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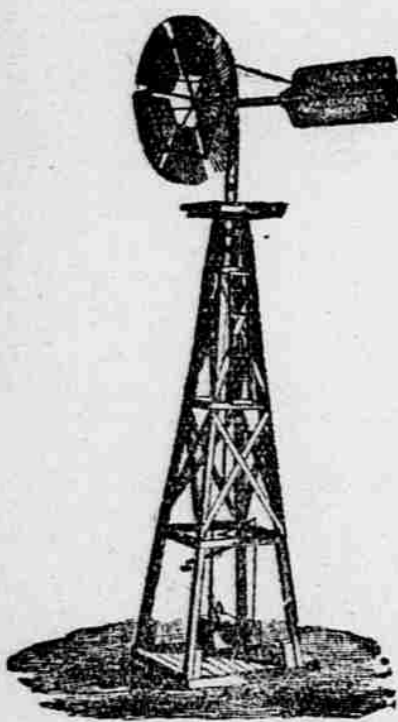
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The McCook Tribune.

POLITICAL PROHIBITION.

Deut. 13:5. "Put the evil away from the midst of thee."

No room for any evil among God's laws. Over in Canaan, four thousand years ago, there was prohibition. Prohibition against idolatry, prohibition against immorality, drunkenness and everything evil. Is the wrong-doer a man? Stone him that he die. Is it a city? Smithe the inhabitants with the edge of the sword, gather the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof and burn the city with fire and all the spoil thereof, every whit, for the Lord thy God, and it shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again. That is prohibition radical enough to suit the most ardent.

The text contains the sentiment adopted in addressing you upon Political Prohibition. This is not a temperance address to-day. There is a principle called prohibition now before the American people, and we are bound to give it consideration. The evils usually exhibited in addresses upon temperance, I shall take for granted and regard only the political bearing of the question.

First. A word about politics. To determine whether a principle or measure should have a place in politics, it must first be discovered what politics are. Is a certain town within the state of Nebraska? Draw the boundaries of the state and see. You say, two men in the street are talking politics. Your meaning is understood. They are discussing party questions. This is the accepted use of the word. Now, if there is no other meaning to this word, if, when I speak of political prohibition, you understand me to mean prohibition mixed up with party questions, prohibition as a race for office, a cat's paw to pull chestnuts of plunder out of the government fire, then political prohibition is a folly owned by the ignorant or nursed by knaves. But there is a better definition of the term, and so far as is within the power and scope of this pulpit, I seek to impress it upon you. Politics is the science of government. Politics have to do with the regulation and management of the state, preserving and promoting its peace, safety and prosperity, increasing its strength, defending the rights of the individual and maintaining good morals in human society. What a calling politics might be! Here in America we forbid politics and the pulpit to dilute, but it is because the word is given its broader meaning. Over in England it is the province, almost the duty of preachers to engage in political life. Dr. Brown returned to London from New York because our American ideas circumscribe the minister too closely. Taking then, the word in this higher range, the question is: "Has prohibition a right to come within political lines?" You see what it is necessary to prove. You must prove that prohibition preserves and promotes the peace, safety or prosperity of the country. You must prove that it conduces to the general welfare; that the rights of citizenship demand it, and that it is essential to good morals. All need not be proven. If prohibition accomplishes any one of them, then it falls within the boundaries of true politics, and must be given its political value and bearing, the same as any other issue. So then, we must give prohibition a hearing and this brings us:

Second. To the plea. A medium of experience in temperance work has led to an interested observation of the prohibition movements as a result. I have no appeal to make to passion or prejudice, but ask that this question receive fair and just handling. I place four facts at the basis of prohibition, as inclusive of the whole matter.

1. Intoxicating liquor of various sorts, to the amount of hundreds of millions of gallons, are sold or offered for sale every year, in the markets of this nation.

2. This business is called the liquor traffic. A tremendous capital and an immense number of people are employed. A considerable portion of our national population, including grain, fruit and hop growers, as well as manufacturers and sellers, get a living in this way; some of them great fortunes.

3. These liquors are every year consumed in such large quantities and by so many people that such consumption results in public evil; courts of justice uniformly showing that crime, pauperism and social difficulties for the most part are directly traceable to this cause. To these must be added drunkenness, disease, death, vice and greatly increased taxation.

