

held its monopoly more firmly, and the Norwegian authorities avoided some of the already obvious faults in the Swedish system. But, in handing most of the profits to charity, instead of to the municipalities. Norway raised up trouble of another kind; the Norwegian cities were still strongholds of drinking, though, as in Sweden, most of the country districts had gone dry under Local Option. Both Norway and Finland adopted prohibition during the war, and have resisted hard commercial pressure from their old customers, the Mediterranean wine countries.

The Gothenburg Company, we have said, soon lost its philanthropy in Sweden. Strangely, also, it soon abandoned its monopoly. After thirty years, a review was taken of the seventy licenses it started with. Seventeen had been sold back to private clubs, restaurants, and hotels, and hotels vending liquor for gain. Twenty-three more had gone to wine and spirit merchants who did an "off sale" trade. Seven went to carry on another "Offsale" system in which the Company was mixed up. Four were retained for the sale of spirits with meals in eating houses. Only nineteen "philanthropic" houses remained to vend spirits under regulation as originally planned. This deeply significant tabulation indicates how impossible it is for any system of public control to hold its intricate and unwieldy business as a monopoly. The great name of the Gothenburg system was acquired under false pretences: the tremendous decrease in Sweden's drinking took place under Local Option during the ten years before it came in. Careful calculation shows that, for our century, the Gothenburg scheme reduced the drinking of spirits one quarter of a gallon per head, and increased the consumption of beer eight gallons per head.

Gothenburg itself is one of the most drunken cities of Europe. In one pre-war year of this century, it had 1600 more arrests for drunkenness than the most drunken American town of its size. On the number of convictions for drunkenness, it is judged five times as drunken as Aberdeen, Cardiff, or Liverpool. It is the most drunken city in Scandinavia. One of the Company's original aims was to decrease pauper-

ism. But it has increased fifty per cent. There are about eight hundred licensed houses in Gothenburg, but the Company's eighteen or nineteen "philanthropic" houses were, not many years ago, calculated to be responsible for one third of the drunkenness there.

So great were the evils of the Gothenburg system that in 1914, a Stockholm expert, Dr. Ivan Bratt, was called on to reform it. The purchase of liquor is limited by a "motbok" or license card. This is issued only to persons over 21, who for three years previous have not been alcoholic patients in hospital, nor convicted for drunkenness, nor punished for crime. The allowance runs from one to four litres a month (a litre is seven-eighths of a quart). A license card is cancelled for drunkenness, or if lent to another, and no one under eighteen is served with liquor in a restaurant. The Bratt system has been in operation since 1921. During 1913-1915, years of free sale, consumption rose to 40,000,000 litres a year. It dropped to 25,000,000 litres later, but in 1924 it had risen to 28,000,000. Convictions for drunkenness are also rising. There were 32,381 in a population of six millions. During the last three years drunkenness among young persons has especially risen, amounting in 1924 to 20.1 of the whole sum. The number of license-holders is also increasing; in 1925 they were 1,060, 441 and 92,981 of these were women. So much for the Gothenburg-Bratt reform.

My authority for these recent facts is the International expert, Alexis Bjorkman, writing from Stockholm on January 12th, 1926. He adds:—

"The whole temperance movement in Sweden, comprising some 500,000 adult members, stands unanimously against the system and for total prohibition." But why, it may be asked, do not the Swedish towns exercise Local Option and get rid of the Company system? The answer is that each town receives 7/10 per cent of the huge surplus profits. One idealist may quarrel with Mammon, but who ever saw a Corporation of idealists? At one blow, Gothenburg crushes both these myths of reform—Trust and Corporate Control.

Let a clear-sighted Swede, the Mayor of Sater, speak the last word:—"Endowed with the semb-

lance of official justice, morality, and temperance, and wearing a glamour of saintliness, the Gothenburg system has degenerated into an unheard-of humbug . . . It is the kiss of Judas. It creates a cruel lust for blood money . . . Of it can only be said as of other profitable egotisms, 'has God in the eye, but the devil in the fingers.' "

Strangely the shadow of Gothenburg flashes across the screen of British politics. In 1872, the philanthropic brewer, Mr Carnegie, came over and joined with Mr Joseph Chamberlain, then a Radical, to dazzle England with this new salvation. But Britain, however weighed with liquor trouble, refused to be dazzled. Even then it regarded the brewer as a dubious temperance reformer. Enquiry also shows Gothenburg more drunken than any British town. Mr Chamberlain, however, did not abandon his projected liquor reforms with his Liberalism. In the early nineties he set forth a municipal monopoly of public houses as a counter-cry to Local Option, the Liberals being pledged to the latter. Liberalism foundered on other rocks that year, but the Tory victors did not municipalise the public houses.

Yet the seed thus dropped produced some fragile flowers of reform in England, such as the Public House Trust Association of Northumberland, headed by Earl Grey, and taking over several public houses. The scheme sounded well, only pure liquor was to be sold, the managers were to receive a commission on food sold and on "good management"—a fatally elastic phrase—but not on liquor, and profits were to be administered for the benefit of the community. The intentions of Earl Grey were good, but, after a few years, the "Grey Arms" was denounced as one of the worst conducted houses in the North of England, and two clerical shareholders pronounced the whole scheme a failure. Other and smaller Trust house experiments have been tried in London and other large cities. They are unknown to fame and to reform.

(To be continued).

Absent-minded—the man who thought he'd left his watch at home and took it out of his pocket to see if he had time to go home to get it.