

CANADIAN TEMPERANCE LEAFLETS.



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Shall we License the Dram-Shops?

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What Licenses Mean.

It is important that in the first place we should get a clear perception of all that is meant by the word *Licenses*.

The underlying idea is that of permission or allowance. A Hackman's License, for instance, "permits" him to engage in the business of cab-driving, a Marriage License "permits" two persons to be legally united in wedlock, and a Liquor License "permits" a person to carry on the sale of intoxicating liquors.

This permission or allowance always carries with it the idea that what is permitted is right. When a parent or teacher "permits" the child to do a certain thing, the child instinctively feels that the thing itself is right and not wrong. Similarly, when the law licenses or "permits" anything to be done, it teaches that with what it "permits" is correct in principle and expedient in practice. Again, the authority which "permits" a thing to be done will and must protect and support the person it permits against all that would annoy or harass him. If one permits his boys to go a-fishing, he must protect them to the extent of his power against all who would prevent or interfere with their sport. So when the law licenses or permits any business to be carried on it is bound to protect the person licensed. The license of permission is generally coupled with certain conditions which the person must obey, and penalties are attached to the violations of these conditions. When, therefore, a community or a country issues licenses it does three things:

- (a) It calls the Dram-shop into existence and permits its work.
- (b) It declares that the Dram-shop is correct in principle and expedient in practice.
- (c) It pledges its authority to the protection of the Dram-shop, in its congenial and permitted work.

II. *What it is to license.*

Before a community calls an institution into existence, declares it right and pledges protection to it, the people should carefully consider what are its aims and effects.

(a) It provides nothing useful. No fabrics to wear, no foods to sustain the body, no implements of labor, no books to inform the mind, no articles of comfort for the means, nothing that adorns civilization, elevates society, or adds a single impulse of good to the community, can be found on its shelves or within its four walls. If every Dram-shop in Canada were to be burned to-morrow, Canada would not lose a single iota in all that goes to clothe, feed, develop, and beautify her millions.

(b) It encourages idleness. A Dram-shop immediately reduces "loafing" to a fine art. It has a convenient place to "drop into." Some of the "boys" are always on hand. There is constantly something to hear or see. Games for the idle hour are over ready.

Drinks are forthcoming at any moment, and stories and songs fill in the intervals. All are invited and welcome to stay. And thus the Dram-shop is continually turning the active and industrious into the idle and shiftless. Thus it is a standing peril to the children in its neighborhood.

(c) It is a school for tippling. The principal object of the Dram-shop is to get sober people to tipple, and tipplers to drink to excess. It exists for no other purpose,—if it succeeds in doing this its gains increase; if it fails, it starves and dies. Unless it be able to turn sober children into drinking men and women, it must cease with the present generation. So its aim is to debauch each generation of children. It greedily eyes the school and homes, and sets itself to trap the innocent. The "staid" is chosen in the most public resorts, the temptations are made as alluring as possible, the bar-keeper is selected with this point in view, the host puts on his blindest manner—all to gain custom, that is, to induce sober people to tipple and tipplers to drink more and more. In no other way can they reap their harvest of gain.

(d) It breeds disorder, vice, poverty and crime.

We would scarcely ever hear of a brawl or fight if it were not for the Dram-shops. When people are cool, collected and masters of themselves, there is almost perfect peace and quiet. But the Dram-shop changes all these conditions. It collects in heated rooms all sorts of characters, the vicious and the innocent. It frenzies them with strong drink, benches them into the wildest disorder and the bloodiest quarrels. Nine-tenths of all the crimes against good order, decency and the person, are the traceable outcome of the Dram-shops. There, ill-wills breed mischief, the vicious corrupt the innocent, the vulgar, indecent and blasphemous gradually poison purity, wages are squandered, self-respect is lost, passions are inflamed, and the seeds of crime sown broadly. No words can portray the mischief and miseries that breed and breed in the Dram-shops of our country. If malicious ingenuity had raked its brains for a thousand years, it could not have devised no more thorough an efficient agency of corruption than are these.

(e) It antagonizes every influence of Home and School and Church.

The Dram-shop rivals the Home, and in innumerable instances robs it of loved ones, breaks it up and ruins it irretrievably. There is no community cursed with a Dram-shop, but can point to one or more ruined homes as monuments of its terrible and deadly antagonism.

The Dram-shop nullifies the work of the School.

It renders parents indifferent to the education of their children, it brings poverty and rage, and so keeps idle ones from the schools, or it drives them out on the streets to beg and to steal. A large percentage of the children of our country are grown up in utter or comparative ignorance because of such blinding and corrupting influences.

The Dram-shop blocks the path of the Church.

The Christian Church spends millions of dollars to-day in the field of Foreign Missions, sends out hundreds of missionaries, and makes thousands of converts each year. But for every one convert she makes in other lands, the Dram-shops destroy full one hundred souls in Christian countries. And here among our pulpits and by the very side of our preachers it is safe to say that the Dram-shops lead as many downward as the Churches lead upward. We are asked then to become an institution which:—

Provides nothing useful or beautiful.

Causes and encourages illness.

Teaches tipping and drunkenness.

Breeds disorder, vice, poverty, and crime.

Antagonizes our homes, schools and churches.

Can we, dare we call such institutions into existence, set them up in our midst, sanction their work, and protect them in it?

