

# The Licensed Victuallers

## YEARNING AFIER TYRANNY.

An act, which in all its contemptible aspects it would be hard to equal, was committed a few days ago by a self-constituted coterie calling itself the Prohibition League. This body—which is literally such, for it has no soul—had heard from some of its members a cock-and-bull story about a keg of beer and the distribution of anti-teetotal cards at the Costley Home, and immediately jumped to the joyous conclusion that the manager of that institution was in league with the brewers, and the devil, and all the other powers of darkness, for the purpose of destroying the welfare of the inmates here and hereafter. An indignant letter was sent to the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, in which the charges were formulated in detail. The manager was accused of having, previous to the last local option poll, permitted a person to distribute alcoholic liquor to the inmates, caused the brewers' ticket as to how to vote to be laid alongside of each inmate, and allowed a big poster upon the same lines to be displayed in the Home. The letter on receipt had been handed to Mr Skynner, the manager of the Home, whose simple and circumstantial reply not only proved that the complaint was utterly baseless, but demonstrated that if the League had had the courtesy to make the simplest inquiry the impotent storm need not have been raised at all. Mr Skynner's report stated that no alcoholic liquor had been presented to inmates with the exception of a ten gallon cask of ale, given by Mr Moss Davis on the 9th of November, in order that the inmates might drink the King's health. That was distributed among the inmates in the presence of Dr. King, and he had the pleasure of stating that no single case of drunkenness resulted. Mr Skynner denied having distributed the brewers' card of instructions how to vote, and stated if it was done it would be entirely without his wish or knowledge. He admitted that copies of the prohibition ticket were forwarded by post to inmates, and were handed to them. He had also given the prohibitionists permission to address the inmates, which they did, while the liquor party never had such permission. Mr Skynner also gave his most emphatic denial to the statement that a large poster of the brewers' was placed in the Home.

The members of the Board, without exception, were extremely disgusted that their time should be taken up with such frivolous twaddle, and some of the members did not hesitate to express their feelings in forcible language. There was, however, no real occasion for surprise. The action of the Prohibition League in this instance is a part of the programme deliberately adopted by the party, which is to use any and every means to throw dirt at those who do not subscribe to their heresies, in the hope that some of it will stick. We have seen that no form of slander or abuse has been neglected by this delectable organisation, and that the reputation of no man is safe in its hands. How long we are, as a community, going to put up with the fanatical advocates of a system that has been utterly discredited wherever it has been given a fair trial, we do not know, but the strain upon the good nature of the public is becoming rather too heavy to bear. With the action of the Prohibition party in respect of our electoral machinery it is too early to deal, but the inquiry proceeding promises to provide some rich material for consideration and reflection.

## THE MEDDLING WOMAN NEGLECTS HER DUTY.

The records of the "convention" of the W.C. Temperance Union just concluded at Dunedin have been received with mixed feelings by the ordinary man with old-fashioned ideas about humanity and sociology, and the relationship of the sexes in general. Alternately the sentiment uppermost has been surprise, pity, contempt, disgust, strong disapproval, dismay, and anger. The milder varieties are the more comforting, but it is not easy to abstain from indulgence in the others, and a mixture may be recommended. Let us then be stern, but do not let us lose our sense of the ludicrous. In this frame of mind writes a correspondent of the Dunedin "Star," in a recent issue of that journal, as follows:—

"Sir,—I read two reports in Saturday's "Star." The first was an account of the loss of a valuable life from want of knowledge. "A baby's death" was the result of improper feeding, etc. Oh, the pity of it! Will no one—can no one—come to the rescue, and teach us as a community how to rear our offspring, or must parents be left to blunder on in the future as in the past, resulting in the loss of many valuable lives? Is it not possible to make some practical effort to reduce the rate of infant mortality? It may seem novel at first sight, but could not a move be made somewhat on the following lines:—The authorities take the matter in hand, and have a model set of rules or directions drawn up by some properly authorised competent person or persons, setting forth in plain language how to feed, clothe and nourish children, so that they may have a chance to grow up healthy men and women. Have these rules issued to every parent in the colony: have them published from time to time in the daily papers, and printed on the backs of marriage certificates; and use every other means that may be necessary to spread the desired information, so that every father and mother may know their duty and how to do it.

The second was an account of the deliberations of the W.C.T.U., representing forty-seven Unions. They seemed to be ready and willing to discuss and debate almost every subject under the sun, ranging from, say, pitch-and-toss to manslaughter, in their frantic efforts to carry out their pet notions. I sincerely hope and trust that every woman of them read your account of "A Baby's Death," and that it may be the means of bringing them back to a proper sense of their duties and obligations, rights, and privileges in the community as our mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters.—I am, etc.,

FATHER.

