

managed, or the opposite, the enterprise must now be carried on to speedy completion either by the company, or by the Government. The course of negotiations will be watched with interest.

The events of the next few weeks will probably determine whether Gen. Wolseley's name shall go down to posterity amongst those of England's greatest generals, or whether the brilliant reputation already achieved shall be shattered. The event will very likely be determined by circumstances beyond his control, or that of any man, not by merit. In any case he will have deserved well of his country for his agency in helping on some valuable reforms in the British army. Perhaps not least of the services will be that he has already performed in demonstrating that strong liquors are not indispensable to soldiers and men forced to endure great hardships or great extremes of heat and cold, as was so long absurdly supposed. Wolseley is an utter disbeliever in the sovereign virtues of the grog ration. He carried through the Manitoba expedition on cold coffee. The following extract from a speech by Mr. Caine, the new Civil Lord of the British Admiralty shows that the abstinence policy has been adopted with equal success in the Egyptian campaign. Mr. Caine said:

"It had been demonstrated that the greatest hardships of the severest campaigns could be better borne without the use of intoxicating drink than with it. The recent desert march in Egypt had been done upon water. The most brilliant infantry charge of modern times—that of Tel-el-Kebir—was carried through on cold tea. Every day he said, was proving that the blue jackets, of whom there were twelve thousand abstainers, could do their work—whether amid the heat of Suakim or the cold of Skye—better without grog than with it."

The memorials presented to the Dominion Government on the 19th inst., by representatives of the Licensed Victuallers and others interests affected by the Scott Act, are worthy of careful reading by friends as well as opponents of prohibition. It is to the credit of the latter thus to adopt the appeal to fact and argument, rather than to the more questionable measures which are too often resorted to in support of their views. While no mere business interests or financial considerations of any kind should be allowed to block the way of a great moral movement, the claim of those whose means of livelihood are cut off by change of long standing legislation to compensation has much to be said in its favour and may be founded in justice. If there were any reason to hope that the Royal Commission asked for could really be relied on for a fuller and more trustworthy report than any yet had, on the workings of prohibition, truth seeking men would be glad to have it, though the advocates of prohibition might well refuse to have the merits of the measure judged by the results of the first struggles, in the face of the most formidable obstacles and the bitterest opposition, to enforce it. If those whose occupation is injured or destroyed can establish an equitable claim to compensation it should be promptly given on the ground of paramount justice. At the same time, if, by fair and generous dealing, the prohibitionists could enlist the more honourable

of those who have been engaged in the traffic, on the side of enforcing the law, the policy of compensation might be found eventually cheapest and best as well as just.

The latest news from the Soudan is of the very gravest character. Not for many years has England been brought face to face with so serious a problem, or threatened with so terrible a disaster. Burnaby, Stewart, Earle, Gordon and many other officers and men as brave, if not as famous, have left their bones on the burning sands of the great desert. Brackenbury, with Earle's old command of perhaps 900 men is in the vicinity of Berber, and, it is said, under orders to take and hold that place, though Osman Digna with 40,000 men is there or in the neighbourhood. Buller, with Stewart's force of 1,600, attempting to make good his retreat from Gubart to Kortu, is at last accounts surrounded by immense numbers of the Mahdi's warriors at Abu Klea, the scene of Stewart's victory and fatal wound. Wolseley himself is at Kortu with the balance of the British force, not more perhaps than 25,000 strong, and his delay in making any forward movement, even for the relief of Buller, seems to argue strongly that his own position is not too secure, and that an advance would be attended with too great risk to be justifiable. In such circumstances there is, of course, a tendency on the part of the press and public to exaggeration. Buller himself is reported as saying that he can hold out against a force even stronger than that being brought against him. At the same time the action of the British Government, which is probably in possession of fuller information than that given to the public, in the transfer of officers from the regular army to the reserves, has a very serious look. We still have faith in the pluck and endurance of the British troops, but the odds against them is fearful, and it is amongst the dreadful possibilities that Buller's little band of heroes may any day share the fate of Hicks Pasha's of a few years ago. There is no longer any hesitation, troops are being pushed forward as rapidly as possible, and the final issue of the conflict can scarcely be doubtful. But the difficulties in the way of both the Nile and the desert routes are fearful, and the cost in blood and treasure of crushing the Mahdi will be immense.

Alas for political fame! If "uneasy lies the head which wears a crown," still more uneasy must be that of the leader of a popular Government in a crisis such as that through which England is just now passing. The huzzas with which the people were wont to greet the "grand old man," their own William, are swiftly changing to execrations. The press is almost a unit in denouncing Gladstone and his cabinet as the authors of national humiliation and danger. We have been accustomed to expect a balance of judgment and moderation of tone on the part of the great English dailies for which we now look in vain. Had Wolseley's expedition succeeded, as there seemed every reason to hope but a week or two since it would succeed, had Khartoum and Gordon not fallen through treachery, the proudest of victory would have been intermingled with praises of Gladstone's policy and far-seeing statesmanship. As matters have turned out a motion of censure is hanging over his head