

barmaids and women assistants from all parts of the Metropolis. Long before the hour appointed for the commencement of the proceedings, every seat in the body of the Holborn Town Hall was filled, and when Miss Gore-Booth took the presidential chair, there was not even standing room. Mere man was allowed to view the proceedings from the gallery. Never was there a more orderly or better-conducted meeting. Only ladies were allowed to address the assembly, and the speakers were all ranged on the platform, each being introduced by the chairwoman. Miss Gore-Booth made a most effective speech, in the course of which she pointed out that those who were championing the movement viewed the question entirely from the point of view of women workers. She had received many letters from barmaids on the subject, and one very naively asked whether Mr Gladstone would provide her with £150 in the event of her being turned out of her situation in order that she might start a business on her own account. What they maintained was that if the employment of barmaids was abolished, they would necessarily have to swell the ranks of the unemployed, and it was a very serious thing, indeed, to deprive people of their living. Those who were fostering this legislation had no statistics to fall back upon to support their arguments. Barmaids, it was said, drank to excess, and all that they could bring forward were 18 cases; and, said Miss Gore-Booth, there were 27,000 barmaids! Again, it was said that they lived irregular lives, yet they had only 16 cases to put forward in support of this statement. Then they said the hours were too long. Well, the hours varied, and no doubt they were long, but that was no reason why barmaids should be turned out of employment. It was all nonsense to talk about getting women into skilled trades and professions. It was true that some women had become doctors, but what chance was there for them as lawyers? And those who could hope to make a living in such a way must needs spend money before they could expect to succeed. Then, again, it was said if there is no room here there was plenty of room in South Africa and in Canada. She had received a letter from Manitoba stating that it was a beautiful country for women's work. What I want to know, said Miss Gore-Booth amidst vociferous cheering, is why cannot England be a beautiful country for women's work? In conclusion, she moved the following resolution:—

"That this meeting of London barmaids protests indignantly against any attempt through legislation to restrict or abolish their employment. They regard the unwarrantable attacks that have been made on their reputation as grossly insulting, slanderous, and injurious to the industrial interests of a large body of respectable and hardworking women. They deeply resent the proposal of the Home Secretary to give the authority of the State to that section of the public, who, in their efforts after strict temperance legislation, do not shrink from swelling the numbers of the unemployed workers, increasing the sharpness of competition and the sum of poverty in the country, and they appeal to every fair-minded citizen to help them in averting such a disaster."

The resolution was seconded by Miss Maple, and supported by Miss Robbins; by Miss Roper, who said such legislation would simply mean starvation, and perhaps suicide; by Mrs Dickenson, Trades Union organiser, who felt sure that if the London barmaids protested against any interference with their employment, that they would have the women workers of the country at their back; by Miss Chant, who pointed out that there were far greater opportunities for immorality amongst shop girls than there was among barmaids; and by Mrs King Day, who gave a most telling speech, in which she showed how it was desired to abolish the occupation of acrobats by the Dangerous Performance Bill.

The next resolution moved from the chair, ran as follows:—

"That with a view to giving practical effect to the wishes of this meeting, authority is hereby given to its conveners to form a deputation representative of barmaids for the purpose of waiting upon the Home Secretary to lay before him the opinions and interests of women employed in the licensed Trade."

This was seconded by Mrs Reddish, and supported by Lady Russell, who maintained that if certain work was not good for women, it was not good for man. It was finally resolved that a copy of the foregoing resolutions be forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the other members of the Cabinet, and to all Members of Parliament; and Miss Eva Gore-Booth, in closing what she very rightly described as "a magnificent meeting," asked those present, who were willing to join the deputation, to give in their names on leaving, or forward them to 18, Buckingham Street, Strand. There was a businesslike air about the whole proceedings, and Mr Gladstone is to be asked for an early interview.

—London L.V. Gazette.

ANNUAL LICENSING MEETINGS, JUNE, 1907.

