

THE WEEK.

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The Week,

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

ALTHOUGH the general public feel nothing like the interest in Prohibition that might be imagined from the attention the subject receives at the hands of a noisy section, it has, by the latter, been forced into an artificial prominence, and some districts may be called upon before long to say whether a sumptuary liquor law shall be passed. It would be well for all to think for themselves rather than meekly accept the doctrines of well-meaning intemperants, and see if there be not some golden medium between a quack remedy for intemperance and the spread of that vice. The Toronto *World* is doing good service by giving the experience of anti-prohibitionists who have lived under the Scott Act. One more testimony is added to the many which show the failure of prohibition to produce a temperance millennium. The Calgary *Herald* says:—"The prohibition has not removed the appetites or desires for liquor from those who had them before coming here or before the prohibition. There will always be a supply where there is a demand, and to meet this demand for liquor there have sprung up a lot of whiskey peddlers, generally thieves and cut-throats from Montana or an adjoining State, who, for the high prices which they can get for liquor, bring it in overland and take their chances of escaping fine or imprisonment. It is also brought in on the C. P. R., put up as coal oil, oatmeal, flour, varnish, and, in fact, many other ways, and, if received safely, it is doctored up with poisons and sold to the thirsty at five dollars a bottle. It is also brought in under permits from the Lieutenant-Governor. The law says it shall be for medicinal purposes only, and yet there is enough liquor brought into Calgary alone to supply all Canada for medicinal purposes. Anyone can get liquor at any time, and, in fact, we virtually do not have a prohibitory law. Now, what is the consequence? Liquor is sold here; the dealers are pests and outlaws from their own country; they sell their poisons for ten times the price of good liquors; they take their unlawfully gotten money out of the country, except what a few of them surrender in the way of fines."

THE Chicago *Current* speaks with but superficial knowledge of English men and politics when it asserts that Mr. Gladstone has become depen-

dent upon the Irish vote, in consequence of the narrow majority by which his Government was spared defeat on a scratch motion condemning its Egyptian policy. Mr. Gladstone has made up his mind to do what he considers justice to Ireland by including her in the extended franchise; but he is not the leader of a party which is to be intimidated, turned aside by base ingratitude, or that would sell its principles for place. Neither would the main body of the Opposition enter into alliance with unreasoning rebels, except, perhaps, to use them for the purpose of ousting its opponents. No person knows better than Mr. Gladstone that in enfranchising a large number of uneducated Irishmen he risks an increase in the number of irreconcilable members of Parliament, and though many of his staunchest followers question the wisdom of this policy, it may eventually prove the better course by precipitating the "square fight" that Mr. Walter says must come, and which ought to unite loyal Britishers in the stamping out of treason, sedition, and murder. Our contemporary makes a still further mistake when it states that "Irishmen who have ventured to criticize the policy of the Government in Ireland, and advocate an Irish Parliament, have been arrested and jailed as conspirators." The too few "conspirators" who have been imprisoned, have been deprived of their liberty because they attempted by assassination, intimidation, and other illegal acts, to subvert the Government, not for criticising it, or for propounding what each intelligent Irishman knows to be both impossible and undesirable in the interests of all concerned.

ONE of the wildest of the many wild schemes put forth on the eve of the Presidential election is that embodied in the "Labourers' Protection Bill," recently introduced into the United States Senate. This measure is a sop to American workmen, and practically forbids the admission of their foreign *confreeres*. Foreign imports, it is said, are protected; why should not alien workmen be similarly treated? A curious feature is that under the provisions of this extraordinary Bill men who come out to look for employment, without any definite idea of what to do or where to go—the class, in fact, from which paupers and loafers are drafted—would be allowed to enter the States freely; but the alien who has secured employment previously to emigrating would be prohibited. The penal clauses of the "Labourers' Protection Bill" provide a penalty of \$500 for every act of disobedience, and ordain that it shall be a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of \$1,000 and disqualification from holding office under the United States, for any person while in the official service of the United States, to violate any of the provisions of the Act, or to aid and encourage such violation. Perhaps one of the most remarkable features in connection with the absurd proposal is that it is treated seriously by its promoters, and is not regarded as too ridiculous for comment by the New York press. "This sort of legislation," the *Nation* remarks, "is of course sure to come if the present protective policy is persisted in. It is useful as showing the tendency of the protective system towards mediæval restrictions on freedom of every kind. It is now fast reaching the personal passport or ticket-of-leave stage in this country. From preventing skilled labour coming in under contract, there is, of course, only one step to preventing its coming in at all, except under a trades-union license."

ENGLISH writers are asking, Is the Chinese cheap labour difficulty going to perplex England as it has troubled America? One swallow does not make a summer, nor do half-a-dozen nursemaids signify an invasion; but a correspondent points out that lately "there have appeared in the London parks pairs of almond-eyed daughters of the Celestial Empire, who, in their blue dresses, added to the variety of the scene." These beauties of the Mongol race may or may not be the forerunners of a veritable invasion; but it is certain that many ladies, perplexed with their domestic arrangements, have been longing for a little of the obedience of the docile Chinese race. There is one objection, however, to the employment of Chinawomen. They are docile, willing to learn, quick to imitate, and ready to work with patience. But they have nasty, dirty ways with them which apparently cannot be eradicated, and which make them hated of housewives in America. Perhaps England may teach them better manners. Otherwise there is not much to be hoped from China.