facts to prove that where *lasting* effort is required, alcohol is purely mischievous. Yet he is disposed to believe that it does impart momentary force, which, like that of a maniac, is soon followed by a proportionate prostration. This exactly answers to the idea of a *stimulus*, or spur, which seems to use up existing strength rapidly, but certainly adds no strength. Such is precisely Liebig's view. He says that the sup of spirit enables the drinker to make up deficient power at the expense of his body. He consumes his capital instead of his interest. Wine, he adds, is followed by an expenditure of power. This admits that it gives temporary ability of action. To the same effect is Sir Benjamin Brodie's latest opinion, who insists that power is not created by alcohol, but only rapidly used up. On the contrary, the late Dr. W. Brinton, physician to St. Thomas's, in his great work on Dietetics, lays down that there is 'little doubt that a moderate dose of beer or wine would in most cases *at once* diminish the maximum

weight which a healthy person could lift.'

Space does not allow us to quote similar testimonies. The new belief seems to be, that while (confessedly) large doses of alcohol kill by narcotism, small doses ought not to be called *stimulant*, but *irritant*; and that they irritate precisely because the system rejects the alcohol as noxious. The controversy will be, to excellent service, fought out by men of science. We here only notice, that Tom Sayers the pugilist, and the betters at boat races, seem to be of the new opinion. Knowing persons will not bet on a rower who fortifies himself with porter. Tom Sayers, though fond of liquor (which indeed was his death), found that, to fight his best, he must not touch a drop.

The decision of this question may ultimately depend on the kindred one, whether alcohol *nourishes*; but the mysterious uncertainty what is vital force, what may impart electricity, what relation the electricity may have to that force, imposes much humility on a layman's argument. 'Nourishment' is here defined to mean the adding of some needful material, which the body will take up and build into its own fabric. The idea that alcohol is in this sense nourishing, has been most unwillingly renounced; but after experiments in 1860, which no one can suspect of wanting scientific impartiality and thoroughness—made by a Parisian committee of two physiologists and one chemist—our leading medical journals regarded the matter as settled. It was even said that no professional man could now call alcohol *food* without risking his reputation. The decisive facts alleged by the French trio are especially these: that al-

cohol is ejected in its *pure* state, as fast as the body can get rid of it; that it is found *pure* in the blood and brains; and that its derivatives are never found. If it is never disintegrated, it cannot be food. But when it became necessary to admit that alcohol does not nourish, it was next alleged to be nevertheless *quasi-nutritious*, on the ground that it lessened consumption, arrested decay of the tissues, and made food go farther. But when the meaning of this is analysed, it is found to assert that alcohol makes the current of life more sluggish, and lowers vital power. In vigorous life the tissues decay rapidly, and are rapidly renewed. Lumps of clay or tobacco in the stomach lessen hunger, stop digestion, 'economise food;' but also lower vitality. If alcohol does this, to call it on that ground quasi-nutritious is truly deceptive.

But the French experimentalists assert that this is exactly what it does; that it hardens food in the stomach, disintegrates the gastric juice, and *arrests digestion*.¹ The conclusions of the celebrated trio, Lallemand, Perrin, and Duroy, are thus summed up:

1. Alcohol is not food;
2. In a feeble dose it excites, in a larger it stupefies;
3. It is never transformed in the organism;
4. It accumulates in the brain and in the liver;
5. It is ejected entire and pure by the lungs, by the skin, and especially by the kidneys;
6. It is pathogenetic, causing functional disturbance and organic alterations in brain, liver, and kidneys.
7. Spirituous drinks owe all their peculiarity to the alcohol they con-

¹ The question of *digestion* was treated by killing young dogs, and examining the contents of their stomachs after giving or withholding alcohol. Of course, if alcohol *improved* the gastric juice, or *softened* food so as to make digestion easier, it might assist nourishment, though not itself nourishing; but if it *harden* food and *spoil* the gastric juice, the argument is at an end.

tain. Their use is often noxious, and should only be tolerated in exceptional circumstances.

