

USE AND ABUSE OF LIQUOR.

In an address on "Wine, Its Use and Abuse," Rev. A. Chedewski, of Canterbury, England, who is one of the most celebrated lecturers of the times, said, among other things: "We learn from the Mosaic law that God allowed the use of fermented wines three thousand years ago. It would surely be an insult to the Almighty to infer that He did not know that the drinking of wine and strong drink were injurious until the Prohibitionists came to teach Him. Wine usually formed a part of God's blessing, and its absence was considered a curse. We frequently find the Prohibitionists appealing to the Bible, and endeavouring to strengthen their arguments by saying that there are so many different kinds of wine mentioned in the Bible, and that wherever wine is mentioned as a blessing that an unfermented juice or the fruit of the vine is meant. Unless we are prepared to admit that the Bible absolutely contradicts itself, it must be manifest that the wines of the Bible were fermented, that their use was freely permitted, and that only their abuse was considered a curse. It is well known that the wines of the ancients were, with few exceptions, made from the juice of the grape, which was allowed to ferment; and it is equally well known that in a warm climate the juice of the grape, or of any other fruit, will not keep fresh beyond a few hours. It is, therefore, perfectly safe to assume that the juice of the grape would be used much more generally in its fermented state than in a fresh state; and while we have evidence, in the form of clear statements in the Bible, that almost all the wines are associated with intoxication, we can come to no other conclusion than that these wines were both fermented and intoxicating. There are at least eight wines mentioned in the Bible which were undoubtedly fermented, and one or more of them is mentioned in the important passages relating to the use of wine as blessings, curses or sacrifices. They are: Jayhin, shechar, tirish, asis, chemer, mesech, sobe and shemarin." The writer then quotes extensively from the various books of the Old Testament and New to show that the use of these fermented wines or strong drink was authorised and the abuse thereof condemned. He argues that the wines most commonly mentioned in the

Bible were in ordinary use and are conclusively proved to have been intoxicating. Another general proof that the wines of the Bible were intoxicating is the frequent reference to drunkenness. If the wines were not intoxicating, how did the people become inebriated? The Israelites preserved their wines in leather bottles or goat-skins, and the juice of the grape, after being pressed out, was placed in these vessels, where it fermented and obtained its degree of strength. Wine was used by the rich Egyptians and was drunk at banquets by both men and women, as the monuments abundantly testify. It was even drunk by the priests when offering in the temples of their gods. Isaiah mentions the mixing of wine with water by dishonest dealers. Wine was the national beverage of the Israelites. Vinegar was used for the purpose of quenching thirst, and wine regarded as a stimulating beverage. The offering of wine is often spoken of as being a "sweet savour unto the Lord." We find Solomon saying: "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works." Mr. Chedewski says in conclusion: "Let me observe that sobriety exists as much in moderation as in total abstinence. With a rigid inspection of all liquors before they are allowed to be sold to the public, and regulation of the hours of traffic, we may well leave the rest to the canon of the unwritten law. For the time is surely coming when the people will speak upon this question with no uncertain sound, that, when a man disgraces himself, he disgraces the whole community. When that doctrine is fully understood there will be no more drunkenness."

A REMARKABLE LIBEL ACTION.

At the recent Glamorganshire Assizes a somewhat exceptional action was tried, in which the rights of a licensed victualler as an ordinary citizen appear to us the main question involved. The action was brought by two publicans against two members of the Abergvnyny Temperance Committee. The plaintiffs were in March last candidates for the Glyncoerwg Urban District Council, and the defendants thought fit to issue and distribute a circular containing the following passage:—"We do hereby call upon all the electors, men and women, lovers

of morality and humanity, to do their utmost to oppose the return of the publicans, men who live upon the degradation of the people, and pose as their friends," and a good deal more matter in a similar strain. The conduct of the case by the parties concerned displayed a remarkable contrast, for whereas the plaintiffs had from the start, and even in Court, expressed themselves willing to accept an apology as a settlement of the action, the defendants' case produced an amount of fanatical hostility that happily is rarely met with in a court of law. So much was this the case that the learned Judge, Mr Justice Wills, in reviewing the evidence of the Rev. Benjamin Davies, declared that "such an action as raking up past events of thirteen or fourteen years ago was eminently uncharitable, and he regretted it should have come from a Minister of the Gospel, who, above all others, should set an example of Christian charity to his neighbours, whether they be publicans or anything else." Although the action resulted in only nominal damages being awarded to the plaintiffs, we hope it will have the effect of opening the eyes of those living in the neighbourhood as to the true character of those who would deprive a licensed victualler of his natural rights as a citizen, simply because he happens to carry on a trade which is unpalatable to their own narrow-minded views.—("Ridley's.")

THE BIG LONDON HOTELS.

It has been said, and there is a good deal of truth in the statement, that there is no world like the catering world in which to make money. But the question is whether the hotel business is not being a little overdone at the West End of London. Many magnificent caravanserais have been erected during the last few years, each one perhaps more expensively and luxuriously appointed than the other, and now that a wave of depression is passing over the country the keen competition is being severely felt. Novelty is always an attraction, and visitors to the metropolis from all parts of the world have been flocking to the new Savoy—the number of diners last Sunday evening were so numerous that accommodation had to be provided in the foyer—and some of the other palatial establishments have been feeling

what is commonly called a "breeze." Both the Cecil and the Carlton have to admit a falling off in public patronage; in fact, the business done at the former during the past year was in round figures only £182,000 against £226,000 in the previous year, which tells its own tale.