4. A vast power is behind this traffic, upholding it, notwithstanding the production of such results: a power which brooks no interference, wants no change, objects even to restraint. It is usually called the rum power. I call it so to-day; one of the most dangerous and threatening at present operative in human society.

There can be no dispute as to the correctness of these propositions. Every body knows and will attest their truth. But on them prohibition rests its case. They are its plea. Grant their accuracy and you at once come into sympathy with the underlying principles of prohibition.

What is to be done in the premises? Here is an issue about which all good citizens agree. The evils of intemperance are so enormous, obvious, widespread, that every community is confronted by them more or less. And further, this issue falls within the range of true politics, for it is conceded that it involves much of the peace, prosperity, strength and moral character of the nation. Prohibition then, is an issue that cannot be gotten rid of. Now what are you going to do about it? Nothing, nothing! Who says that? Not the unfortunate victims of this terrible power. He would like something to be done to save him. Who says nothing? The liquor manufacturers, brewers, distillers of the land. Nothing, answers the liquor sellers, hurling their victims to furnaces of perdition heated seven times. Nothing! Who so gives answer? All those who selfishly think of their own comfort, but let the world about them go to the shades. Issues enough to wrangle about, let this one alone, say certain classes. Is that your answer? What answer gives humanity? What answer gives the Christian church? What is God's answer? Having at heart the cause of humanity and God, I cannot accept any of the answers given. This republic has three chief stones in its foundation, liberty, education, religion. Perhaps we have liberty enough but not enough education or religion. I hear the cry for more schools and more righteousness. Such demands indicate good government. But who ever heard the cry for more schools? Like the government, rum power stands on three legs, production, sale, consumption of liquor, and every man knows that it would not be safe to strengthen that power by increasing its support, i. e. by increasing liquor production, liquor selling or liquor drinking.

On the other hand the evil has assumed such proportion that the highest wisdom of society is needed to apply a remedy, if indeed there be a remedy. Society stands baffled before the demands of this question. Out of this tangled web we must spin a line of thought, clear enough to give requisite answer.

As to the remedy, it must have certain

characteristics, (a) It must be lawful (b) efficient to remove. Or (c) to restrain. Any measure or method not possessing these, cannot receive political consideration.

There are two remedies which meet these requirements, and they are the only two of which I have knowledge.

1. Moral. What is this remedy and the method of its work? It pleads with men by argument, by entreaty, by prayer, for God's sake, for humanity's sake, for their own sake, to give up the production of liquor, to give up the selling of it, to give up the drinking of it. By all the ghastly wrecks of misery, broken homes and hearts, ruined bodies, multiplied crimes and quenched hopes that line and litter the banks of this swollen river of iniquity, men are asked to stop the evil. This is moral suasion. The remedy is lawful and is efficient only as conscience has sway. This method has been a favorite one at all times, old as this Bible, it is the Bible way of saving from evil of all forms. All temperance societies adopt it. The churches adopt it. It is good. It will never cease to be employed. Father Matthew and Francis Murphy have worked wonders in this way. It is the most pleasant and successful way to the heart. Mothers use it. They coax, entreat, plead their boys to shun the path of temptation. Hard the heart that is proof against mother, the Bible and God. But such there are. At them all this evil laughs. Now, if moral suasion could accomplish its end, of course nothing further would be needed. But it does not. It is inadequate. At most it is only talk and this evil cannot be talked out of existence, as facts attest. Something else is needed.

2. Legal suasion. If you cannot get a wrong right by persuasion, then MAKE it right. Is this remedy lawful? Law must be lawfully invoked. Can law restrain the evils? No doubt about it. That is settled. The local option, civil damage, license and prohibition laws of the different states, shows that it falls within legislative jurisdiction. The highest civil jurisprudence has vindicated such legislation. Some of the earlier prohibiting laws were set aside as unsound, but no law against the sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage was ever condemned. Forty years ago the United States Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of prohibitory legislation. Subsequent efforts of the rum power to secure a different decision have proved futile. So then we see the lawfulness of legal suasion as a remedy. What now shall be our prayer (as the lawyers say)? What shall we ask the law to do? Sumptuary laws are neither desirable nor lawful. A man has a right to drink liquor and to spend his property for it. The only point when a hold can be gotten on this matter is where the manufacture and sale of liquor involves the public welfare. Bringing the law to bear here, one or two effects may follow.

