

business and its surroundings, that it may become as free from just reproach as any other, and as unobjectionable, from the temperance point of view, as it has long and generally been in Catholic countries such as Italy and Spain. For the rest, if, apart from these considerations, many of our faith view the Prohibition movement with suspicion and distrust, it is because these feelings have been burned into their souls by the virulence and persistency with which many of its leaders have for years attacked and outraged the most cherished religious sentiments of Catholics in every part of New Zealand.

But, despite the improved conditions that have generally prevailed during the past three years, the traffic in alcoholic drinks has a long and arduous road to travel before it satisfies the reasonable aspirations of the friends of temperance. The trade is one that is peculiarly liable to abuses. For this very reason it should be entrusted only to men that are specially fitted to carry it on. It should, moreover, be placed under specially stringent control, and be hedged around with every reasonable safeguard. Under both these aspects—that of selection and of control—there still remains much scope for reform in New Zealand. There are, no doubt, many in the business who merit the encomium bestowed some time ago by an earnest Prohibitionist on a strict and greatly respected hotel-keeper of Dunedin whose soul had just flitted—we hope to the Better Land: 'If all publicans were like him, there would be no Prohibition.' The lesson is not new. It received a fresh illustration at the recent Local Option polls. But there seems, on the part of many licensed victuallers, a disposition to keep it out of sight and out of mind. We once more remind all concerned that the real leaders and organisers of Prohibition are not those who are nominally at the head of the crusade against the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks. No, the real plumed generals of the movement are the scallywags of 'the trade'—the wretched dollar-grubbers who bend every energy to create a demand for liquor, even beyond what sobriety should dictate, and to squeeze the utmost coin at the speediest rate out of cask and bottle, regardless alike of the law of God and of the proper restrictions with which, in the public interest, the Civil Power has surrounded the occupation of the licensed victualler. The motto of this sordid fringe of the licensed business is that set forth by Pope:—

'Get place and wealth; if possible, with grace;
If not, by any means get wealth and place.'

The Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore laid down the following elementary rules for the guidance of publicans:—

'They should sell no drink to minors, or to persons who are likely to take it to excess. They should close their saloons on Sundays. At no time should they allow within their saloons blasphemy, cursing, or obscene language. If, by their fault or co-operation, religion is dishonored, or men led to ruin, they must know that there is in heaven an Avenger, Who will surely exact from them most severe penalties.'

But the scallywag is, so far as he dares—and he dares much—a law unto himself. He recognises—when he safely can—no law that conflicts with his shekel-raking principles. Appeals to his conscience are frequently as futile as dosing the dead with pink pills. Such men are pests of society. They are a constant menace to the public weal. And the first step towards public-house reform is to eliminate them permanently from the business of licensed victualling. The Prohibition movement owes its rise and growth and gathering influence to the grave and acknowledged abuses of the scallywag—abuses which, however, we believe to be no more inherent to the traffic in alcoholic drink than to the trade in jack-knives or diamond-grain sporting-powder. But it is high time that the antecedents and personal character and fitness of applicants should be made

the subject of closer scrutiny by the police, licensing committees, and the Association which represents 'the trade' in New Zealand.

We have more than once expressed our conviction that the licensed victualling trade in New Zealand is placed between the two alternatives of substantial reform or gradual abolition. And from time to time we have pointed out that any real reform must come from within—although it may be powerfully aided by legislative enactments, which, like Father O'Flynn, may serve a good purpose by 'lifting the lazy ones on wid the stick.'

We understand that a conference of the licensed victuallers of the southern provinces will be held shortly with a view to effecting sundry improvements and reforms in 'the trade.' If—as we hope—they will set about their work in a serious, practical, and thorough-going manner, they will probably lay the foundations of a genuine reform that may in due course search every licensing district in New Zealand. We commend to them the following suggestions:—

1. Steps to be taken to rid the business of the scallywag—by moral suasion and altered conduct, if possible; otherwise by more emphatic means, such as formal opposition to his license by the L.V. Association, aiding in prosecutions, etc.

2. An organised and systematic effort should be made to aid in enforcing the provisions of the law, especially in regard to (a) trading on Sundays and after hours; (b) gambling; and (c) the supplying of strong drinks to minors and intoxicated and prohibited persons. No infraction of the moral law should be tolerated, and not one tittle of the provisions of the civil law should be inoperative or ineffective.

3. Fresh legislation should be proposed on some such lines as the following: (a) In the interests of the home life of both publicans and their clients, ten o'clock closing to be made compulsory throughout New Zealand. (b) To raise to twenty-one years the age at which young persons may be supplied with liquor. (c) Imprisonment without the option of a fine to the person who actually supplies alcoholic liquor to anyone who is under the influence of drink. (d) Endorsements of license to be compulsory and non-cancellable for Sunday trading, and supplying liquor to minors and intoxicated and prohibited persons. (e) Three such endorsements to constitute a perpetual disqualification for holding a license. (f) Provision to be made for the more effectual 'prohibition' and safeguarding, not alone of the habitual toper, but likewise of the usually more stormy and tempestuous drunkard who indulges in occasional or periodical bouts of intemperance. (g) The abolition of private bars. (h) Effective and perpetual abolition (and not mere paper abolition) of tied houses. (i) Cessation—say on January 1, 1909—of the employment of young women behind the bars of hotels.

We should be sorry to see the methods of the American saloon ever acclimatised in New Zealand. But in one respect, at least, it offers an example deserving of imitation: female bar-tenders are unknown under the Stars and Stripes. From personal knowledge we are prepared to vouch that the employment of young women in bars is the cause of a very serious amount of the opposition manifested towards the licensed victuallers' trade in New Zealand. For everything that tends towards increasing the demand for spirituous drinks beyond the needs of reasonable refreshment, is bad both in morals and in policy. Now the ground of opposition arising from the barmaid is one which the respectable licensed victualler has, alike with the rascal, in the trade, long been supplying to the Prohibitionist party. This objection is intensified by the fact that in, perhaps, the majority of cases personal attractiveness is a chief—if not the chief—factor in determining the employment of an applicant for a position behind the bar.

J. TAIT, Monumental Sculptor

273 Cashel Street West CHRISTCHURCH.

Just over Bridge
and opposite
Drill Shed

Manufacturer and Importer of Every Description of Headstones, Cross Monuments, &c., in Granite, Marble, and other stones.