## Trade Topics

Mr W. J. Baker, licensee of the Alexandra Hotel, Chapel Street, Auckland, has commenced proceedings for criminal libel against William Richardson and W. T. Bell, in connection with a letter written by the latter and published in a print issued by Richardson.

At the Supreme Court, New Plymouth, Rev. Ben Hutson, Presbyterian Minister, sued Robert McKinnon Morison, claiming £3000 damages for alleged slander and libel. Leading counsel was retained on each side. During the course of plaintiff's ministering, he preached a sermon in favour of prohibition, and while referring to a case of robbery at Stratford, in which it was shown that the culprits were drunk, plaintiff went on to mention that defendant, who was deputy Mayor, and other leading business men were setting a bad example by being in hotels after hours. After considerable evidence had been taken, a settlement was arrived at between the parties, by which the defendant withdrew his allegations and insinuations against plaintiff's character, and expressed regret that any misunderstanding or unpleasantness had occurred between them; each party to pay their own costs.

The whisky controversy continues unabated in the London Press. After all, this question may be said to resolve itself into one of palate. Whisky drinkers like their particular blend or brand, and what is more, they take very good care they get it. Whether it is composed of grain, or malt, or "pure malt," they care little so long as the whisky is to their liking. With the object of "protecting the consumer," Dr. Schedrowitz, the analytical chemist who wrote the article on whisky for the "Encyclopaedia Britannica," suggests that two things should at once be done. First of all, he says, the difficulty of sampling under the Food and Drugs Act should be removed; secondly, an experimental inquiry should be instituted to make the necessary standards. The inquiry, he maintains, would be justified with a view to ascertaining to what extent adulterant ingredients are present in grain or so-called "malt" spirits on the tent adulterant ingredients are present in wish to be poisoned, but it is not too much to say that for purity it would be hard to beat many of the branded whiskies on the market to-day. Still, as with butter, so with whisky. There are many people who infinitely prefer margarine to the best creamery butter, there are also those who prefer their particular "Scotch" or "Irish" to the finest blend on the market.

Messrs Whytock and Co., Lambton Quay, Wellington, and Christchurch, report the sale of the following hotel properties:—The lease and furniture of the Sandridge Hotel, Sydenham, Christchurch, from Mr Baker to a Wellington client; a lease of the new Clarendon Hotel, Christchurch, from the Hon. C. Louison to Mrs Read, late of Chavanne's Hotel, Wanganui; the lease and furniture of the Junction Hotel, Halswell, Canterbury, from Mr G. H. Buchanan to Mr P. C. Triggs, of the Terminus Hotel, Napier; the lease and furniture of Weakley's Hotel, Akaroa, Canterbury, from Mr R. Bailey to Mr G. S. Spooner, of Roxborough, Otago; the freehold of the Greytown Hotel, Greytown North, from Mr C. Rogers to Mr Charles Thompson, late of the City Hotel, Wellington; the lease and furniture of the Pahautanui Hotel from F. Mayers to Mr G. Smith, late of Dannevirke.

A London cablegram last week announced that Mr Balfour, in receiving a deputation from the beer and wine trades, deprecated the unjust confiscation policy of certain magistrates in refusing renewal of licenses. He hoped the quarter sessions would reverse most of the extravagant decisions and to give the Licensing Act of 1903 a fair chance.

The death is announced of Mr Paul Frederick De Castella, seventy-five, a pioneer winegrower in Victoria. Mr De Castella was born in Neuchatel, Switzerland, in May, 1827. He came to Melbourne in 1849, and in 1850 he purchased the Yering Station from Mr W. Ryrie, where he resided for over forty-three years. Mr De Castella and his brother (the late Mr Hubert De Castella) were pioneers of the wine industry in Victoria.

Lord Balfour, of Burleigh, the Secretary for Scotland, is indisposed to give any information as to the nature of the new Licensing Bill for Scotland to be introduced in the forthcoming session of Parliament. While he is willing to receive any suggestions from any and every side, he told a deputation that waited upon him last week, that the first information of the contents of the Bill should be made to Parliament itself; but he stated that, so far as he could see at present, it was likely to take precedence of any other Scotch measure. The main object of this deputation was to induce the Secretary for Scotland to incorporate the principle of early closing and make the ten o'clock regulation applicable to all Scotland. It is significant that many members of the Trade have given their adhesion to this movement. Lord Balfour, however, gave the deputation but little encouragement. His view is that every interference with personal freedom is in itself bad unless an overwhelming justification for it can be produced, and he is inclined to the belief that the balance of evil would be against the proposal which the deputation put forward.