Are the interests of our homes, our society, our children and our neighbors to be sacrificed to such a demand?

And for whose interests? That one in 500 may become a drinker and make a *lucky living* at the expense of all we hold dear; that the other 499 may bear the burden and suffer the misery.

2. *What the voter does by licensing it.*

Christian voter before you cast your ballot for the *Dram-shop*, please think that by your licensing it.

(a) You compromise with wrong.

Suppose a man comes to you and says, "Sir, you have a nice boy growing up there, I will pay you \$100, if you will give me the liberty to teach him to tittle and drink. I will not compel him, but simply use attractive display and persuasion on him."

You indignantly repel the awful proposition. But a friend standing near says, "You might as well take the \$100 if you refuse. he will get your boy in some secret and illicit way, and teach him to drink. Your boy will learn to drink all the same, and you will have the \$100." And yet you repel with perfect abhorrence the suggestion that you should allow anyone, for a money consideration to attempt the ruin of your boy. But when a man goes to your corporation and says, "I will give you \$200 if you will allow me to teach as many of the boys in your county or city as I can allure to tittle and drink," what do you say?

In the first case the man wishes to try his arts on one boy, and that one yours; in the second he proposes to try his arts upon all the boys, yours included. It would have been infamous for you to have accepted his money and delivered your boy over to his seductions; is it not all the the more infamous for you to vote to take the money and deliver all the boys of the corporation over to his wiles? You would not compromise with wrong when the proposition for private corruption was made; a thousand times less should you do so, when it is proposed to attempt a wholesale and public corruption.

(b) You go into partnership with the traffic.

When you license the *Dram-shop* you practically say: "Give us a portion of your gains, and you keep the remainder." You thus become a silent partner, and are paid for your silence. The *Dram-shop* ruins your neighbor's son; you can say nothing. you will get your percentage of profits made out of his ruin. The *Dram-shop* destroys a happy home, and mother and children sit weeping and heart-broken in its ashes. You must be quiet, for in your pocket clinks a portion of the silver into which that happy home was pitilessly transmuted. And when at the end of the year the *dram-seller* counts up the gains—while outside you behold the ruin, the vice, the misery and the sorrow which have been wrought, he invites you in and with almost dramatic leer says to you, "I know it looks ugly out there, but I have the gains and here's your share sir. We're partners you know." Can you partnership the traffic?

(c) You lead it respectability and sanction.

The liquor traffic without license is a vagabond, a bankrupt, an outlaw. It dinks about with the brand of Cain on its brow—wherever finds it may slay it.

The very moment you license it, it is entitled to claim full citizenship : it lifts his head boldly on your best streets ; it is recognized as a full brother to every useful and legitimate business ; it wears the full flowing garments of respectful attention, and leans for support on your schools, your churches and your laws. When it struck a blow before it was done furtively and in constant dread of punishment ; now it bears the sword full view of all, and dares right and left. It enlarges the borders of its garment, and with all the prestige of city and state authority launches out into its congenial work.

To all appeals and remonstrances it can then triumphantly reply, "I have the people and the law at my back, do, and my business is as good as any other." Every voter who cast his ballot for license practically throws his own mantle of character and respectability about the traffic and endorses his work.

(c) You arm it for its work.

The Dram-shop is ready in essence. There is the man who wants to sell. There is the place completely fitted up where he wishes to sell. There is the liquor in bottle and keg which he is ready to sell. But the door is barred, bottle is undisturbed, the man is waiting and no work of demoralization has commenced, and it will not commence until you and the other voters order it. Legally and virtually that machinery of destruction is motionless until you give it the word. That word is the license power. Withhold it and all is well ; give it, and immediately the evil work begins. Do you not see how you—the voters—give potency and activity to the Dram-shop. You arm it. You erect a citadel for it out of which it issues to the constant attack. You place the law and the police behind it, and no matter how many it slays and destroys no vengeance can overtake it.

Without your license all is different. It then has no abiding and secure place. It haunts the alleys and dark ways. Wherever it shows its hands, the law descends upon it. If it injures, the injured one can demand and obtain redress. It is haunted by the imprecations of the law and has the registered condemnation of the people hung over against it—a continually impending sentence.

Can you arm this instrument with its destructive power ?

(c) You become responsible for what it does.

When the unlicensed Dram-shop plots its illicit trade and works its evil, the whole weight of responsibility falls upon the head of the law breaker. Him the law holds guilty in the sight of Heaven.

When you license it, you—the voters—share the responsibility for all the ruin that is wrought. Has it riled a home ? You made it possible, and as the just eye of God looks down upon the desolate hearth, and listens to the cry of the lone ones for vengeance, He sees the poor over-tempted, appetite-ridden one at whose feet lies part of the guilt ; He sees the Dram-seller behind the bar who pitilessly fed the passion for drink which finally burned out all love and duty ; and He sees behind all, the man who placed the dram-seller in the position to cause this ruin, and He holds them responsible. They had a part in the desolation of that home, and will He not make retribution at their hands ?

Arise quickly, O Christian voters, and come out from this awful partnership, which throws upon your soul part guilt for every broken heart, every saddened home, every wrecked life, which has for the Dram-shops you placed in their way, might have been ringing for joy, brightened with sunniest hope, and filled full of refining influence.