

certain transaction into which you think of entering it is long odds that you get a note from him some two or three months afterwards reminding you of the hitherto unsuspected fact that it was owing to his expert advice that you did that same business and claiming a good fat commission thereon. Sometimes, when you are green in the ways of the commission agent you pay, sometimes, if you are wise, you don't. Take our advice and don't—always. At election times the commission agent is busy about town in the interests of one or other of the candidates. Canvassing is, with him, an expansive term, and his "expenses" are generally very heavy and apparently very intimately connected with the consumption of alcoholic beverages. He is great in land transactions and often has a few million acres of native land which he empowered to sell or lease at "a mere song." As a rule the colonial is well up to this ancient "wheeze," but by dint of his oily tongue the commission agent sometimes manages to get a good sum out of a new chum on speculative Australian, who, after some months "delay" with those confounded natives old fellow finds that either the land has long ago been leased to some one else or has never even been put into the agents hands at all. The country settler suffers a good deal at times from the wiles of the commission agent. He knew him perhaps in brighter days, and when he comes into town, looks him up, and is beguiled into putting some small affair into his hands. The result is too often that the settler gets "left," and that he votes all city men a pack of greedy rogues. The commission agent is generally well dressed and sports the bell topper of recognised respectability. The respectability often begins and ends with the bell topper. How he pays his way is a mystery to most people, but need not be, for the very simple and all-sufficient reason that he doesn't pay his way any more than he can help. The times, however, are growing worse for the commission agent and unless he can get some picking in the way of touting for a local "Shylock up to date" or bumming upon some wealthy politician who wants someone to do his dirty work for him, he has but a poor show of making more than the barest existence. Sometimes he manages to get hold of a "mug" who wants to make a deal in shares and then there is rejoicing in the heart of the agent for the share-mania-bitten fool is the most foolish and most profitable of all fools. Of course there are exceptions to what we have written, there are, say, a dozen men in each large centre, who, by business nous and wide experience have gained the confidence of men, who are not capable of undertaking their own affairs, but these are in the minority, and the average New Zealand commission agent would never be missed were he to disappear off the face of the land to-morrow. The day for the middleman who lives upon the labour of others is rapidly passing away and before

long the commission agent in a colonial town will be as extinct as the dodo or the moa. If half of the lawyers could be cremated at the same time the country would be all the better off.

ZERO.

## Sairey Snodgins on the Comin' Fite.



Seein' as the Liesening Eleckshon is hengagin' the hattention of all thortful men an' women, Mr. Heditor, after due consideration I came to the conclusion as it would be a rite thing to call a meetin' of members an' intendin' members of the Women's Club for the purpose of egschangin' erpinions on the subject. An' so, Mr. Heditor, last Friday being my day "At Home" I called the meetin' for that day, an' just after three o'clock the ladies were seated in my best parlour, an' after Kate Deborah had handed tea an' cake round I got hup an' sayed—

"Ladies, I 'ave called this meetin' in order that we may discuss the spros an' scones of the Liesencin' questshon. An' so, ladies, without further interoduckshon I would ask for the hunbiassed erpinion of any lady present on this himportant questshon. I ought p'raps egsplane that though we decided at our last meetin' our next would be called in order to hasser-tane how successful we had been in the raisin' ov money for the bildin' fund for our club, I thort this matter was of suffishunt importance to demand a meetin' at once. An' now, ladies, I shall be glad to heer your various erpinions on this questshon." (Heer hear.) An' then our secretary, Mrs. Blank, got hup an' commenced—

"Mrs. President an' Ladies,—To begin with I should like to congraterlate our President on her sound commun sense in callin' this meetin' to discuss this questshon, for it is undoubtedly a questshon as concerns women. (A vice—Yes, indeed.) Well, ladies, I am not a Prohibitionist. (Heer, hear, an' a vice—What a pity!) I am a moderate, (heer, hear.) But to a certane egstent I am in sympathy with the Prohibs.—in sympathy with there evident desire to lessen drunkenness—but not in sympathy with there methods. What is there gratest present desire? To reduce the Liesences. Will the reduckshon of liesences reduce the drink traffick? (A vice—No.) No ladies, I am atrade it would not. (Another vice—Yes it would) Well, ladies, I will give you one instance where it did not. Wanganooi, as many of you know, elected a Prohibition Committee, who shut hup seven hotels. What was the consequence? It was this. Wanganooi 'as opened two Workin' Men's

Clubs, as sell more drink than the seven hotels did, so where was the gane to our Prohibitionist friends. An' on the other hand I am afrade that this reduckshon of liesences may lead to sly grog sellin', wich would be infinnitly worse than the hotel trade. An' now, ladies, I will not take hup more of your time, but will make way for more able speakers. (Loud applause.)

Then hup jumps Miss Elizer Green, (the women's rites woman) an' burst forth—

"I am surprised at our worthy seckr-tary's view of this matter. Reduce the liesences indeed; I should think we would. I say we, ladies, for I am a Prohib., an' I'm proud of it. (Heer, hear.) Close the hotels, indeed. Aye, everyone in Wellington—may in New Zealand to-morrow if that was posserble. (A vice—What would you do with the publican?) Do with him? I'd ruin him, egsterminate him, turn him out of the country, for what use is he, only to lure men on to destructshon. Why, if I had my way I'd burn all the hotels in the world, make them into one huge bon-fire, and make all the publicans form a ring round it, an' watch it till it dyed out as had there prosperrity. (Cries of shame.) No I'm not ashamed of these, my sengiments, for these' an' none other is my sengiments," and with a flop she sat down amid faint hap plause.

There was a slite pause, an' I says, "surely some other lady will speak," when Mrs. Hawkins, the thin-faced nervous little woman rose timidly, an' says.

"Mrs. President and Ladies,—I don't think as there are many peepel as 'ave suffered more through drink than I 'ave, yet for the life of me I could not feel one cord of sympathy with the last speaker. (Happlause.) I think, ladies, the men an' women may be led to give hup drink, but they will never be forced to give it hup. An' that is where our Prohib. friends make the mistake; they are too feercely henergetick, an' this takin' away of liesences will do little or no good. That is my humble erpinion. An' now, ladies, I am sure we are all anxhus to heer what our able President has got to say, (yes, yes) on this himportant subject." Sits down amid loud happlause. When all was quiet I got hup and says—

"Is there no other lady as would like to speak," an' was answered by cries of "No, no, let us hear you."

"Very well ladies, as you wish," I commenced as follers,— "Dear friends, this liquer questshun is indeed a matter of himportance to all, an' I think a matter of more himportance to women than men, because women suffer more through it than do men, an' therefore women should band themselves together and do there level best to lessen the drunkenness an' misery there is in the world. (heer, hear.) But, ladies, I do not perpose