

THE WEEK.

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

It is necessary, in discussing the advisability of encouraging a liberal immigration of young women from the old country—a course which is being strongly advocated by sections of the Canadian press—to ascertain the class of persons invited out. Lord Shaftesbury spoke within the mark when he said there were thousands of unemployed women in England; but it is not so certain that it would be wise to encourage their being sent to this country in large numbers, and without judicious pruning. The *Telegram* says "there are always homes ready in Canada for domestic servants who are willing to work." So there are in England. One of the most embarrassing social problems in that country at this moment is how to get good servants. The average English housewife has had bitter experience of the difficulty of this task. Country girls, who used to be delighted to go into domestic service, now flock into towns and cities to take situations in factories, warehouses, and shops, where they are "more their own mistresses," can be "more independent," and have fixed hours of work, after which they may spend their time as they please. The advertisement columns of any prominent daily will show hundreds of applications for domestic servants, and at salaries that would have been thought princely two or three decades ago. For one response to an advertisement of this class, there would be twenty applicants for the position of sewing-machine girl, bar-maid, or paper-box maker. A lady must exercise the greatest patience, and make many pilgrimages to the "registry," before she can engage a suitable chambermaid or kitchen help; but her husband, if he should be a cotton-spinner, need not wait a day for a female "piecer" or "minder." The conditions are very much the same in the two countries, and if the *Telegram* writer had substituted the word "England" for "Canada," in the following sentence, he would have exactly hit off the situation in the older country:—"In Canada there is always a demand for domestic servants, so many of the young women of this country, preferring to earn their living in factories to going out to service. There are always homes ready in Canada for domestic servants who are willing to work. The newspapers contain applications innumerable for servant girls." There is considerable danger that a large influx of unemployed females would include many who might be useless, or worse. It behoves those who are inclined to encourage female immigration to avoid committing themselves

to an undigested scheme of philanthropy, and so exposing those whom they would assist to a much worse fate than being unemployed near home.

It is being urged, by the zealous advocates of compulsory teetotalism, that because we have compulsory vaccination and compulsory sanitation we must have compulsory teetotalism. As this argument savours more of logical conviction on the part of those who advance it than many of the intemperate statements made by prohibitionists, it may be well to point out the prime fact that whereas the two first named forms of compulsion apply equally to all classes of the community, compulsory teetotalism would saddle the poor man with a vexatious hardship, and at the same time scarcely affect the capitalist or man of even limited means. It is very much to be regretted that well-meaning enthusiasts should perforce drive the friends and advocates of moderate drinking into the enemy's camp, or make them seem to take sides with intemperance. Excessive drinking does lead to disease, pauperism and crime; but is that a reason why moderate drinking should be prohibited? It is not as if the evil were on the increase. Drunkenness has long since gone out of fashion with the gentry, and is gradually becoming less common amongst the labouring classes. "We are as distinctly in favour of a temperance propaganda, pointing out the evils of excessive indulgence in strong drink, as we are opposed to legislation which would punish respectable citizens for the faults of their disreputable neighbours." If it were known for a fact that the world would come to an end at a certain date, there might be an excuse for improvising a hurried Utopia. An electro-plated golden age might pass muster if it were not intended to wear, but only to look smart for a short time. It happens, however, that as the future of the world is not limited in duration, we should be extremely foolish to repeat the worst mistake of Puritanism.

If there is anything that impresses itself upon the mind of a journalist familiar with his profession on both sides the Atlantic it is the utter unreliability of the cabled reports on European politics which appear in the average American newspaper. To a considerable extent this applies to the Canadian journals, because their Old World news is obtained *via* New York. Hence the absurd contradictions that constantly appear regarding the position of England and the British Government on the Egyptian Question. One day we are told Mr. Gladstone is about to resign, the next he is said to be more "solid" than ever. Now we read the whole of England rings with reproaches of his "desertion" of General Gordon; then we are assured that the Premier and the soldier are entirely of one mind. The fact is, the London representatives of New York papers do not understand England, Englishmen, or British politics, and they further telegraph only such rumours as they think most palatable to the average American reader, even though they have to stultify themselves by announcing their falsity the next day. Of such a nature was the *Sun's* report that "everybody, including the Ministers, was last week convinced that defeat and dissolution were only a few weeks off." It would scarcely be rash to say that no such report was ever afloat in influential English circles, though it might have obtained amongst a few short-sighted and bitterly hostile opponents of the Government. The Jingoese have strained every nerve to discredit Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy, but their tin and tinsel programme causes only derision. It required all the adroitness that Mr. Disraeli commanded to foist such a policy upon the *residuum* and music-hall elements of England, but the savage recklessness of Lord Salisbury or the blatant impertinence of Lord Churchill will not deceive to anything like the same extent. This is borne out by a paper in the current *Fortnightly* entitled "The Bursting of the Bubble," in which Lord Churchill receives a smart castigation. The writer, a conservative M.P., pronounces anametha maranatha upon the "mouth-piece of quacks and empirics who are aiding a crude and novel Toryism in the Provincial press." No doubt Lord Randolph could lead the hybrids well. "His attacks on the Whig landlords of London, his appeals for the restitution of an 'exiled Arabi,' and his rapid conversion on the extension of the franchise to Ireland, savour enough of the Merry Andrew to satisfy the requirements of the post. Moreover, among the qualities which unfit him for ordinary political preferment are some which are absolutely priceless to a party whose first principle it is to be unprincipled."