

THE SITUATION.

The following able and forcible setting out of the present position of the prohibition movement, is taken from the editorial columns of *The Montreal Daily Witness*, of November 5th. It ought to be carefully read and considered by every prohibitionist and every politician.

After the overture of carefully harmonized belittlement which burst from the whole orchestra of the Liberal press on the morning after the plebiscite, and the scorn of its result that has been trumpeted fortissimo ever since, one would naturally have looked for a flat denial for the prohibitionists when they went to ask the Government for such legislation as will implement the plebiscite. Organs that had opposed prohibition, organs that had sneaked and sneered, organs that had been mum, and, worse than all, organs which had given it a more or less frank and hearty support, were all found tuned up and ready with the same song that a majority for prohibition meant, of course, a majority against it, and that the plebiscite had proved a woful fizzle that must postpone the question of prohibition for many years.

There has been just a little too much zeal in trumpeting this, to make people believe that the trumpeters really thought the plebiscite meant nothing.

After the courteous but unanswerable presentation of the matter by Mr. Spence and others, backed by a gathering of determined temperance leaders, sufficient in numbers to fill the House of Commons, it would have been very difficult for the Government to treat the matter as having no significance. The tone there observed was, on the contrary, in the highest degree serious and respectful. Sir Wilfred Laurier frankly told the deputation that he was not himself a prohibitionist, but was ready to subject the views in which he had been brought up to those of the majority, and give up his own usage for what might be generally considered the good of the country. What would be done under the present circumstances he would not now be expected to say, but the representations of the deputation would be laid before the council and an answer given before long.

There are a good many in suspense, awaiting this answer. During the campaign and at the time of voting it was noted that the politicians of the party, taken as a whole, were very anxious that the verdict of the people would go against prohibition, and we do not think we are overstating the matter in saying that in many, and in some very large sections of the country, the party machinery was used and even strained, in the effort to obtain this result, and that this had a very potent effect on the actual result. This does not mean that the party does not at its heart believe that prohibition would be good. The great majority of the Liberals certainly do think it would be good. It only means that the politicians looked upon it as politically a nuisance, out of which, in view of the powerful interest involved little party capital is to be made. The result has, however, not been, as they hoped, a verdict against prohibition, but one for it, and the crisis reached is far too important a one to have no outcome, as the loose-tongued spokesmen of the party pretend to expect.

For the Government to announce simply that it was going to do nothing would cause an outburst of very deep indignation, against which the party probably could not stand,—certainly could not if any forward movement was offered elsewhere. There are acknowledged to be difficulties connected with the sectional character of the vote, though the Government and its spokesmen have evidently acted with supreme discretion in utterly refusing to put the sectional nature of the vote forward as having any significance. No greater wrong could be done a country than by unnecessarily rousing section against section, and the present Parliament and its predecessor have had enough of this kind of trouble in the school question. The fact that seven provinces have strongly demanded prohibition, and that one has strongly refused it, while it creates a condition demanding consummate statesmanship, is very obviously not going to be met by doing nothing.

Selections

PUT IT THROUGH.

Come, freemen of the land,
Come, meet the last demand;
Here's a piece of work in hand;
Put it through!

Here's a log across the way,
We have stumbled on all day;
Here's a ploughshare in the clay;
Put it through!

Here's a country that's half free,
And it waits for you and me
To say what its fate shall be;
Put it through!

While one traitor thought remains,
While one spot its banner stains,
One link of all its chains;
Put it through!

Hear our brothers in the field,
Steel your swords as theirs are steeled,
Learn to wield the arms they wield;
Put it through!

For the birthrights yet unsold,
For the history yet untold,
For the future yet unrolled;
Put it through!

Lest our children point with shame,
At the father's dastard fame,
Who gave up a nation's name;
Put it through!

Here's a work of God half done,
Here's the Kingdom of His Son,
With its triumphs just begun;
Put it through!

'Tis to you the trust is given;
'Tis by you the bolt is driven,
By the very God of Heaven;
Drive it through!

—Selected.

GOD'S ARGUMENT.

I was down to the city doing some shopping and went up to my old schoolmate's Mrs. Frank Benton, to spend the night. Jennie and I have always kept warm our school-girl friendship, and I seldom ever go to the city without calling on her.

Frank is an easy, happy, whole-souled fellow that I enjoy visiting with, although there are many questions on which we differ. I am always impressed when I talk with him, with the power and possibilities that he has of doing great good if he would only wake up and use them.

"Are you going to vote for prohibition?" I asked as we gathered around the tea table.

"Hardly, hardly," he replied, as he tied on little Willie's napkin.

"Now, Kit, don't begin about politics," said Jennie. "If you and Frank get started you won't stop to-night, and I want to have a good visit with you."

"I would vote for it," he explained, "if I thought it would do any good, but we can't pass it, and if we did it would do no good. They would sell liquor just the same, and we might as well have the tax."