Thus the inquirers may seem to have ended in teetotalism, or something a hair's breadth different. Dr. Monroe of Hull, and others, have repeated and confirmed the experiments on the gastric juice, so as to make a strange contrast to the doctrine of the current practitioners concerning the *digestive aid* of alcohol. He has also used pale ale and sherry in his experiments, to avoid the objection that alcohol in spirits was too strong. The French committee state that they employed mild as well as strong doses. To the above we may add, that in *Materia Medica* the standard writers class alcohol and opium together, as narcotic poisons.

Now, what is this to us, beyond the literary curiosity of knowing that a collision exists between the bulk of practitioners on the one side, and the non-practising men of science on the other? Without pretending to enter the lists of science, we justly deduce that no government should treat alcoholic drink as it treats potatoes, milk, and honey; nor class it with foods; nor talk of it as 'a necessary article,' as 'a valuable beverage,' as 'indispensable for general use;' and so on. The experience of great nations, of millions of mankind, is indeed a sufficient disproof of its necessity; but we have here, over and above, undeniable scientific proof that it is rightly classed with medicines, with poisons. Too much indeed is made of this last word by the teetotallers. They lose advantage by hot pursuit of the enemy. Prussic acid is a more deadly poison than alcohol; yet, are we never to take it in the flavour of noyau or of bitter almonds? Possibly *all* flavours will one day be called poisons.

We observe that there is some controversy about the definition of poison, into which we cannot enter;

but the experience of whole nations appears to show that certain condiments are taken solely because food needs to have some *taste*. Instinct leads men to prefer even a nasty taste, as that of garlic, to none at all. Instinct suggests pepper with one dish, salt with another, and so on—as diet, not as exceptional medicine. When this is the case, we turn a deaf ear to the objection that a particular condiment is a poison. Pepper probably makes beans less flatulent, water-melons less aguish. Salt kills worms within us; and it is obviously hard to clear food from all germs of animalcules, often invisible. Even if salt had *no* property of food, if it were purely a poison, purely noxious, it might do us more good by killing worms, than harm by its directly bad effect on our ourselves; and similarly of other condiments. Dr. Lees and his friends can afford to provoke ridicule for objecting to brandy, even in Christmas pudding and mince-pie, for they have a respectable *moral* ground—they would not impart a *taste* for alcohol any more than for opium. But to leave this specific reason, and rest on the generic objection, that alcohol, like prussic acid, is a poison, does but involve the argument in clouds of doubt and disputation. That writers on toxicology class alcohol with narcotic medicines, is the great fact to press on Parliament; and the less it is embarrassed by argumentation about minute doses of poison, the better it is calculated for political service.

In the present conjuncture it seems inevitable that we shall have to follow in the wake of the United States, from whom the first great impulse against alcoholic liquors rose. The battle still rages on that side of the Atlantic. The Rum party and the Slavery party were in fact but one; and they die hard. Nevertheless, there are some phe-

nomena, little known in this country, which show how intense a hold the doctrine of total abstinence has taken of the Free States, whose spirit and principles are sure to conquer. We confine ourselves to a few facts. First, the champions of the liquor trade struggle for arrangements in their favour, which are more severe against them than teetotallers here demand. For they desire, as the normal system, one of licenses far more stringent than ours, and at the same time concede a permissive veto to a bare majority of every parish. But our U.K.A. asks only a permissive veto for a two-thirds majority of the local ratepayers, and leaves the country under the present system everywhere until the veto is used. Next, the U.K.A. doubtfully counts some three peers in its ranks; but in the United States, the prime of the Senate, the president of each house of Congress, and great numbers of the most eminent persons in the Northern States, are prohibitionists. So far has this gone, that the halls of Congress are freely used for temperance meetings, no opponent thinking it of any use to object. A senator may be in the chair, and senators around him on the platform. Nay, we read in a letter from America by General Neal Dow, that no member of Congress is allowed to get his customary glass of wine or spirits in the dining-hall; all such liquors being voted out of the entire building. With such a state of things, what is the 'reaction' against prohibitory law, of which our newspapers make so much?

