

Absolute prohibition is a myth, an utter impossibility, and an over-stretch of power; but to eliminate the element of temptation from the business is at once practicable and imperative.

The "Bystander" argues as if the liquor traffic in its present form were a perfectly justifiable business, and he also argues as if the Scott Act were considered by its supporters as a species of model legislation. If the "Bystander" knew the "true inwardness" of this traffic as it is known to those more familiar than himself with social life as it really exists in Canada, he would be one of the first and loudest in demanding that the lure to vice be removed. He would cry out as earnestly as any one, "Oh, reform it altogether." And if he only knew how many look upon the Scott Act merely as a present expedient, a temporary counteractive of evils that loudly call for remedial legislation, he would be willing to let it have its day, and be the forerunner of a system which shall neither tempt on the one hand nor absolutely deprive on the other.

A mad dog is rushing at me; I would like best a good rifle or shot-gun to shoot him at safe distance; but if I cannot have either of these, I am very thankful for a club or pitchfork, and will make the best use of them I can. Something must be done. Society has got its back up on this liquor question, and is determined to abate the nuisance of intemperance. The Scott Act is being passed not as an *ultimatum*, but as a means of compelling our Government to give us something better. Nothing is more certain than that the liquor traffic, as now carried on, "must go." But a liquor traffic of some kind there will be, and it ought to be such as befits a professedly Christian people, instead of being a system of diabolism framed to induce the public to drink as much as possible, that liquor-vendors, and the Government which licenses them may pocket money out of the seduction of the people to vice. Granted that no one is forced to drink, but the allurements are incompatible with a state of good morals, and utterly inconsistent alike with the golden rule and the petition: "Lead us not into temptation."

W. F. C.

THE WEST INDIA TRADE.

THE trade of the West Indies is just now a subject of unusual interest in many quarters. In both the Spanish and the British West Indies great depression prevails, and both are seeking to better their lot by new commercial connections. On the 18th November, a commercial treaty having special reference to the trade between Cuba and Porto Rico, colonies of Spain, and the United States, was signed at Madrid. By this convention the United States is to admit the sugar of these colonies not above No. 16 Dutch standard, molasses, coffee, cocoa, fruits and vegetables, free of duty; and Cuba and Porto Rico are in return to admit a long list of articles, the produce and manufacture of the United States, on the same terms. When this treaty comes before the United States Senate for ratification, it is safe to predict that it will meet with determined opposition from the sugar-growing State of Louisiana; and it is impossible to foresee what its fate may be. The treaty with Mexico, which was before the Senate all last session of Congress, still hangs fire.

Negotiations with Spain on behalf of Canada, looking to the trade of these islands, were begun some weeks since, but what may be the prospect of a treaty being concluded no one has undertaken to tell. To secure a treaty that would give free access to large markets of the United States was a much more important object than to conclude one with Canada; and the negotiations having reference to the trade of this country would naturally be assigned a secondary place. Just before negotiating the treaty with the United States, Spain decided to admit the tobacco and sugar of Cuba and Porto Rico free of duty, in opposition to the protests of her home producers of beet sugar. The whole intercourse between the mother country and these colonies was put on the footing of the coasting trade. Under this arrangement it was believed that Cuban sugar and tobacco would go to Spain and Spanish wheat to the colonies. Until she had so far secured herself by free trade in these products with her own colonies, Spain was not in a position to give to other countries by treaty advantages which, by her fiscal policy, she had denied herself. The Spanish-American treaty places the United States, in respect to those staple products, with the exception of wheat and flour, on an equal footing with Spain, while proximity to the Spanish colonies is an incidental advantage which will tell in favour of the foreign country in the competition on which the two countries will enter should the treaty go into operation. The exception of wheat and flour in the Spanish-American treaty is made in favour of the wheat-growers of Castile, and incidentally it leaves the United States, in respect to these two articles, on an equal footing with Canada; but as the wheat and flour of all other countries except

Spain are intended to be excluded, Canada can reap no advantage from an equality in the results of exclusion. It is in the power of any country, by a simple reduction of its tariff, to get the sugar of Cuba or any other country at the lowest cost; but, if this treaty should take effect, it will not be in the power of the United States to get any advantage in the markets of Cuba and Porto Rico for its wheat and flour over any foreign country which has no treaty with Spain.

