

A BURNING QUESTION.

There is one drawback to the moral and material prosperity of Western Canada—the Territories, more especially—to which attention has been frequently called during the last few years. No person who has studied the statistics of crime in the Dominion can fail to have observed that its increase in certain localities has been largely due to intemperance. It was deemed well, in view of these facts and of the peculiar circumstances of the country, that, in the organization of the North-West, a strict law should be enacted prohibiting (save by special permission) the introduction and sale of intoxicating liquors within the limits of the Territories—the enforcement of this law being one of the duties of the Mounted Police. That the task of compelling obedience to its provisions is no easy one is, however, sadly evident from the published reports of the Police Commissioner, of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, of the Minister of Justice and of the Immigration agents and from the almost unanimous testimony of the Territorial press. Not long since we had occasion to remind our readers that the temperance reform on this continent could be traced back to a famous meeting held at Sillery in 1648, at which Father Jérôme Lalemant and an Algonquin Chief were among the denouncers of the liquor traffic. Generations passed away before the rulers of the land were won over to their views, but their cause ultimately triumphed. The conflict is now between authority and those who defy it, but that there is the same earnestness on the side of the former that once actuated its opponents there is unhappily too good reason to doubt. In his last report the Superintendent-General says most distinctly that the Indian agents, instead of being encouraged and helped by the magistrates in protecting their wards from the seductions of the traffickers are actually embarrassed and impeded by their laxness and indifference. Were this charge made by some unofficial or unimportant person, we might be tempted to conclude that it was exaggerated, but coming from such a source, we must accept it as the unquestionable truth. Naturally, when the magistrates and other officers of the law are thus lax, those who have only a moral responsibility in the matter and whose sympathies, for any cause, may be with the culprit, do not hesitate to shield or even assist him in his misdoing. If we ask what the Chief Commissioner of the Mounted Police may have to say on this liquor question, a reply equally emphatic awaits us. There are, he says, the gravest reasons for complaint. Though he acquits the rural districts of any wide spread indulgence in intoxicants, he avers that in the towns there is a great deal of liquor disposed of, and consequently more or less drunkenness. As for the farmers, it is only when they visit the towns that they allow themselves to be overcome. The offenders mostly break the law with impunity. "In Calgary judicial district it is impossible to get a conviction sustained." They have devices for evading entanglement in the legal machinery which have so far apparently proved shamefully effectual. One person obtains a permit and gives it to the liquor-seller and the latter snaps his fingers at the officers of the law. The saloon keepers are thus protected from the consequences of their illegal practice by the coöperation and connivance of their thirsty friends. An expert dealer keeps enough on his premises to accommodate his customers and to tally with his often

fraudulent permits. The rest of his stock is hid away in haystacks, manure heaps, and other receptacles, to be safely produced, as occasion requires.

Undoubtedly the worst feature in this evasion of the laws is that it is made possible by the assistance of a considerable proportion of the community. The failure of the police to unearth the contraband stuff, or of the magistrate to convict the law-breakers, is greeted with acclamation by citizens who should know better. Is it any wonder, asks the Commissioner, that the members of the police force should grow weary of constant disappointment and of the sneers and opprobrium of those who resent their interference? At the present moment it is computed that there are no less than twenty-two illicit liquor shops in the town of Calgary alone, and respectable citizens, whether avowed total abstainers or professed moderate drinkers, are both sorrowful and indignant at the degradation consequent on such an open revolt against the law.

As to the remedy opinion differs. The Commissioner of the Mounted Police, who has had wide experience of both prohibition and licensing, is opposed to the latter. Though he admits the evils of the present system, he thinks that to abrogate the law would make matters worse. On the other hand, many of the citizens—including even temperance people—have come to the conclusion that nominal prohibition, with practically unrestrained liquor selling, has been condemned by its own fruits, and that the only source of relief is a high license system. One thing is clear—unless some plan of redress be discovered and applied, the fairest portion of Western Canada will ere long be hopelessly demoralized.

THE BRITANNIC EMPIRE.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESTINY OF ITS VARIOUS STATES—GREAT BRITAIN.

V.