1. Restraint. This is called license, a partial remedy of course. By some temperance advocates who confuse the moral with the aspect, license is condemned. I find no hostility between license and prohibition. License is good temperance legislation. The Scott law of Ohio, the high license laws of Illinois, Missouri and Nebraska show advance in the work. The business cannot be pursued except under certain legal restrictions and conditions. This is one thing the law can do.

2. Prohibition. Stopping the manufacture and sale of strong drink altogether. This remedy says that the state cannot approve of any more than political and social economy of a traffic which causes eighty per cent. of all crime and pauperism. As to the successful operation of license and prohibitory laws, greater failure in the former than in the latter, is granted. As between the two, I choose prohibition, for the reason that the rum power hates it so. It does not care a snap of the finger for license.

Prohibition it fights with the desperation of despair. No wonder for Maryland, with two-thirds of her counties under prohibition, has a story to tell which staggers the rum power. Sohas Georgia, with her seventy-two counties, and all of South Carolina outside the cities of heaviest population, and Alabama in one-third of her domain; and Texas and Arkansas and Rhode Island. Yes, and half the British dominion of Canada, and from across the sea, voices come from Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar. Billows rolling from Kansas and Iowa eastward through all the states, onward, over the Atlantic to the British Isles, till it is beginning to be seen that prohibition is upon the Anglo-Saxon brain, is therefore destined to conquer, and though slowly, is now mightily working to crush the most demoralical power ever seen in human history. If it be said this is rhetoric—that prohibition does not prohibit, study the U. S. Revenue laws for one thing. Prohibition does not wholly wipe out the evil. Be pleased to inform me as to the law that is wholly efficient. But prohibition is the most successful of any remedy yet applied.

So this question has entered politics. The last few years it has risen into a prominence hardly to be anticipated. It has come to stay. Some say it is an intruder. No sir, it is not—it has come through an open door. It has been invited to enter. The laws of the country have invited it. The heart-breaking necessities of society have invited, nay, commanded it to enter. Any legislation for public welfare which ignores the rum traffic, is demagogical. The evils of this land cannot be mentioned, if this one is left out. It is a living, burning question. The grandest forces of modern society are marshalling into line against the drum-shop. They speak of it as a nuisance, a reprobate, an outlaw. Is the reform gradual? Yes, most reforms are. They come by installments. But it is coming. Better get ready for it. The index finger of the century is pointing to the issue. Why should not the church condemn the drum-shop? Civilization declares there is nothing in it to cherish. Civil jurisprudence says it can be indicated by no principles of justice or law. Political science finds nothing in it to approve. Medical science refuses to endorse it. Humanity denounces it as the cause of the woes it seeks to palliate. Christians condemn it as a most gigantic evil—and the church? What a power to purify the land. Fifteen millions of Christians. Three hundred thousand churches and Sabbath schools—holding the balance of power: If they were arrayed against it, marching shoulder to shoulder with the cause of justice, science, humanity and God. Is it not time for the church of Christ to pull out the trumpet stop and speak in tones that shall be heard by the nations.

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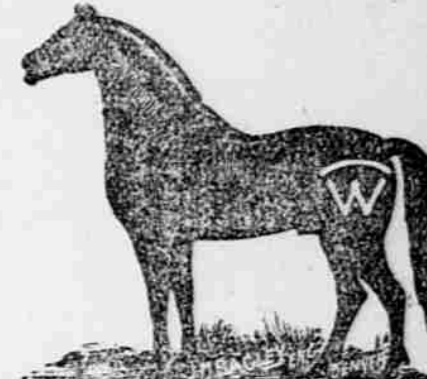
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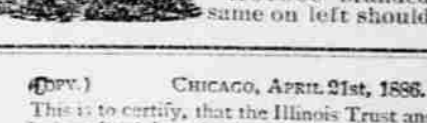


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