

and to do this they must adulterate largely, or import liquors of the worst possible kind. In many cases they do both, and our town, instead of having two taverns vending wholesome liquors, and four respectable grocery stores, now boasts half a dozen pot-houses, bidding one against another for the privilege of poisoning the community. Multiply this half dozen by thirty, and embellish one third of the result with a sprinkling of women of more than dubious character, and we have a truthful picture of a large portion of Halifax. And this is the direct result of a system of spirit licensing based upon the supposition that a legal qualification is in all cases to be accepted as a legal right! Was ever reasoning so erroneous, followed by results more prejudicial?

In articles absolutely essential to the well being of civilized men the demand regulates the supply, but in the case of spirituous liquors, a gratuitous display creates an unnecessary demand. No sane man ever bought a hat which he did not require because a number of hats were tastefully arranged before him; but many a man has bought a glass of rum because it was temptingly placed under his nose. For one man that has damaged his fortune through an insane passion for articles in themselves useful, there are five hundred men who have irretrievably ruined themselves through a passion for questionable luxuries; and it is to a soundly applied knowledge of this weakness of mankind in general that we are indebted for spirit duties and spirit licenses. That spirits are deemed an unnecessary luxury, is evident from the high taxation imposed upon them. That spirit sellers must pay an additional tax in the shape of a license, shows that even a high taxation is insufficient to stop the many evils attendant upon a large consumption of spirits. But licenses, judiciously and cautiously regulated, may keep these evils within bounds, and this, we take to be the sole aim and object of the licensing system. If, on the other hand, licenses are incautiously or injudiciously granted, they serve but to develop the evil under the fostering protection of the law. The first duty of a magistrate when applied to for a license, is to see whether the present sale of spirits in the locality under consideration is sufficient for the wants of the community, as regulated by the magistrate's common sense, with a due regard to public decorum. When satisfied upon this head, it is time to consider the character and qualifications of the applicant. It does not seem in accordance either with common sense or a due regard to the interests of the community, that sixty spirit shops should flourish almost side by side, or that every Halifax grocer should be licensed to sell spirits as well as tea and sugar. Why should we, with a population under thirty thousand, tacitly reconcile ourselves to an evil which London, with its three millions, will not tolerate? Turn to the police sheet of a London newspaper, and for one license withdrawn on account of its holder's misconduct, we see five licenses refused on the ground of expediency. But in Halifax it is neither deemed inexpedient to renew licenses to disorderly houses, or to grant them to anyone having the legal qualification. And why are these licenses granted and renewed? Because, forsooth, were they not granted or renewed, it is to be feared liquor would be sold all the same, and that too without any legal hold over the houses thus offending! This seems to us a novel argument. Would our magistrates license a delicate fingered youth to pick pockets, in order that the police might keep an eye upon him? If, with our small population, we cannot ascertain what men are in the constant habit of setting the law at defiance, the sooner we cease to contribute towards the maintenance of a police force, the better. Do we—who are never tired of styling ourselves "prosperous," "enlightened," "thriving," &c., &c.—do we absolutely license men wholesale to poison us, because they will

poison us whether we like it or dislike it? Such an argument is childish. We had intended to say something about the necessity for appointing an Inspector of Spirits,—as there are Inspectors of bread, meat, &c.,—but we have already exceeded our space, and must reserve this important consideration for a future issue.

#### A DISMAL DEPOT.

First impressions, however incorrect they may afterwards appear, are known to weigh with great force upon their recipients. First impressions of a city, a country or an hotel can rarely be effaced from the mind of a traveller. Such a person is generally too hurried to receive more than a first impression, and often curses or blesses from a distance his last night's experience, before the breakfast of the following morning is digested. Visitors of the Colonial press, however, would appear from all we read, to be above such petty influences, and express unqualified delight at all that they can remember of a sojourn, however brief, in Halifax. Such persons we must confess, are unusually fortunate. Everything that can be done is done, to render their stay agreeable, by those who fancy that the reputation,—nay, the existence—of the city is imperilled by the exposure of such gentlemen to any discomfort whatsoever. From personal observation, it has struck us as not impossible that when some well known foreign or colonial scribe arrives amongst us, he is placed under the surveillance of a Committee, whose sole business it is to beware lest any unpleasant thing should reach the senses of their charge. Thus, if a fog is seen approaching the shore, the illustrious stranger is regaled with punch in a shuttered room, and entertained with the pleasantest conversation at command, and if forced to traverse a loathsome portion of the town, it is doubtless contrived that however the outward senses may be affected, the inner man is made lightsome by well assorted flattery. There is one part of the journey to Halifax, of which such a vigilance Committee should be peculiarly wary. We allude to the period which elapses between the arrival of a night train at the Depot, and the ensconcement of its passengers in their respective hotels or homes. Ordinary travellers however, have no such Committees appointed for their reception, and are entirely dependent upon such general comforts, as should be provided for passengers in every city, laying claim to be worthy of a visit.

Take for example, the case of a family couple journeying to Halifax by an evening train. After a journey of three, four, or five hours, the time varying according to the ripeness of the raspberries on the road, and other local causes, some well informed passengers assert that the Capital is at hand. All our travelling couple's little traps and carriage comforts are scattered loosely around, and the lady has probably removed her bonnet and shawl, to avoid suffocation. The car being ill-lighted and the twilight past, it is agreed to "fix" everything up at the terminus.—Terminus! In these days a terminus means a thing of light, a place where people can stretch their train cramped legs, where ladies can shake their dust stained dresses, and obtain, at the least, a glass of water in a waiting-room. Such mild accommodation is provided by most Railway Companies at Stations in the centre of a city. In Halifax, the word terminus, would appear to represent a barn full of noisy dirty people, without light, without waiting-rooms, without comfort, and situated two miles from the nearest habitation. To return to our lady and gentleman. The former, for want of better accommodation, is probably stuck in a despondent state to a keg of molasses, whilst the latter, like a good busy husband, is looking after the luggage. From the gloom, some one enquires if he wants a carriage!—yes—and then he is asked for his cheques. Cheques given, he sees them pass from hand to hand, and by reason of the darkness, fears that he may have fallen into the hands of catfists. Such however may possibly not be the case, and after much mental anguish, his effects are seen safely deposited in the cab which he has engaged. Wife is hustled in, (all in the dark mind) and the coachman remarks "guess you are all right." The travelling couple are naturally astonished, when five minutes later, the coach in the meantime remaining immovable, the cabman looks in at the window and remarks

blandly, "The other fare of the fact is, our coach, applied to no fault of the with a passing himself for all it. Common c min the propr nates whom the slough of despic to pursue their ask. An intent of preserving it who arrives r thought of th would be exp that the next d tic Asylum.

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