



GRANNIE COSSIPS.

Yes, my dear, I always like to be Parliamentary, and so I don't say that the Moderate Party tell lies. I only rank them an easy first in the Ananias class. If a lie gets them votes, that's all that troubles them. Of course they might be such fools that they can't understand the Act, but you take it from me that they're either fools or knaves—they can place themselves which class they rank in—but I know what I think. Last night Mrs Smith was troubled because they told her that if we failed to carry Prohibition in April, then all our No-License districts would become wet. "Well," says I to her, "just you read the Act and use common-sense, which, by the way, is a very uncommon article. I've read Hansard (which my old friend, Sir James, sends me pretty regularly) closely, having not much else to read, and mighty dull reading some of it is, and I've got the Act and studied it, and I can't find any provision in it for increasing the number of licenses. My old friend Mr S. A. Adams, whose legal opinion is always mighty clear, and worth having, not being the product of whisky and imagination, says I'm right there, and that we are sure to keep what we've gained in the past, and get as much more as we can, all New Zealand we expect. Even in the old Act there was no provision for increasing licenses. We could reduce by vote of the electors, but no vote could increase. Just you make a note of that!

Then they told Mrs Jones that after we had voted the trade out and paid

the 4½ millions, the bars would open again in 12 months. So says I, "My dear, don't you worry any about that; do you think the Moderates would rush round holding meetings and working to keep their licenses if they could get 4½ millions just to close them for one year. Not much!" If we carried Prohibition there is no other poll provided for in the Act. Of course any Act of Parliament can be repealed or amended by any succeeding Parliament, but if the people of this Dominion are going to vote out the trade and pay 4½ millions to make it quit at once, and then elect a Parliament to bring licenses back in a year they are bigger fools than even I took them for. If we look at things in that way we'd never work for any reform. What's the good of working to get women a vote if the next Parliament can take it away. Well, we worked and got the vote, and no Parliament would dare to take it away from us. You take my tip for it, Parliament don't alter Acts that the people want; the members are too fond of votes to do any such fool thing. I'm going to do my level best to get it out this time, and let them get it back if they can. I'm a democrat, and let the people decide.

Besides, no Government would grant licenses unless they first submitted the question to a Referendum of the people. And if we once get folk to vote it out, I'm not afraid they will ever vote it back again. Anyway, I'm going to do my duty on April 10th; also I'm praying the Lord to strengthen the backbone of some of my friends to do the same.

In my younger days, when Clutha had just gone dry, a publican up North says to me, "Of course, we don't object to No-License. We sell more liquor in Clutha than we did before." And I smiles, and says, "Go on now. Do you really? Well, I suppose you'll work hard for No-License in every electorate, as all you want is to sell more stuff." But they didn't help us to get No-License. What's troubling the Moderate Party is that Prohibition is so great a success that no place ever wants to go back to License after trying Prohibition, and they know that New Zealand will be no exception to the general rule. Doctors say it isn't healthy to lie on both sides, though I always thought that lawyers were a healthy

enough body of men. But the Moderates are not finding it healthy to lie on both sides. They say to the drinker, "You know, if Prohibition is carried you can't get a drop, even as a medicine." Then they tell the likes of me, "Prohibition does not prohibit." But they can't have it both ways. Wait till the numbers go up in April, and I'm prepared to bet, not being a betting woman, that Prohibition leads the field, with Continuance such a bad second that he'll hardly get into the "Also-ran" class.

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### STATE PURCHASE OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

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#### Mr. Asquith Expresses Strong Views to a Deputation.

In speaking to a deputation from the British Temperance Societies, Mr Asquith spoke thus about State Purchase: "As an old Chancellor of the Exchequer, one who had a long experience of financial matters, he had examined the subject from every point of view. It was true that some of the proposals had plausible attractions, but in his view the whole scheme was financially unsound. That, however, was only one, and not the principal consideration. There were businesses, some of which had been placed under Government control during the war, which might rightly, and probably would, be acquired and carried on by the State. But this business was not a business of that character. It was a business the owning and carrying on of which as a business the State should not touch with its finger-tips. On every ground, social, economic, moral, and intellectual, he was opposed to State Purchase, whether by the State as a whole or by smaller communities, and those who opposed such a proposal might rely on his uncompromising support."

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"The loved and lost; why do we call them lost?  
Because we miss them from our onward road?  
God's unseen angel o'er our pathway crossed,  
Looked on us all, and loving them the most,  
Straightway relieved them from life's weary road."