It is not simply a decrease in the number of visitors that is deplored by the managers. Their chief complaint is that their patrons do not spend the amount of money they have been accustomed to spend, and, indeed, as regards the Hotel Cecil, the chairman said that if the figures were disclosed they would astonish the shareholders. Visitors are now content to take a bedroom, enjoy the luxuries of the drawing-room and the smokeroom, and go out and feed at cheap cafes or restaurants, or if the weather is unfavourable, have their meals in the grillroom. The directors of the Carlton, as well as the Cecil, realise all this, yet the former are quite content to bring into existence another and passably even more luxurious hotel—the Ritz in Piccadilly—which is expected to be in full swing by the beginning of 1906. In fact, the argument used by them in support of the establishment of this new hostelry is that many visitors to London will reside in Mayfair and nowhere else, and that already many persons dine, lunch, and sup at the Carlton, although it is not convenient for them to make that hotel their headquarters.—("L.V. Gazette.")

Lord Alwyne Compton, in presiding over the annual dinner of the Biggleswade Society at the Crown Hotel, only spoke a truism when he said the only way to deal with the drink problem was by a moral education of the people, and that the decrease of one or two public-houses in their midst would not have the slightest effect in the diminution of the amount of liquor sold. He said he had the greatest admiration for men who devoted their lives to matters of temperance, but they could not and must not think they were going to ride roughshod over the rest of the country. Holding these views he is proud that Parliament has passed the Licensing Act, which he looks upon as a great measure of temperance reform, and is satisfied that it will prove of benefit alike to the whole community.

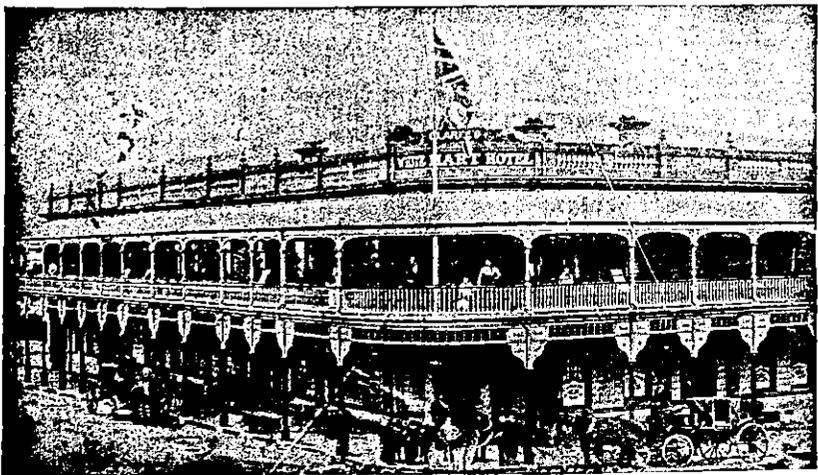


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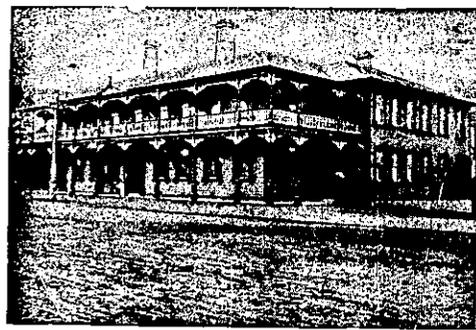
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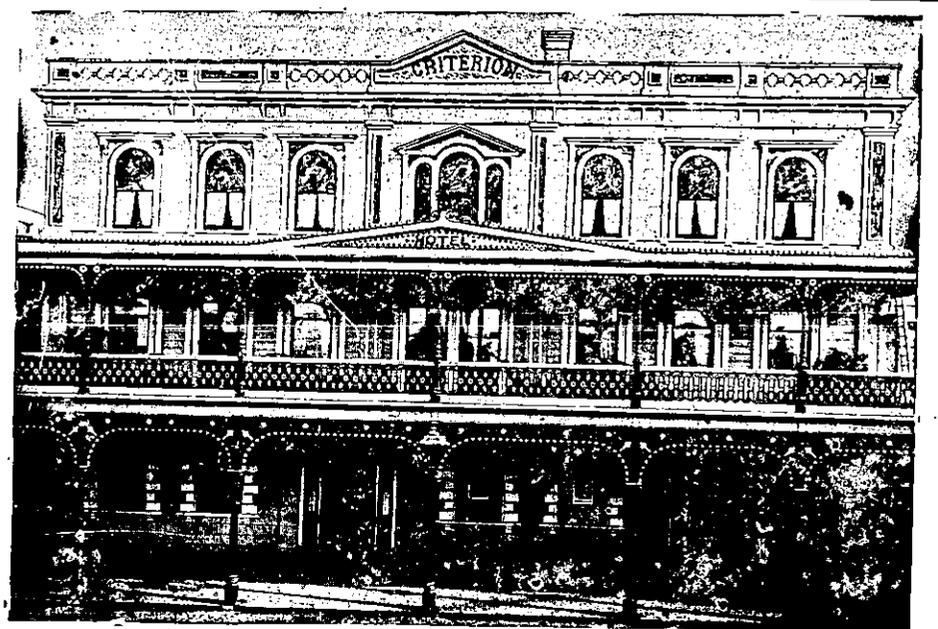


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