The British West Indies are naturally anxious not to be left behind in the race, and they are seeking to secure a treaty with the United States which will place them on an equal footing with the colonies of Spain in the American market. The British Minister at Washington has been instructed to open negotiations for this purpose, and Mr. Nevile Lubbock is to aid him in the same way that Sir Charles Tupper is aiding the British Minister at Madrid, with local knowledge. To the negotiation of a treaty at Washington on behalf of the West Indies the British Government attaches a condition, the compliance with which, it is contended, will be nearly impossible in the case of Jamaica: all loss of revenue in the West Indies which the treaty may occasion is to be made good by the interest benefited. The supplying of the deficiency would fall chiefly on the sugar interest; and in Jamaica the sugar interest is too small and too feeble to bear the burthen. But this objection is probably made too much of, for if the sugar interest were called upon to pay only in the proportion in which it was benefited it would be subjected to no hardship, and ought to be able to meet the demand. If the Spanish-American treaty had contained the most favoured nation clause, and Great Britain had been careful to secure for her colonies the benefits of that provision in previous treaties, no new treaty would now be necessary, as this treaty would cover the ground. But the Spanish-American treaty does not contain the most favoured nation clause: the Spanish Government pressed for its insertion, the American Envoy, Mr. Foster, objected, and the negotiations had almost come to a stand, when Mr. Foster succeeded in convincing the Spanish Government that the course which he suggested was in the interest of Spain; that privileges such as this clause confers ought only to be granted on conditions of reciprocity, and that any other country desiring to secure them should offer some definite tariff reduction in return. The argument was specious, and the bait of selfishness which it presented answered its purpose. But both Spain and the United States will have to convince other nations with which they have treaties containing the most favoured nation clause that their rights are not derogated from by the characteristic omission of the new treaty.

This treaty has proved very disquieting to the Maritime Provinces of Canada: they fear that they may in consequence be greatly restricted in their trade both with the Spanish and British West Indies. The Board of Trade of St. John calls on the Government to do what it can to bring about treaties with the United States and the Spanish West Indies and some reciprocal arrangement with the British West Indies. Their trade with the United States, their natural market, languishes under a Protective Tariff, and they are literally on the brink of despair. At the St. John Board of Trade meeting merchants, whose sympathies are all in favour of the flag under which they live, declared their willingness to accept annexation to the United States as the best apparent means of securing a return of departed prosperity. The anxiety to hear what progress is being made with the Spanish treaty is natural; but there is no other country with which our commercial connections are so important as with the United States. In the fisheries we have something to give in return for a favourable commercial arrangement, and it is far better that it should be offered as a commercial equivalent than that we should again seek to obtain a money payment.

The total value of the annual exchanges between Canada and the British and Spanish West Indies is about seven millions and a-half of dollars, divided, in 1883, into exports \$3,125,031, and imports \$4,359,260. Our imports from the Spanish islands are less than half of the total, \$1,846,266. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick enjoy more than one-third of our trade with the West Indies; but the share of New Brunswick is inconsiderable, while the value of the Nova Scotia exports to the Spanish colonies was \$358,507, and of those to the British West Indies \$1,612,508. About half the export trade of these two Provinces to the West Indies is liable to be affected by the Spanish-American treaty. In fish, lumber, and all kinds of wood that trade must suffer under the operation of the treaty. The trade of New Brunswick with the West Indies is not now of great importance; the market to which it most needs free access for its fish, lumber, potatoes and poultry, is the United States. In that market even now, in the face of the heavy duties, it finds a better sale for its lumber than in Great Britain, where it is heavily pressed by the competition of Norway. The prosperity of the Maritime Provinces is