

CAPE LETTER.

(From Own Correspondent "L.V. Gazette.")

Capetown, September 21.

The half-yearly meeting of the Cape Division Licensing Court was held on the 7th, the date of my last letter, the business of the Court being got through rather more expeditiously than usual, there being less in the way of handles, and excuses, for the teetotal party to seize hold upon. At the outset of the proceedings an attempt was made to put the aboriginal question, the conundrum of "whens a nigger not a nigger?" upon a better footing by the presentation of a petition, influentially signed by the general manager of the Harbour Board, and other large employers of native labour. The application was, moreover, supported by the licensed victuallers themselves, who are often greater sufferers when legislation is indefinite than when it is really harsh, but clearly laid down. His Worship, the President of the Court, informed the petitioners that their request, which was to the effect that permits, instead of being granted by employers, should only be issued by magistrates, and doctors when liquor was required for medicinal purposes, could not be taken into consideration by the Court, except in cases where new licenses were under discussion; that is to say, if any new licenses were granted at all. As it happened, the business of the Court consisted largely in transfers of licenses. The proceedings of the Wynberg Licensing Court were as unexciting and as rapidly got through as those of the court in town. The club referred to in my last letter did not get its license renewed, as the police report was adverse. For that reason the presiding magistrate expressed refusal, whilst, at the same time he snubbed the "Local Vigilance" zealots, whose evidence was declined. The number of transfers applied for and granted was not large, and new applications were withdrawn. In other parts of the colony, where Licensing Courts were held, the business was readily got through, and was of a comparatively humdrum nature.

As you are to have an Exhibition in London shortly, under the auspices of the Royal Horticultural Society, our fruit-growers in the Western Province made application to the Government for as-

sistance, which had to be refused. The date fixed for the Exhibition is too early for anything like a representative exhibit to be got together—an exhibit which the Government could point to as a national sample, as it were. Private enterprise may, as the Minister for Agriculture hoped, enable the colony to be in some way represented, but, of course, you in England must in nowise regard any few exhibits there may be as anything more than a very small sample.

Our so-called Customs Union would appear to be rather a farce, judging by what is said by a correspondent signing himself "Briton," in the "Cape Times": "I saw it stated the other day that, while Cape Colony and the Orange River Colony are charging the 15s per gallon on all imported spirituous preparations, as laid down by the Customs Union Tariff, the Transvaal and Natal are not doing so. This seems to be so ridiculous a statement that I doubted it. I at once made inquiries, and find that it is quite correct. It is very curious to study the position Natal and the Transvaal have taken up. Both of them are heavily in debt, and yet they deliberately throw aside a means of considerably increasing their income, and also a means which ought to be of benefit to the country. The Transvaal Government paid an enormous sum of money to close down the Hatherly distillery. The place is still there, and also the plant to produce spirit suitable for manufacturing purposes, French polish, varnish, etc., whereas the whole affair lies idle, simply wasting money. Again, the Transvaal allows methylated spirit to be imported at a purely nominal duty, but distinctly stipulates that it must be purely British manufacture. I would not mind wagering that ninety per cent. of the spirit used for methylating never saw Britain in the process of manufacture. Nearly all the spirit is German potato spirit." Further, he states, that Natal imports spirits while it allows its sugar refuse to lie in waste. Presumably this and other anomalies will be righted in time, but in the meanwhile the worry to the importer and the opportunity for the evildoer are glaring.

You have, of course, received per cable the news of the strange to the resting-place of Prince Victor, so that I need appeal to no particulars. I must, however, confidently express my opinion that race hatred, at least, has had nothing to do

with it, and I have almost as much confidence in expressing an opinion that, whoever attempted the body-snatching, it is hardly likely to be the Boer. However ignorant the Boer may be, and however degenerate the lowest members of the race, he is eminently a religious man, and the sacredness of the remains of the departed is safe in his hands. It is equally difficult to imagine Britishers perpetrating such a deed, and the offenders, if caught, will be probably found to be what our American cousins would call "no nation cusses," such as are apt to congregate in mining communities. Of course, the object would be blackmail, certainly not race hatred. It is (I am speaking from memory) scarcely a quarter of a century ago when a notorious case occurred in the British Isles. The tomb that was violated was that of a Scotch nobleman of high standing, whose eldest son, the succeeding holder of the title, was eminent for his attainments in astronomical science.

In considering the above, one cannot, nevertheless, forget that crime breaks out sometimes in the most unexpected quarters. At King William's Town, in the Eastern Province of this colony, a church was broken into lately, the collection boxes for offerings for the poor were broken open, and the building set on fire. The fire was more probably the result of an accident than deliberate incendiarism, but "robbing a church," above all, the poor boxes therein, is a proverbial expression for utter, low-down meanness. Strange to say, the two young fellows arrested for the crime were members of the church, which, being Roman Catholic, necessarily makes their crime in the eyes of their co-religionists a most sacrilegious one. One of the prisoners, by the way, has already pleaded guilty and requested to receive short service.

