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*Our Privileged Classes.*

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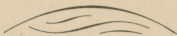


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## Our Privileged Classes.

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WE were slightly amused to notice an election ticket proposed by one of the great political organizations in New York city, upon which, as it was printed in one of the daily papers, there was *not one single name of a native American citizen*. In an American city, in the population of which natives of the country, of course, predominated largely both in number and influence, this party organization proposed to elect a board of officers, every man of whom was foreign-born.

Something similar to this may be observed in the distribution of the licenses by which men are permitted to engage in the selling of intoxicating liquors. Of course, no man has a *right* to deal in these dangerous beverages in any civilized or well-regulated community: as a rule, this business is regarded as one of those dangerous occupations which can only be pursued by persons who are *licensed* to do so. We do not think of *licensing* men

to sell corn, or wheat, or beef, or beans, or butter ; but strong drink men are *licensed* to sell,—that is, a special privilege is granted to some that is denied to others. The same rule applies in the case of gunpowder, and other dangerous explosives : persons must be *licensed* in order to engage in their sale, especially in cities.

It has occurred to us, that if this privilege of selling intoxicating beverages be of pecuniary value, it should naturally be conferred upon deserving people, as a favor or reward for special services which they have done. It might be granted as a privilege to invalid soldiers, who, having toiled and fought and bled, and been disabled in their country's cause, would thus be placed in a position to make a comfortable living without severe labor ; or if these men, remembering their experiences with drunken generals and drunken captains and surgeons, should conclude they had had enough to do with strong drink, perhaps the privilege of selling rum might be conferred upon aged and worn-out ministers, whose long lives of active effort in behalf of humanity might be regarded as entitling them to some special consideration and to peculiar privileges of this kind. If *they* should decline the favor of dealing out liquid damnation, it might be conferred upon worn-out school-teachers or upon poor widows. At the least, a business so vast and so lucrative should be wisely adminis-

tered, and bestowed, if at all, only upon the most deserving persons.

Instead of this, what do we see? Who are the men who have the control of the liquor business in the United States? It is stated that of 61,265 wine and liquor shops in the United States, 27,312 are kept by Irish and Germans, more than half of the balance are kept by other foreigners, only about 11,423 being kept by native Americans. In the United States are 33,991,142 native born citizens; there are 5,567,229 foreigners. Of these, 3,360,074 are Irish or German. From this, it appears that a little handful of Irish and German foreigners, numbering not one-tenth of the entire population, do about *one-half of the United States' liquor business*; while other foreigners do more than half of the other half.

In the city of New York there are 8,034 dramshops. Over 5,000 are kept by German and Irish,—not one in forty of the 8,034 are kept by Americans. Among these dramsellers are 2 Chinamen, 18 Italians, 140 Spaniards, 160 Welsh, 205 Americans, 265 Africans, 285 French, 497 Scotch, 568 English, 2,179 Germans, 3,041 Irish, and 674 whose nationality is unknown.

There are 3,696 dramshops in New York city kept by women. Of these women *one* is an American, 3 are Africans, 3 Spanish, 4 Welsh, 10 English, 13 French, 1,104 Germans, 2,548 Irish, 396 unknown.

What is the character of the *places* where these strong drinks are dealt out? Of the 8,034 places, half are saloons and bar-rooms, the *rest are gambling hells and brothels*. These are the places where men carry on this nefarious traffic.

What is the personal character and history of these 8,034 liquor-dealers in New York city? 2,004 of them have been in State prisons, 2,645 of them have been in county prisons, 1,769 of them have been confined in police stations. Of the 8,034, only 1,616 have hitherto escaped the clutches of the law. These then are the men to whom this nation grants the SPECIAL PRIVILEGE of dealing out these burning drinks which madden and destroy those who taste them. These men and women, state prison convicts, jail birds, ignorant foreigners who have left their country for their country's good, gamblers and keepers of brothels,—these are the men who are authorized to deal out strong drink to multiply crimes, to treble our taxation, to curse our land with misery and pauperism, idiocy, insanity and death. These are the men who are let loose upon the nation, and who in their haunts of iniquity and dens of crime plot to destroy and blot out the image of God in the souls of men, to bring them down through all the nameless horrors of a drunkard's life to the unutterable anguish of a drunkard's death and the drunkard's final doom. And this great, prosperous, intelligent nation in-

creases its taxation threefold and wrecks its dearest interests, that Dennis O'Mahoney and Teddy O'Donahue, Hans Guzzellager, Bridget McSpalpeen, and a lot of other beer-swilling Germans and whiskey-loving Irishmen, instead of doing honest hard work, may be permitted the privilege of getting an easy living by selling liquor, causing riots and broils and crimes and casualties and conflagrations, all at the expense of honest, hard-working, tax-paying, sober members of the community, who are forced to earn the money and pay for the wreck and ruin caused by these foreigners, who have invaded the land and saddled themselves upon the community, and claim that as this is "a free country" they can do what they like, and it is none of our business, and we have nothing to do about it.

This idea we regard as a mistaken one. If we must support these persons, we can do it cheaper in prisons and alms-houses than to have them in rumshops scattering fire brands, arrows, and death throughout the land. And every man who toils to pay his taxes, or seeks to guard his home from ruin and desolation, has a right to say something about this villainous traffic.

Liquor selling not only causes pauperism, but those races that sell most liquor furnish the *most paupers*. *Eight tenths* of the liquor dealers of Chicago are Irish and Germans; and the records of

the "Relief and Aid Society" in 1874, showed that of the 12,938 who were cared for by that society, 10,040, or nearly *eight tenths*, were Irish and Germans.

It must, of course, be remembered that ignorant foreigners are not so responsible in a moral point of view as many others might be. They are natives of lands where whiskey and lager beer are as common as milk; and their sale is deemed as respectable. They stand in a position somewhat like that occupied by the dram-selling deacons and church members of America a hundred years ago. Hence it is our duty as Christians to enlighten them. But it is the duty of the State to protect itself against ignorance and crime, and to crush out this terrible traffic which has fastened itself upon the vitals of the nation, and which wrecks and desolates everything which it touches. Let Christian men and patriots see to it that they grant no quarter to this terrible curse, but that they labor with heart and soul to restrain and eradicate this dire and deadly evil.—*Christian Safeguard*, July, 1880.