

A Curse and its Cure.

By A. A. Phelps, A.M.

The Cause.

The liquor-traffic is a gigantic crime. It is a destroying intruder. We need the store, the school, the church. These are the uplifting forces, and we bid them a hearty welcome. But where under the shining sun is there any need of a brewery, a distillery, or a dram-shop? What want does that supply? What sorrow does that alleviate? What home does that make happy? Does it add thrift to your farms, skill to your mechanism, brilliancy to your brains, or nobility to your character? There is absolutely no need of a single saloon.

It is a commercial fraud. It is full of shame, hollow pretences, and false claims. It takes a blessing, and gives back a curse. It takes your money, but fails to return a fair equivalent. Bar-room bargains are essentially wanting in the principle of *quid pro quo*, or commercial honesty.

It is a prolific crime-breeder. Judges, lawyers, chaplains, and prison-wardens unite in testifying that the dram-shop is a fruitful cause of at least three-quarters of the pauperism, rascality, and crime that spread their dark wings over our land. Chief-Justice Coleridge said:—"If we could make England sober, we might shut up nine-tenths of our jails." This is doubtless equally true of this country.

It is a monster of cruelty. It is conscienceless, unprincipled, and cruel as the grave. It is a traffic in tears and groans and blood, in vice and crime and misery. For heartless cruelty and desolating results the highway robber is not to be compared with the traffic in alcoholic beverages. The former simply says, "Your money, or your life! The latter, with more exacting demands, says to his unresisting victim, "Your money, *and* your life!"

It is a social demoralizer. Judge Sprague wisely said: "The morality of no people can be maintained above the morality of their laws." A good law—taking the side of virtue and sobriety—improves public sentiment and educates the people upward. But a bad law—winking at vice and sanctioning crime—debauches the public conscience and drags the people to a lower level. A prohibitory law is an elevator; but a license law is a demoralizer.

It is a deadly foe to the church. Nothing like the saloon power to-day paralyzes the pulpit, blockades the pew, hardens human hearts, alienates men from the sanctuary, forstalls revivals of religion, and rises like a mountain in the path of Christian civilization.

The Curse.

The effects of Alcohol are a crowning curse. Its horrors have never been fully portrayed. No pencil is black enough to paint

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the picture and do it full justice. No tongue is eloquent enough to tell the sad story in all its dreadful details. The use of Alcohol is a wide and withering scourge. *It is a physical curse*:—blearing the eyes, blistering the tongue, deranging the stomach, paralyzing the nerves, hardening the liver, poisoning the blood, coagulating the brain, inducing and aggravating many diseases, and digging myriads of premature graves. *It is a financial curse*:—draining the pocket, inviting poverty, diminishing comforts, multiplying miseries, filling almshouses, and creating hard times. *It is a mental curse*:—clouding the judgment, dethroning the reason, promoting ignorance, producing imbecility, and transforming its unhappy victims into maniacs and fools. *It is a moral curse*:—weakening the will, inflaming the passions, hushing the voice of conscience, and preparing the way for every vice and crime.

You can never remove the curse by legalizing the cause.

The colossal curse of drunkenness will continue so long as drunkard factories are permitted, protected, and perpetuated by law. Let me file two objections to liquor license:

1.—*It is wrong in principle.* Ten thousand legal amendments can never make it right for one man to run a business that tends directly to make paupers, criminals, lunatics and idiots of his neighbors. To sanction a great wrong is itself a wrong. He, therefore, who votes for license, becomes *particeps criminis*—guilty before God as well as the man who stands behind the bar.

2.—*It is a failure in practice.* We know it, for we have tried it. We have tried it long, tried it thoroughly, and tried it in every shape. Dr. Lees well says: "Britain has tried, other nations have tried, restriction and regulation. The experiment has failed—miserably failed!" It is obviously the devil's flank movement on Prohibition. The dram-shop can never be "regulated" into anything safe or decent. You might as well try to regulate rattlesnakes into harmless playthings for your children.

The Cure.

The axe must be laid unto the root of the tree. The deadly upas is not to be watered, fertilized, and perpetuated by license laws, but cut down by the Prohibition axe, for Prohibition is the only effectual remedy for this ghastly disease.

The power to annihilate the liquor-traffic resides in the government. But the people are the government, and when the people get ready to strike the decisive blow the work will be done.

Put it into the law of the land. Write it in the Statute Book of the Dominion. Then let our electors see that we have behind the law an honest Government that really endorses the principle and is willing to live or die by it. That will give us Prohibition in fact.