

the principle of avoiding absolute compulsion is the correct one, especially if it is coupled with an unrestricted sale of comparatively innocuous beers containing 3 per cent. or less of alcohol. When, in course of time, public opinion becomes sufficiently educated, it may be feasible to prohibit entirely the sale of spirits, whilst permitting light wines and beers, and there is good reason for thinking that the United States has already reached this stage of evolution. It is very doubtful whether any other country has yet got so far, though the Province of Ontario in Canada is near it. In a still later stage of the evolution of public opinion the sale of all real intoxicants (*i.e.*, alcoholic liquors containing more than 3 per cent. of alcohol by volume) may be abolished; but no country has yet reached this stage, though a few of the individual States in America, such as Kansas and Utah, appear to have done so. So far as prediction is possible, it seems not unlikely that, sooner or later, the States bordering on Canada and on the coast will legalise the sale of light wines and beers, whilst the more central States may legalise weak beers of such alcoholic strength as to be non-intoxicating. As will be shown at length in a later chapter, light wines and strong beers, though less harmful than spirits, by no means prevent drunkenness.