1877

Petition for Home Protection: Issued January 8, 1877, by the Bangor Chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union

Mary Crosby

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The Petition for Home Protection

ISSUED BY THE W. C. T. U.

The careful attention of temperance women is invited to the considerations urged in the following letter:

6, FIFTH STREET, BANGOR, JANUARY 8, 1877.

MRS. W. H. SABRETT, PRES'N W. C. T. U.

DEAR MRS. SABRETT—The Petitions to Congress, prepared by the Committee of the W. N. C. T. U., which you sent to our Union, with accompanying note, were duly received December 30th, and laid before the society at their next meeting. They received there a thoughtful consideration and discussion, and when you remember that the Petition had been, for more than a month, open to our observation and reflection in the Union newspaper, you will acquit us of undue haste in reaching the conclusion to which our Union finally came, without a dissenting vote, and which they did instruct me to communicate to you, with their reasons for it, viz:—

1. The triple purpose of our petition—moral, temporal, and national legislation, and the home and seat of our nation's government; and

2. The great and noble women over whose mistake, as it seems to us, we so deeply grieve. We see the intimation that the temptations of the Liquor-traffic ought to be allowed to be the excuse for crime, is revolting to the moral sense.

Finally, and to sum up, this Petition wholly misrepresents us, in our principles, our faith, our hopes, our prayers, and to sign and send it out would be unworthy of our position as Maine women, would strike a blow to the hearts of our friends in all parts of the world, and as such, the enemy Total Prohibition could be, for the Run Power will never consent to so far put itself into the hands of women as to permit a general law requiring Woman's request for its opportunity.

Believing, as we do, that the Liquor-traffic is "a crime against the social order and the laws of God," we feel that we should be sinning against our light and falseness to our high privileges, did we so attempt to countenance the Government in its legislation. As we women of Maine cannot petition for this or any other form of License in our own State, so we cannot ask it for the future States to which we send our sons and brothers by scores, nor for the capital whose honor and purity are ever vital ours to guard.

This petition does not concern the States, in which the women outnumber the men. By signing it, we consent, that in any community where, perchance, ignorance or fraud, force or appetite, shall win the requisite number of signatures, the Government shall forthwith legalize the open dram-shop. Is there no possibility of this in the frontier communities, where total abstinence from dram-drinking is a rare height of self-control? It may be thought the danger is small, but not one would the legalization be right, nor is it in perfect con­sent to the legislation. And the very town where reckless appetite would invite the curse, is the one which the Government should protect from its own vices, and render a fitting home for better citizens.

Such a law, if enacted, would be a mockery to the striving Temperance sentiment of the Territories, where women are the small minority of the population, and would be a stupid neglect of opportunity, and a failure in the duty the Government owes to its own sake, to the hard-struggling pioneers of civilization who wage a conflict with giant forces of nature—the duty of removing from their path that prime hindrance to virtue, strength, and civilization, the pioneer rum-shop, which outruns church and home, and whose evil outcomes are to-day the blackest stains upon our Nation's shield.

If enacted, the law asked for would throw upon a woman a burden of responsibility and of combat, such as it would be cowardly and cruel in the extreme to impose upon her, defenceless as she stands without the ballot. It calls upon her to bear the brunt of this most bitter fight, with naked hands,—with the only weapon that reaches to the enemy's stature, utterly denied her.

The intimation that the temptations of the Liquor-traffic ought to be allowed to be the excuse for crime, is revolting to the moral sense.

We hope to hear from you upon this subject, very soon.

Truly yours,

MARY CROSBY, Cor. Sec'y W. C. T. U. of Bangor.

The following PETITION FOR HOME PROTECTION by Prohibition, was enclosed:

To the Honorable Members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

WHEREAS, The best government, the highest national prosperity, and the happiest people result where Legal Right is one with Moral Right; and

WHEREAS, The Traffic in Intoxicating Drinks is a sin in itself, and its legalization is a national crime; and

WHEREAS, The conservation of Home is essential to the highest welfare and happiness of our people, and to the permanence of all the good we have, and is certainly a fit object of the most watchful interest of law-makers; and

WHEREAS, The Liquor Traffic is the intolerable curse of thousands of homes throughout our land, and its removal is a necessary duty of Congress—

We, the undersigned citizens of Maine, who know the priceless blessing of our own Prohibitory Law, and can point with grateful pride to the facts and figures which shine like stars in our State record, respectfully petition, for the Protection of our homes, that the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks in the District of Columbia and the Territories, be forever prohib—

If you will give me the order, I can get one thousand struck off for about three dollars.

We hope to hear from you upon this subject, very soon.

Truly yours,

MARY CROSBY, Cor. Sec'y W. C. T. U. of Bangor.