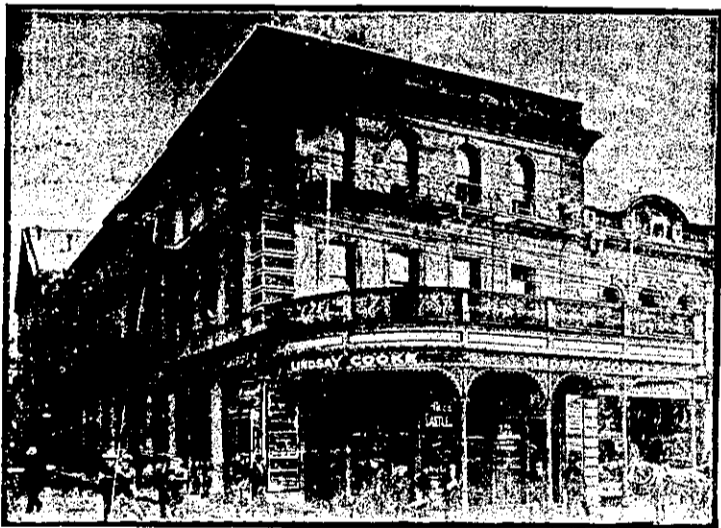
Princess Christian has not been our only distinguished visitor. As you already know, Lord Roberts has visited us, and he, too, has melancholy reminiscences of a private nature connected with this country. As to his public relations with it, they have their lights and shades, which are historical. His disappointment and disgust when he arrived here many years ago and broke his sword when he heard the news of the granting of the Transvaal independence had its transformation scene in the surrender of recent times.

THE ENGLISH LICENSING ACT.

FROM SEVERAL POINTS OF VIEW.

The subject of the new Licensing Act (says the London "L.V. Gazette") is still the principal topic of interest in all quarters where the questions of social improvement and the reform of moral conditions are under discussion, and the value of the measure as an operative instrument is a matter of much conflicting opinion. For the moment we may leave the purely personal aspect of its bearing upon the Trade on one side, although a passing reference may be admitted to the fact that the highly eulogistic manner in which it has been extolled by some trade organisations has not found an entirely unanimous echo of accordance. The several defects which the Act contains has always restrained us from greeting its advent with the warm approval it has met with in some official circles, and these shortcomings are now engaging the serious attention of various and diverse authorities.

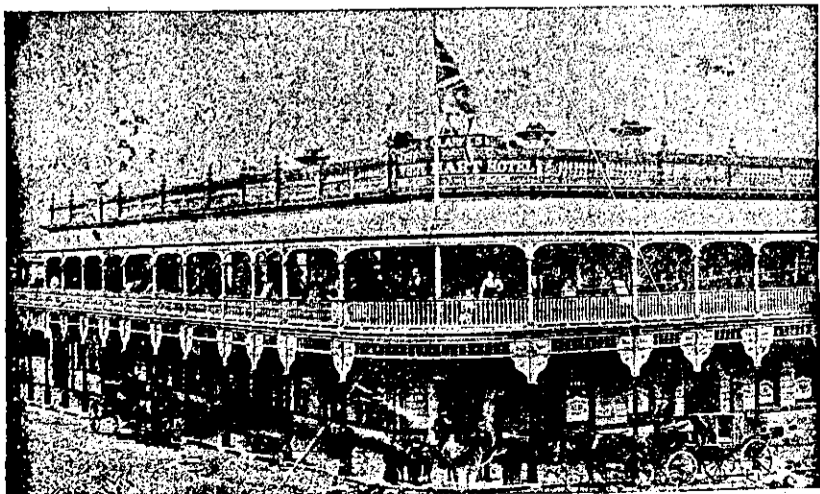
During the past week Mr Balfour's measure has been deliberated by the Central Board, the Law Society, the Birmingham justices, the Bishop of Worcester, and the Bishop of Llandaff. Dr. Gore, while deploring the evil of drunkenness, was feign to admit that its effects were less hurtful to the nation than the ravages of lust, and he further declared that the improvement that he anticipated as the results of reducing the number of public-houses was unimportant as compared with the benefits that would follow the successful solution of the housing difficulty. But His Lordship further contended that the reduction in the number of public-houses would do less for the cause of temperance than his alternative proposal for the reduction in the number of hours that those houses should remain open, and in the face of the facts which have come from Glasgow



METROPOLITAN HOTEL
QUEEN STREET, AUCKLAND.

LINDSAY COOKE - Proprietor.

The new Proprietor has much pleasure in announcing that this popular House has been thoroughly renovated and re-furnished throughout, and now offers accommodation equal to any other in the Colony. Entirely New Stock of Wines, Spirits, and Ales have been laid down, and the Cuisine is unexcelled.



The * * *
White Hart
HOTEL.
NEW PLYMOUTH.

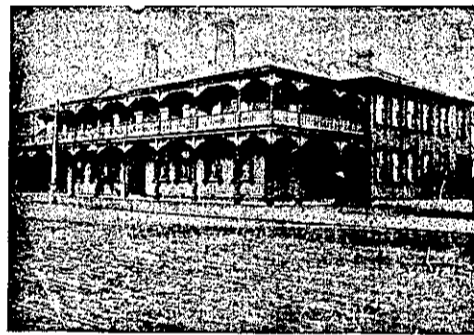
Recognised as the leading Hotel of Taranaki, centrally and conveniently situated, immediately opposite Post, Telegraph, and Government Buildings, and within two minutes' walk of the Railway-station. Re-furnished in the most up-to-date style, and plentifully provided with Fire-escapes, Billiard Table, Hot, Cold, and Shower Baths. All the choicest Wines and Spirits kept in stock. Speight's XXXX Ales & Draught

Chas. Clark - Proprietor
(Late of Gisborne and Auckland).

HAMILTON HOTEL

Hamilton, Waikato.

W. H. BRIGHT, Proprietor.



New Hotel (Front View).



BACK VIEW (Showing the River).

Terms: 6s. per diem; 30s. per week.



Criterion Hotel,

NEW PLYMOUTH.

DAN O'BRIEN, Proprietor
(Late of Canterbury).

Mr. DAN O'BRIEN announces that he has assumed Proprietorship of this fine Commercial House, replete with every convenience. Hot and Cold Baths, Speight's Dunedin Beer on tap. Best of Wines and Spirits retailed. D.C.L. 20 Years Old Whisky on Draught. Best Havana Cigars. Accommodation unrivalled. Cuisine unexcelled. A Night Porter always in attendance.