To the ordinary Briton it seems somewhat superfluous to speak of the greatness of his country, as he most thoroughly appreciates the fact and does not consider it necessary to be always dwelling upon the subject. This consciousness appears even to have affected the national character and to have made John Bull the determined, even obstinate, individual that he is so often represented as being. Yet to those who dwell in the "Greater Britain" beyond the seas, no survey of their own past, or forecast of their national future, can be had which does not include a consideration of the causes underlying the greatness of the Mother Country and controlling its probable destiny.

There can be no question of the fact that Great Britain—by the intellectual attainments of its scholars, by the vigorous character of its people, by its laws and noble literature, by its achievements on sea and land in the old world and the new, on the battle-fields of Asia, Europe and America, has succeeded in impressing a stamp upon mankind more marked than that of even the Roman or the Greek.

In a material sense, and taking the United Kingdom apart from the rest of the Empire, we find an estimated wealth almost beyond the grasp of our comprehension. The figures for 1887 are as follows:

Railways.....	£ 830,000,000
Houses.....	2,640,000,000
Furniture.....	1,320,000,000
Lands.....	1,542,000,000
Cattle.....	414,000,000
Shipping.....	130,000,000
Merchandise.....	321,000,000
Bullion.....	143,000,000
Sundries.....	1,869,000,000

Or a total estimated capital of £9,210,000,000 sterling.

With all this material wealth, with a history rich in memories of great deeds, noble struggles for liberty, and men of light and leading in every department of human research or literary power, Great Britain possesses a constitution which is constantly changing and adapting itself to the needs of the period and yet retaining in its forms and principles those hallowed ceremonies and attributes which have come down through the centuries. First in importance of all the institutions of which Englishmen are so justly proud, and of which we in the colonies obtain the full benefit, is that of the throne. No man can better express a beautiful sentiment or deal with such a subject with so much eloquence as the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone. Let his ringing words speak for themselves:

"The Sovereign in England is the symbol of the nation's unity and the apex of the social structure, the maker (with advice) of the laws, the supreme governor of the church, the fountain of justice, the sole source of honour, the person to whom all naval, all military, and all civil service is rendered. She is the symbol of law, she is by law, and setting apart the metaphysics and the abnormal incidents of revolution, the source of power. Parliament and ministries pass, but she abides in life-long duty, and she is to them as the oak in the forest is to the annual harvest in the field."

It has been said, and with truth, that "the English dearly love a queen," and there can be little doubt that the tendency of a stable, monarchical system, when limited by constitutional practice and usage, is to produce a peace, confidence and steady, continuous progress, in every branch of national life—a result which might otherwise be found exceedingly difficult of attainment. The chivalric devotion of the people to the Crown, when held by a Sovereign such as Queen Victoria has proved herself to be, must always tend to enhance the merits of the monarchical system in the eyes of all who admire stability and respect authority.

It is not, however, necessary to discuss the merits of such a system as compared with other powers of government, but it is needful to refer to the matter briefly, as the Crown forms one of the great links which hold the British Empire in union. With all the wealth of the Mother Country and the freedom of her institutions, with even the wonderful parliamentary system which has proved the parent of a long progeniture of liberty giving legislatures in the civilized countries of Europe and the world, with all that she has to be proud of in the past and in the present, no one subject so stirs the patriotism of the British people as the spectacle of that mighty Empire which has developed as by enchantment during the past one hundred years.

A little more than a century and a quarter ago saw the battle of Plassey, the victory on the Plains of Abraham, and the foundation of the Empire of to-day. The loss of the United States was replaced by the settlement of Australia, and now the British Empire, by a process of natural growth, unexpected discoveries, constitutional development and the powers of communication and coöperation, has become the centre of the chief arbiters of the world's destiny.

But will this greatness last? No living political organism can remain stationary, and within the British realm there are two widely divergent lines of thought and action—one being Imperialism or the feeling of a common nationality; the other—localism or a sentiment of geographical narrowness. Mr. Gladstone has said that: "The sentiment of empire may be called innate in every Briton. It is part of our patrimony, born with our birth, dying only with our death, incorporating itself in the first elements of our knowledge and interwoven with all our habits of mental action upon public affairs * * * The dominant passion of England is extended empire."

It may, I think, be taken for granted that the greatness of Britain to-day is wrapped up to a very considerable extent in the retention of her external empire. The secession of Canada or Australia, or