

age. And when facts are widely diffused as the common air which prove that more vice, crime, pauperism, and terrible misery, result from this traffic than from all other known causes, let us give no heed to those interested antagonists whose new found sensibility is so deeply touched for the imperilled rights and liberties of British subjects. This talk about despotism is nauseous—coming from the advocates of a traffic that has forced millions under the yoke of the most accursed slavery which the world ever knew. Who talks of despotism, when thieves, burglars, and murderers are immured? And who shall babble of despotism when that traffic is repressed which is the exciting cause of the wildest crimes that penal laws are made to punish! Let no such traffic whine about its rights! *It has no rights.* For who has the right, in the reckless pursuit of unrighteous gain, to deal out provocations to murder, burglary, theft, and riot—to sap the morality, intelligence, and industry of our countrymen, until they come as famine-stricken paupers to our workhouse—and to send into the homes of our land more wretchedness than the world has ever known? Rights and liberties belong to those who bring good works and uses to the world—not to that which marks its presence and its course by scenes of moral desolation. And this principle has become more than a theory, for we have stripped the traffic of its so-called right to pollute the day which is sacred to rest and peace. The theory has become a fact, and is fixed in a law. And, doubtless, as that solid public opinion accumulates which, at last, gives law to the legislature, the right and the liberty to attempt to convert this island into the habitation of criminals, lunatics, and paupers, will some day be counted among the most curious anomalies of our country's history.

But we have not been able to secure and realise even this instalment of our full claim without difficulty and opposition. To pass the law was not the most difficult part of the procedure. Its execution has been obstructed with all that perverted ingenuity which well-paid lawyers place at the service of hard-pressed clients, without asking inconvenient questions as to the righteousness of their cause. In the law-courts, these legal quibblers have attempted to throw dust in the eyes of common sense, and to neutralise the law by forcing upon the courts misconstructions of its phrases. Talk of the elasticity of caoutchouc or the conscience—both are thrown into the shade by the powers of expansion possessed by that unfortunate phrase "*bona fide* traveller." "If a man walked a mile from one part of a town to another, did he not travel? Was he not a *bona fide* traveller? could he not claim his quantum of whisky at the first public to refresh his exhausted frame?" But common sense asserted itself against legal sophistry, and we are glad to record that in our city, at least, the fallacies put forth by forensic audacity have not prevented the steady and vigorous execution of the law. Every one knows what this disputed phrase really means, and its meaning only ceases to be plain after a lawyer has given his lucid explanation. But we shall do wisely to leave the phrase as it stands, permitting the common sense of judges and magistrates, supported by an enlightened public opinion, to give to it that definition which it was the clear intention of the legislature it should bear.

But the traffic has not contented itself with efforts to neutralise the law by *legal aid*—it has uttered, through the newspapers, the base coin of bad argument in support of a worse cause. Even editorial conditors have not been wanting to write leaders, whose grandeur of phrase could not hide their poverty of reason. The *Scotsman* sapiently affirms that the result of this act will not be a diminution of drunkenness, but a simple transference of the process of intoxication from the public to the private house. Why, then, this wincing, these contortions? Why this prolonged howl about despotism, raised by the traffic against an act which, by the publican's own showing, do them no harm? If the liquor be consumed, it must be sold; if consumed in the same quantity, it must be sold in the same quantity; and if there be no diminution in the quantity sold, there can be none in the profits of the seller. What a singular inanity of patriotism, then, must have seized the traffic, to induce it to raise this dismal wail about an act which gives them a holiday without diminishing their profits? Confess that the act has attained its object, or that the traffic is a subject for Hatwell. We leave the *Scotsman* impaled on one of the horns of this dilemma (he can choose the precise horn at his leisure), and would whisper to the advocate to get a better case, or to the clients to secure a better advocate.

Nor has this traffic altogether shrunk from the light of that public opinion which it is so ill fitted to bear. Public meetings "of the trade" have been called, to enlighten the community as to their wrongs and to assert their rights. At a meeting of the fraternity lately held here, statements were made curiously indicative of the state of feeling. One poor gentleman complained that "they had ruined the bill with apathy, but they were now feeling the pressure of the screw." Another thought "a great deal of good might yet be done to ease its application to spirit dealers" (strange conception of the nature of "good!" to get liberty to deal out that which deadens the moral sense, de-thrones reason, and provokes into activity the worst passions; and this, too, on the Sabbath day!). Another, in an excess of candour, said that "they were just covering up the sore." What, then, the traffickers being witnesses, their occupation is a "sore"! Yea, a festering, gangrened, loathsome sore, eating into the very heart of the nation, and spreading its infection through every fibre of the social man. The same candid gentleman affirmed that "Sunday drinking would never be put down unless the persons indulging in it were confined from eleven o'clock on Saturday night until Monday morning." How true! if the drink be accessible. To this debased and unmanly condition, to this utter want of control over a diseased appetite, has the traffic reduced thousands in this island,—that, of two alternatives, one must be adopted to rescue them from the temptation that allures them to destruction,—either we must place the victims under restraint, or abolish the traffic which makes self-control impossible. Which alternative is to be accepted by a government which aims to promote the moral, intellectual, and social elevation of the people, who can doubt? And thus it was throughout this notable attempt to veneer the defects of a bad case.

But did any doubts exist in the minds of the friends of legislative suppression—not as to the righteousness,