

Contributed Articles.

COMPENSATION.

Mr. William Kyle, and his drunkard-making crowd, have had their coveted interview with Sir John A. Macdonald, G.C.B., and other members of his Ministry, and, if, the rum sellers think they have "scored a point," outsiders fail to see what that point is. They were told, first, that the Dominion Premier voted for the Scott Act; and, second, that "the Cabinet were not a unit" on the question. Apart from this the deputation might just as well have remained at home putting their house in order against the time to come. They certainly got no cheering hope *in re* the great purpose of their visit, *viz.*, compensation.

The rum sellers are very chary of letting the public know what their ideas are in reference to this question, and upon what they base their claim. I travel a great deal over the Province of Ontario, and wherever I go the great argument used by these virtuous and morality-loving citizens against the Scott Act is "There'll be much more whiskey drunk after the Scott Act is passed than there ever was before. Secret drinking will be the order of the day, &c., &c." Now, if this is to be the result, a largely increased demand for whiskey, upon what grounds can Mr. W. Kyle and other of the same fraternity, claim the demanded compensation? On their own showing their business will be increased, and surely it would be an innovation to compensate for increasing business!

It is amusing to hear the stories of ingenious inventions adopted by those who will have whiskey under any conditions. One man told me he would not vote for the Scott Act because he had heard that young men carried hollow canes which they got filled with whiskey and by means of a small hole in the handle they drew the spirits into their mouths *à la dude* and thus drunkenness was increased. Another, speaking most seriously, gave as his reason for opposing the Scott Act, that "young men" were getting their boots made with *high heels* which were hollow, these hollow heels they got filled with whiskey and when a convenient opportunity offered they took off their boots, &c., to take a swig. I could only think that the man who could satisfy his conscience on this question by such a shallow pretext, if he had not a *hollow heel* must have a *ho low heel*, which had no capacity for being filled with anything but whiskey.

Such stupid reason and anecdotes must do the liquor men much more harm than good, for if a trade has had no better effect than to produce a class of men, who, to gratify a mere appetite would resort to such ignoble means, it stands to reason that it is better out of the way and not entitled to any compensation but to the universal opprobrium of all sober and respectable men.

London, Ont.

G. W. ARMSTRONG.

THE SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT FOR PROHIBITION

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE TORONTO MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION ON
MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER 1884.

BY REV. R. WALLACE,

(Continued from last week.)

It is objected that prohibition will be coercion and interference with the liberties of the people. We do not propose to prohibit people from drinking, but from making and selling that which is injurious to society, and for those who cannot take care of themselves. Now, in this respect, all law is coercion, and interference with the liberties of the people. If we do not obey the law, it seizes us, punishes us, and compels us to obey. It is the same with Divine and human laws. Most of the Decalogue is prohibitory, and infringes upon the liberty of the people to do many things to which poor fallen human nature is only too much inclined. Do we cry out against the Divine laws because of that? No; not many in Christian lands would like to do so openly; but no doubt the thief, the adulterer, the murderer, the forger, and the slanderer, think it hard to have their liberty thus infringed upon. Gambling houses, houses of ill-fame, lotteries and such like, are forbidden by law because injurious to the morals of the people, and because they sap the foundation of society, and lead directly to many crimes. Now the laws against all these are sustained by the majority of

the people, because these laws are held to be necessary for the protection of society, and for the best interests of the community. And, no doubt, were it not for these laws there would be a great deal more crime. Yet all these crimes put together cause far less injury to society than the liquor traffic does. Government is an ordinance of God, appointed for the good of society, and designed to be a terror to evil, and a protection to the weak and well doing. The very object of its existence is to protect the community from being injured by the unprincipled. Society therefore has the right to protect itself, and has always acted on it in legislation. Render anything illegal and you make it discreditable; and this goes a great way towards preventing its general practice. This has been proved in Maine and other states where a prohibitory law has been enforced, and where there is not the twentieth part of the liquor sold there was before. Besides, special evils require special legislation. All prohibitory legislation is founded on this idea. If there were a dangerous place on the edge of a precipice, or overhanging some fearful whirlpool, where the weak and timid were in the habit of going to destruction, would it not be the duty of the Government to place a fence around it to protect such persons from injury. Blackstone declares drunkenness to be one of the crimes which ought to be restrained. The American judges have taken the same view. On this principle every Christian nation acts in prohibiting these things already mentioned, and anything that endangers the morals or the health of the people. As to the interfering with the rights of the people, we reply that the liquor traffic is itself an infringement of the primary rights of society, and tends to counteract its very design. Society is, or ought to be, formed on the principle that every man is to seek subsistence for himself in such a way as not to interfere with the rights or happiness of others. The farmer, the laborer, the merchant, and the professional man, all benefit society, while providing for their own households. But it is not so with liquor-dealers; they seek only their own benefit, and that always to the injury of society. Look at any community where distilleries and breweries abound, and where the people indulge largely in intoxicants, and you see that a blight rests on it, business declines, and prosperity droops her wing and flies away to some more genial region. Every man is bound to pursue such a business as will tend to promote the welfare of the community. This the dealer in intoxicants does not do; the few are enriched, the many are impoverished, and society at large injured, socially and morally. Suppose a man were to advertise fever, cholera or leprosy for gold, and could and would sell them, what would the community say to such a traffic? Even though each disease were of first-class brand, or XXX, men would rise up and banish such a selfish monster from their midst. What would be thought of the farmer who would mix poison in the flour which he sold? You cannot express the horror which all men would feel at such a transaction. Yet such a traffic we witness daily; but men have become so long accustomed to it that they feel no horror at the sight. The state prohibits one man from taking the life of another by pistol or otherwise; and shall it not prohibit men from taking the lives of others by the sale of that which sends many thousands yearly to the drunkard's grave and awful doom? If the law does not permit arsenic or tainted meat to be sold to those likely to injure themselves, why should it allow intoxicants to be sold to those who injure themselves and society at the same time? Does not the sale of alcohol lead to the destruction of more lives, the commission of more crimes, and the infliction of more misery than all these other evils? Shall we restrain and prohibit the lesser evil, and license the greater because liquor dealers make money out of the vices and weaknesses of their fellow-men? The state laws enacted for the protection of Indians, minors and insane persons, and shall it not protect drunkards and those liable to become drunkards from those who cruelly tempt them, to their ruin? We ask again is it right for the state to sanction a traffic which above everything tends to increase crime, waste the national resources, corrupt the social habits and destroy the lives of the people? The very existence of the license system proves that the State has the right to legislate in this matter. And the result of all past legislation abundantly proves that it is impossible satisfactorily to limit or regulate a system so essentially mischievous in its tendency and results as the traffic in intoxicants. The custom of allowing the poor Hindoos to throw themselves under the wheels of Juggernaut has been prohibited by the British