"Why, then, Frank, are the saloon men spending so much money and working so hard to prevent the bill's passing, if they can sell it just the same? You might as well say that there was no use in having a law against murder because people would murder anyway, and we might as well have the tax money!"

"Have some more toast? Have some more toast?" he said, with a provoking, polite smile. "They have a prohibition law in Maine, he resumed after a pause, "but they sell liquor there still."

"They don't sell it there any more in elegant, attractive saloons right on the principal streets where young men have to pass every hour," I said. "It is only sold in out-of-the-way places where young men would not care to go unless they are already drunkards, and that is the way you may want it sold in this State when your son is grown."

"I am not afraid of him," he said, looking tenderly at Willie. "The taxes would be so high that we couldn't live if it wasn't for the liquor revenue."

"Frank Benton," I said, laying down my knife and fork, "all the tax that has ever been paid in this city wouldn't pay for the ruined body and soul of one young man; all the tax that has ever been paid in the universe couldn't pay it if it were your son."

The polite, good-natured smile left his face for a moment. "You are getting excited, Kit," he said. "Jennie,

pass her the cake. She is eating no supper."

"Your little Louise may live to become a wife and mother," I continued. "She may need protection and care long after your strong right arm has crumbled to dust. I hope her heart will never be wrung by this curse that you could help put down to-day."

"I hope not," said Jennie, looking toward the cradle. Frank went on to explain a great deal to me, about past laws and present politics that I did not understand. After we left the table the subject was not again mentioned, but up in the pretty spare room, that night, I prayed very earnestly for Mr. Benton. I knew that he owned a fine property in the city, and that the fear of a heavy tax had helped to shape his views about prohibition more than he realized. The human heart is so deceitful.

"You had better quit teaching and take to the lecture field," he said, with a comical smile, as I waited for the car the next morning.

"I feel sorry for you, Frank," I said, looking soberly at him.

He laughed heartily, carried my satchel to the car and bade me a kind good-morning. He went back to the porch still smiling. I saw him gather a handful of light snow and throw playfully at Jennie, and arm in arm they entered the house.

Three weeks later I stood in my friend's front parlor. Frank's mother was there putting some flowers into the still, cold hands of little Willie. In the room above I could hear the slow tread of footsteps backwards and forwards.

"I can't understand," I murmured, "how a druggist could make such a mistake."

"It all comes of that awful curse," she groaned. "You see he was an experienced clerk that Mr. Smith had the greatest confidence in, but lately he had begun to go to that corner saloon with the boys, and Smith had not found it out. He was intoxicated when he put up the prescription. Mary thought he acted queer, but did not think to tell Jennie until after they had given Willie the medicine.

"O my Saviour, help us," I sobbed, as the hot tears fell on the damp curls of my little favorite—"Aunt Kittie" he had always called me.

The walking overhead ceased, and presently Frank entered. His face was as white as Willie's, it seemed to me. We withdrew, and he knelt by his son. A long, long time he remained there, and the wicked old world is already feeling the effects of that solemn hour's communion with God and the dead.

We were all sitting by the fire that evening, after Willie was laid away. Mr. Benton was very quiet, and looking so stern and manly, that for the first time in my life I was afraid of him. Jennie could not be comforted.

"I would rather he would be where he is, dear, said good Mrs. Benton, "than to have had him grow up and be brought home to you as Johnnie Moor was to his mother, to-day."

"Amen!" said Frank, fervently. He came and stood by Jennie. He looked an inch taller to me than he had before. "God has given us a hard lesson to learn, love," he said.

"It seems as if we might have learned it some easier way," she sobbed.

"I think that you could," he said, "but my eyes were terribly blinded. Perhaps my boy is safer to-night than he would have been with such a selfish, wordly father as I was to protect him."

"Oh, Frank! how can you talk that way when you have always been so kind," she cried.

"I have always been kind to you," he said, "but I have not been just to other women and children. I have taught you to believe just as I did, and you have loved me so well that you have often followed me instead of the Saviour to whom you were so loyal when I first learned to admire you. I don't amount to much," he said humbly, "but what little manhood and energy I have to spare shall be used in fighting this curse that has robbed me of my boy."

Jennie grew quiet. I think she saw the silver lining.

It is marvellous what a difference the fear of God will make in the whole appearance and character of a man.

In the spare room I asked the Saviour how much He had to do with the things that happen in this world. In eternity I may receive my answer.—*Lillian Norton, in Union Signal.*

IMPORTANT.

TORONTO, 1898.

DEAR FRIEND,—

You are respectfully requested to carefully examine **The Camp Fire**, a neat four-page monthly Prohibition paper, full of bright, pointed, convenient facts and arguments; containing also a valuable summary of the latest news about our cause. It is just what is needed to **inspire workers and make votes.**

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