

side, and whether it is not rather in favour of those who believe that a moderate use of alcoholic drinks is good for the majority of mankind, especially for those who have to undergo severe labour either of body or of brain. They will at least see that the point is still debatable. The assumption upon which their action is based, and which forms their sole justification for coercing their fellow-citizens on a question of private health and taste, is that moderate use must lead to abuse ; and this is contradicted by the experience of hundreds of millions. They will be glad at all events to find that the truth of the hideous charges of intemperance against English-women is challenged, as it certainly may be with good reason if the charges rest on no more trustworthy foundation than the work of the American, Mr. Gustafson, with its claptrap title "The Foundation of Death." While they are on the path of research, they may be induced to look back to the account of Prohibition in Vermont, given by Mr. Edward Johnson in the *Popular Science Monthly* of last May. They will there find that the law having been passed at first by a small majority, and having failed in operation, as under those circumstances it was sure to do, enactment has been heaped upon enactment and penalty upon penalty, till at last the exasperation of the baffled Prohibitionists has trampled on that which all freemen hold most dear by empowering the police, if they suspect the existence of liquor, to break without a warrant into any citizen's home. The infamous trade of the informer is of course encouraged by abundant bribes. And what is the result ? According to Mr. Johnson, the free and open sale of liquor, notwithstanding spasmodic and futile efforts to enforce the law. The number of places in which liquor is sold seems even to be on the increase. Legislation is forced through by moral violence and by the fears of politicians who stand in awe of the Temperance Vote ; but public opinion does not support coercion ; and, as Mr. Johnson says, of enforcing the law as the laws against burglary and larceny are enforced no one dreams for a moment. Unfortunately the attempt, although abortive, is not without consequences. The people learn disregard of law ; the taverns being unlicensed, are no longer regulated ; ardent spirits being most easily smuggled are substituted for more wholesome beverages ; and the moral agencies by which intemperance has been greatly diminished, are weakened by the fallacious confidence reposed in legislative coercion. But when people are careening on the wings of a supposed principle they think as little of practical consequences as they do of inconvenient rights.