Kaipara, Saturday, 1st June, to be adjourned to 28th June, Court House, Dargaville.
 Manukau, Saturday, 1st June, to be adjourned to 15th June, Court House, Onehunga.
 Marsden, Saturday, 1st June, Court House, Whangarei.
 City of Auckland, Tuesday, 4th June, S.M. Court, High Street.
 Franklin, Tuesday, 4th June, Court House, Mercer.
 Parnell, Wednesday, 5th June, Borough Council Chambers, Parnell.
 Waikato, Wednesday, 5th June, Court House, Hamilton.
 Ohinemuri, Wednesday, 5th June, Court House, Paeroa.
 Bay of Plenty, Wednesday, 5th June, Court House, Tauranga.
 Eden, Thursday, 6th June, Epsom Hall, Epsom.
 Waitemata, Friday, 7th June, Borough Council Chambers, Devonport.
 Thames, Friday, 7th June, Court House, Thames.
 Bay of Islands, Friday, 7th June, Court House, Kawakawa.

THE ETERNAL QUESTION.

The defeat of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, the appearance of Jane Cakebread at the police-court, and the threat to legislate the barmaid out of existence, were at one time the three most persistent recurriers in the annals of the year's happenings. But in this finite world all things come to an end sooner or later. The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill will one day attain to the dignity and oblivion of an Act, while Miss J. Cakebread has already disappeared as effectively as Mr Wertheimer's pictures. The barmaid is still with us, but the prospect of legislation to put an end to her term of usefulness is now greater than ever, and the necessity for making an active stand against the mischievous proposals of Mr Herbert Gladstone and his following of ill-informed, interfering, and insolent busy-bodies is correspondingly greater also. We have always advocated the continuance of the employment of women in licensed premises, both on the behalf of women, to whom such employment affords the means of making an honest, clean, and independent living, and in the interests of public morality. We resent any attempt that is made to close this means of livelihood against a body of women who are as respectable, as competent, and as trustworthy as the people who are agitating for their removal, and we emphatically resent the insulting grounds upon which they base their demand for their abolition. When the Home Secretary ventilated his conviction that "the employment of girls and women in bars was open to objection on grounds of health, economic disadvantages, temperance, and morals," he flung his insult not only at the women so employed and their employers, but at the community at large.

There can be no difficulty whatever in proving that, in the matter of health, the barmaid is catered for as well, and better than, nine-tenths of the women who have to work for their livings, and it is a fact that a large percentage of the girls who dispense intoxicating beverages are themselves teetotallers. Indeed, the temperance objection is the most obsolete kind of bogey that ever put the fear into a Radical politician. It is not easy to handle Mr Gladstone's objection to the economic disadvantages of the present barmaid system, because we do not see to whom the disadvantage applies. It cannot surely be to the employees? Yet we cannot believe this concern is on behalf of the employers. Nor can we understand how the economic conditions of the general public would be affected by the proposed change. We doubt if even the financial experts of the Wastrel party in the last County Council could demonstrate the economic advantage derived from throwing some thirty thousand women out of employment. But when Mr Gladstone refers to the moral objections to the engagement of females in licensed premises we are able to follow him once more; and, presuming that he grants that the women so employed were moral when they entered the business, it may be inferred that their deviation from the strict path of virtue is brought about by the people with whom they come in contact. In other words, the questionable morality of which the barmaids as a class are suspected by the Home Secretary is attributable to about nine-tenths of the male population of the United Kingdom.

It is only necessary to grant the inferior state of morality that prevails among barmaids to agree with Mr Gladstone's conclusions. But we indignantly deny that barmaids are less moral than any other class of female workers, or female loafers, in the country. We are not disposed to accept Mr Hall Caine's insinuations with regard to hospital nurses; we are not swallowing all the stuff that is written about the immorality of the stage; we suspect that most of the stories reflecting

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upon the purity of lady typists have no advertisement, is quite so abandoned and foundation in fact; we don't even believe dissolute as we are asked to believe. But that the Smart Set, out of whom Father Bernard Vaughan is making such bold we unhesitatingly maintain that, in the matter of the domestic virtues, barmaids