At the quarterly meeting of the Geraldine Licensing Committee, on Tuesday 3rd, the license of the Winchester Hotel was cancelled on six specific grounds—(1) That the premises are not maintained at the required standard. (2) that the foundations of the premises giving way cause the floor to be dangerous to walk upon. (3) the outhouse conveniences are unsuitable to hotel requirements. (4) the premises are out of repair, and have been allowed to become ruinous and dilapidated, (5) not sufficient facilities are provided to allow the inmates to escape in case of a fire, and (6) great danger to life existed in the past, and continues to exist if the premises are allowed to continue in the present state.

That old-established house, the Royal Hotel, Victoria-street, Auckland, which has been greatly enlarged and completely reconstructed throughout, has been taken over by Mr Percy Isaac, who has been purser in the Union Company's service for fifteen years, and is well and favourably known to all the travelling public. Under Mr Isaac's enterprising control the Royal will speedily resume its place as one of the leading hotels in the city. It is now fitted with every modern improvement, and in all its appointments, including the cuisine, is designed to meet the demands of the most exacting patrons.

A very interesting and timely book, "The Heresy of Teetotalism," has been published by Messrs Simpkin, Marshall and Co., London. The author, Mr E. Thorne, was once a temperance advocate himself, and comes of a family which has suffered much on account of its principles. He is not sparing of his remarks regarding the misuse of Scripture by teetotal advocates, and especially of the misquoting his neighbour drink, that puttest giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest the bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also," the continuation (which completely alters the advocates' application) being omitted, "that thou mayest look on his nakedness." That the use of alcohol in wine and other forms is recommended in the Bible is shown by a goodly array of texts, though drunkenness and over-indulgence (in food as well as wine) is always condemned in Holy Writ. Nor is the author at all lenient with those who would attempt to explain away the incident at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, and the use of wine at the Lord's Supper. Professor W. O. Atwater adds a very interesting paper on the nutritive value of alcohol, and the author concludes with interesting accounts of the various Prohibition laws of the Prohibition States of America, by no means in their favour.

From a speech made by Mr Reginald Mortimer in reply to the toast of the "National Trade Defence Association," given at the luncheon of the annual meeting of the South Wales Brewers' Association and National Trade Defence Association, held at the Park Hotel, Cardiff, at which Alderman Brown entertained about seventy delegates, representing over one thousand licensed houses, I gather that there is invested in the Trade in South Wales alone between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000. This is an amount which it is the bounden duty of all concerned to conserve, and I am glad to note that these two organisations are fully alive to the importance of immediate action. It is all very well for the justices to say that there are a number of houses that are structurally unfit to be licensed premises. This point should have been determined before licenses were granted, and now at any rate the owners should be allowed the opportunity of bringing them up to the required standard ere the renewals are refused.—("L.V. Gazette.")

A recent visitor to New Zealand, speaking to an Australian interviewer of his experiences in this colony, said:—"I never saw so little drinking, nor met with so many teetotalers before. You will see forty or fifty people dining at a hotel, and not more than two or three of them taking liquor with their dinners. Proprietors of the larger hotels, fearing the advent of Prohibition, will not spend sixpence on extensions and improvements. State Socialism is developing there very rapidly. The Seddon Government does not wait for private enterprise in the matter of increasing facilities and attractions for tourists, but spends money in that direction by the thousands." The visitor thinks New Zealand a paradise for the working man.

An application has been made to the Board of Inland Revenue, England, with a view to meeting the question which has arisen in regard to affairs in the blending trade. Messrs H. S. Perse, Limited, of Galway, suggest to the Board that all whisky should be labelled and accurately described. The Board of Inland Revenue know by their books the age of the whiskies in bond, and the firm suggest that the Board might issue a certificate similar to that which the Canadian Government attaches to all spirits bottled under its supervision. In the case of bulk whisky, the Inland Revenue, it is pointed out, give a certificate of age in the form of a permit, and Messrs Perse, therefore, cannot see any objection to continuing this with cased whiskies.

At the Dunedin Police Court, last week, John Lafey, licensee of the Gtogo Hotel, was convicted on a charge of supplying liquor to one George Magorian, while the latter was in a state of intoxication, and fined £10. Notice of appeal was given. The evidence was very conflicting.