

taken in order to reduce the number of the victims of Bacchus. They urge the strict observance of the civil law and the canons of respectability in the conduct of their business and threaten with a Vigilance Committee the scallywags of the trade who supply drink to the partly intoxicated person and to the heady toper who (in the words of the old English ballad)

'Gets on a spree,
And goes bobbing around.'

All this is commendable, provided that it represents a serious and permanent crusade against the grave abuses which it professes to combat. We have said full many a time—and here repeat—that the real leaders of the Prohibition-without-compensation movement are those licensed victuallers who defy the laws of God and man in their sordid hunt for shekels. Such guilty gold can never bring a blessing. And the heaviest blows of 'the butt-end of the law' are punishment all too light for the itching palm that closes on the coin of the swiller who has laden himself with more of the flowing bowl than befits his manhood.

It matters little in principle here whether the alcohol that constitutes the chief element of attraction in the toper's swill is or is not a poison. Every controversial Johnny Raw can decide this knotty scientific question out of hand. But the doctor and the chemist cannot—just yet. So we'd better bide a wee before we dogmatise upon the point. Dr. C. M. Douglas holds the non-poison theory. But, in 'Public Opinion' of August 4 he urges people to look upon alcohol 'as a doubtful luxury, to be used sparingly and moderately, and under exceptional circumstances as a medicine to supply the want of, or the inability to assimilate, nourishing food.' And he entreats 'that girls should never or hardly ever drink alcohol, even in a comparatively mild form, and that distilled liquors should never find a place amongst a young man's beverages. To youthful blood and brain it is,' he adds, 'as poison, destructive as vitriol to steel.' 'It has its place,' says 'Mr. Dooley,' 'but its place is not in a man's head.' For some, total abstinence is a precept of necessity, for others, it is a counsel of perfection.

Some New Zealand Wit

In former days Kings made war and peace. The kings—of finance—do it still. Sidonia, in Disraeli's 'Coningsby,' never troubled about international crises and rumors of war in newspapers till Governments began to negotiate for heavy loans. Then he knew they meant blood-letting. But the monarchs of the Stock Exchange are those who, by the opening and the closing of their purse-strings, practically determine the opening and the closing of a war. And they know abundantly how to guard as well as how to place their treasured millions. Quaint and humorous expression was given to this idea by Mr. John Barrett, of Christchurch, in the course of a recent interview with our San Francisco contemporary, the 'Monitor' 'How is your country defended against foreign aggression?' the 'Monitor' queried. Mr. Barrett's reply was both witty and wise 'England,' said he, 'has a South Pacific squadron which calls once every six months, but our main defence is the fact that we owe the Jews of the world forty million pounds sterling, and intend to borrow more money from them. In their hands we consider ourselves pretty safe against aggression.'

Biography of a Lie

On the twelfth of July—auspicious date!—the cable-demon sped to New Zealand and the other ends of the earth a circumstantial account of an Irish agrarian 'outrage.' The story—which smelled of the Walls of Derry—told of a gallant defence made by one Mr Edward Magennis, near Boyle, against a large body of men who surrounded and besieged his house, volleying

shots into it for three hours, until the noble little garrison beat them off. Last month, in the House of Commons, Chief Secretary Long admitted that the whole story was a cowardly calumny and an invention from start to finish. Mr. Magennis and others had testified before a special police investigation committee that no such attack had taken place, and that, in effect, the romantic story of the defence of the Roscommon Plevna had no more of sober truth in it than the eastern tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. It was merely part and parcel of the campaign of falsehood instituted, for an obvious political purpose, by the Coercionist Irish press. But, true to his coward traditions, the cable-fiend never withdrew or corrected the envenomed romance. The calumny was spread on the wings of the lightning; far in its wake the refutation jogged along in a leisurely way in the hold of an ocean liner. Which gives a point to the mixed but well-meant metaphors of the Philosopher of the Sandwich Islands: 'Slander is played on a tin horn, while truth steals forth like the dying song of a lute.' The ruffian who concocted, or first spread, this slander is well known to the police in Boyle. But the rawhide of the law has never crossed the caittiff's back; for was not the calumny bred and spread in the sacred cause of Coercion?

Mountebank 'Prophets'

'Since knowledge is but sorrow's spy,
It is not safe to know.'

For our benefit God has hidden the future from our eyes. He can lift the veil, for all things past and present and to come are open and naked to His eyes. But we must not suppose that He is going to do so by means of tea-leaves or packs of playing-cards, or glass balls, or the other paraphernalia of the fortune-teller or 'futurist' who plies her (or his) trade at as much per head as the credulous are prepared to part with. We in New Zealand could afford to export a big brigade of those professional charlatans. India is apparently not so heavily infested by them. But it has some 'famous' seers, all its very own, whose 'forecasts' add to the gaiety of life in that land of temple and jungle. One of these is Pandit Rammarayan Yogshastri. Thus far all his predictions for 1905 have failed to 'materialise.' Here is one of them, taken from a list of fourteen published early in the year in the 'Bombay Gazette':—

'From the 17th March next Russia will begin to achieve victory over the Japanese, and from the 25th March next Russia will obtain decisive victories. Within June Manchuria and Port Arthur will be in full possession of Russia. Russia will be victorious in land and sea fighting within the above-mentioned period.'

This is a good average sample of the work of the self-styled 'prophets' who (for a consideration)

'Make fools believe in their foreseeing
Of things before they are in being,
To swallow gudgeons ere they're caught,
And count their chickens ere they're hatched.'

But your professional seer seldom commits herself (or himself) to definite statements regarding future events. Their oracles more frequently relate to a 'dark man' and a 'fair woman,' and a 'letter from over the sea,' or to such homely platitudes as that which Madame Crompton addressed with ungrammatical lips to Artemus Ward: 'If you ain't keeful when you git your money, you'll lose it, but which otherwise you will not.'

The wise astronomer foretells
The date of each eclipse,
The racing man at fingers' ends
Has all the latest tips.
But we can vouch a fact more true—
Can give a tip more sure—
If you would of a cold be rid
Take WOODS' GREAT PEPPERMINT CURE.

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