If we do not mistake, the natural history of the whole phenomenon is entirely misjudged by our papers, which go on insisting that the struggle is one between a pharisaical majority and a discontented oppressed minority. But, except

where Germans, or Irishmen who cling to towns, have immigrated largely and recently, the controversy is not between two homogeneous masses of the nation, but *between powerful capitalists on the one side and the mass of the people on the other*. The voting power lies with the people, but the members of the Legislature are drawn from the families of the richer classes, and are in social relations with the capitalists. When an election turns on the liquor question, the people send up men pledged to vote the trade down: nevertheless, the magistrates in a few great towns, being of the capitalist class, deliberately neglect to execute the law; and the trade, thus supported, sometimes goes on even openly in defiance of law. When other questions are uppermost, then—in one or other State—in the course of seventeen years—it may be expected that a majority of the Legislature is at last discovered to be favourable to a renewed liquor traffic, and to sympathise with the discontented minority. But what is the ground of discontent? There is, no doubt, a residuum in certain towns (*fax Romuli*),—ignorant Irish, habitual rowdies, sottish men, rogues, prostitutes, and youths prematurely indulging in manly vice, who dread to lose the bar and the tap; but these could have no political weight. The discontent which moves the Legislature is that of capitalists, who import and drink at home as much liquor as they please, but murmur only when they cannot *sell* and make *gain* at the expense of the weak-minded. As soon as a Legislature, thus elected on another issue, discovers that it can count on a majority for reopening the trade, it is likely to move against the prohibitory law, and enact a system of licenses.¹ But after a short interval the country people

¹ This has happened once in Maine, once in Massachusetts. Since writing the above we have a copy of the new license law of Massachusetts. Its extreme and ridiculous

(*tribus rusticæ*) are sure to re-establish prohibition more stringently than ever. To prevent themselves from being thus eluded, the people of Michigan have lately put the prohibitory law into their *Constitution*; so that it will no longer be possible for legislators to tamper with it. In all probability State after State, as fast as it is brought up to blood-heat on this subject, will follow the lead of Michigan; after which the capitalists will despair of recovering their impure source of gain, and many odious vices will be starved out. As regards the Germans, it must be admitted, that all the recent immigrants are discontented that they cannot get their familiar beer; and though there is much sottishness connected with it, they are not to be treated as on a level with the spirit-drinkers. They stir up their countrymen who were in America before them; thus in a few States the controversy is not simply between capitalists and the public. It ought not to be overlooked, though our limits forbid here to enlarge on it, that in all our colonies the movement against the drink trade is active, and that it always *has its strength from below*, but is resisted, as here, by the moneyed classes.

As to these islands, the reason why landlords in rural places get on so well with a prohibition fully equal to that of Maine, is, because there are no powerful capitalists to counteract them. The truth comes out in another way in the experience of Co-operative Stores.

It is rarely indeed that the workmen to whom these belong will endure that beer be sold in them; as Mr. Gladstone (according to the newspapers) was lately surprised to discover. *Capitalists* have no influence on those stores: that is why the beer is so easily voted out. Nor do we hear of a 'discontented minority.' In our *towns* the struggle will be quite different; and the danger with us, in the near future, is great, lest the local leaders of the Liberals side with the capitalists against the nation. These leaders are sometimes themselves 'in the trade,' and everywhere have near friends or political associates in it. If they take this course and carry the party with them, a split in the Liberal ranks will come at an early date, and be very fatal to immediate hopes. Much depends on two men, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. J. S. Mill. If they pronounce clearly and vigorously for the morality of the people as more important than profits to one class of tradesmen (whom Mr. C. Buxton feels most painfully to have got rich at the expense of the people's vice and misery), all will go right: the capitalists will have to submit. But if Mr. Gladstone adhere to Whig routine, and Mr. J. S. Mill to economic theory, the noble excellencies of both will precipitate an obstinate struggle, to which we can foresee only one end. The example of the United States, and the high-strung convictions of the Temperance party, augur for the Liberals immediate weakness and ultimate discomfiture.

severity shows that the framers *intend its precautions to be violated*, not to be executed. They are dust to throw into the eyes of good, simple people; for they are certainly impossible. Space forbids further elucidations.