

THE Boston *Index* has no manner of sympathy with the "purveyor of slander," who is, we are told, "no more entitled to the respect of honourable men than is a thief." Commenting upon THE WEEK's position on this question, however, the *Index* says: "If society were what it should be, it would be less ready to listen to unsupported attacks upon character by irresponsible persons. The fact is, such attacks are often encouraged in the supposed interests of religion and of political parties by men whose standing is good in Church and State. It is not strange, therefore, that so many unscrupulous journalists take advantage of their position to traduce those who have offended them."

THE enthusiastic if not brilliant journalists who have hailed Mr. Gladstone's resignation with effusion as a check to democracy in England are, profanely speaking, somewhat "too previous." A slight and unprejudiced acquaintance with British politics would have taught these gentlemen that nothing could have a greater tendency to ensure a Radical victory at the next election than a period of Tory rule, which generally has the perplexing effect of meddling and muddling domestic affairs, and of throwing foreign politics into inextricable confusion.

It is really amusing, moreover, to find some Canadian papers assuring us, in spite of our senses, that England has been made contemptible in the eyes of Continental nations by her recent foreign policy. This is an opinion which can only be honestly held by writers who do not read more of European politics than is dished up in party organs. Disappointment there is amongst foreign statesmen who would see England humbled, and who saw in a possible war with Russia about a shadow an opportunity to strike a rival of whom they are jealous. The best proof that Mr. Gladstone's policy in this matter was right is to be found in the fact that the verdict of those who speak the mother tongue the world over has been on England's side, and she stands better with them to-day and enjoys a surer meed of glory than has happened to her on some occasions when Englishmen were more vainglorious. Let foreign journalists and disappointed Tories rave as they may, the British Government, on the Russian incident at any rate, carried with it the conscience of the civilized world. It is only an obsolete and discredited policy which made the two countries enemies, nor can any unprejudiced Briton look back with aught but shame upon the Berlin episode when Disraeli went into conference with the great powers having a secret treaty in his pocket, and then had the effrontery to call his underhand barter "Peace with Honour."

"BETWEEN the devil and the deep sea"—that, says the London *Spectator*, is the position of the English Tories, and facts would seem to indicate the truth of the assertion. To retain office they must do the bidding of their hereditary foes: to refuse governmental portfolios would be to confess themselves timid and factious. Neither in Tory nor in Radical rule can there be stable and statesmanlike government in England at present. The only solution of the difficulty, judged at this distance, would appear to be a coalition of the moderate Conservatives and Liberals.

DAYLIGHT balls, which have already become popular in Paris, are, we understand, to be introduced at several great houses during the coming London season. The Baroness Adolphe de Rothschild and several members of the foreign nobility have particularly interested themselves during the past month or so in this idea, which has all the charm of novelty, and has, partly in consequence no doubt, enjoyed not a little success. But we do not share the opinion of some of its enthusiasts that day balls will ever eclipse or even rival in popularity those held at an hour more convenient, if not more natural.

It will probably be a surprise to most people who know Mr. Sala, to hear that his lectures have not met with unqualified success in Australia. Indeed, a Melbourne writer declares the five lectures, or at least two or three of them, delivered in that town to have been anything but inspiring affairs. "Echoes of the Week," says this discontented scribe, "are all very well in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*, but two mortal hours of *viva voce* paragraphs after the same fashion is a quite too heavy form of evening's entertainment." It is very hard to believe that "G. A. S." could be dull if he tried, and we are strongly inclined to believe that the failure of the lectures, if failure it was, should be attributed to some extent to want of appreciation on the part of his Melbourne audience rather than to any deficiency on the part of the world-renowned "special" of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Few Englishmen, probably, have seen Mr. John O'Leary's little pamphlet given before the "Young Ireland Society," and just published, in regard to the dynamite outrages. Few Englishmen know Mr. John O'Leary. He is only an old-fashioned Fenian. He edited the *Irish People* from 1865 to 1867, took the side of revolution very strongly, was sent to fifteen years' penal servitude for his action, and was released on condition of his returning to England only after the expiration of his sentence. He went home full of horror and indignation at the depths to which the cause for which he risked his liberty has fallen. He is angry at dynamite. Still a revolutionist, he is not afraid to tell his people their faults, and to lay the full scourge on the backs of those who, by miserable violence, do such harm to the Irish name. He now preaches more self-control, a better education, and more persistency, as a means towards the revolution. Mr. John O'Leary has, however, no following in Ireland. Nobody there wants to fight. Few people there are really horrified at dynamite. Mr. Parnell is the real leader of the people, and the one thing

he discourages is anything like a rising. The one thing he cannot be got to discourage is assassination, dynamite explosions, the houghing of cattle, and other such methods of agitation.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications intended for the Editor must be addressed: EDITOR OF THE WEEK, 5 Jordan Street, Toronto.

Contributors who desire their MS. returned, if not accepted, must enclose stamp for that purpose.

T. J. DARCY, Montreal.—The sentiments and statements objected to are those of a contributor, "Carlos," and THE WEEK cannot be held responsible for them. These columns are equally open to a refutation, should our correspondent desire that opportunity.

THE PROHIBITION QUESTION.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—May it not be possible, by a little analysis, to get rid of some of the mists which have gathered about this vexed but momentous question, and lay bare the real issues involved?

The word "sumptuary" has of late been frequently applied to the prohibitory legislation. The aim of the Prohibitionists, however mistaken or unwise, surely differs *toto celo* from that which gave rise to the ancient sumptuary laws. No sane Prohibitionist would attempt or wish to regulate any one's personal or household expenses, or to interfere with luxury *per se*. Any effort of this kind which may be the outcome of Prohibition is merely incidental to a movement whose one single aim is to reduce the frightful volume of vice, crime and misery which afflicts modern society by cutting off its most prolific source. Is it not then both illogical and unfair to create prejudice against a cause which is purely philanthropic in its origin, by the use of an epithet which insinuates a design totally different from that which all know to be the real one?

The parallel which some have attempted to draw between drunkenness and intemperance in the use of other articles of food or drink, fails so palpably that one cannot but question whether those who use it are really serious. When over-indulgence in tea, or beef or pastry, begins to transform sensible men into gibbering idiots, wife-beating brutes, or quarrelsome and savage maniacs; when it causes hundreds of thousands of once respectable citizens to give up useful industry, to neglect or abuse their families, to pawn their household goods and clothe themselves in filth and rags, and to bring their wives and children to indescribable misery, the parallel will begin to have force, and it may be time for patriots, philanthropists and statesmen to unite in seeking to devise a remedy. Till then, I submit, the resort to such modes of argument but weakens the cause it is intended to serve.

Much stress is laid by some clergymen and others upon what may be called the Scripture argument as against not only Prohibition but total abstinence. Admit, if you please, on the one hand, that Christ and his disciples countenanced the wine-drinking usages of their day, or on the other that the figment of an unfermented, non-intoxicating juice of the grape represents a reality. What follows? That would surely be a shallow and unworthy view of the New Testament which supposed its aim to be to lay down cast-iron rules and usages for all time to come, irrespective of ever-changing social conditions. Such an interpretation would enslave us in the bondage of the letter indeed. The real question and the only one worth discussion for its practical bearing surely is not what Christ and his apostles may have said and done in Judæa or Galilee in the first century, but what they would say and do now and here, in full view of all existing conditions, tendencies, adulterations and abominations of the nineteenth. The incidents of the New Testament were local and temporary. They could not in the nature of things be otherwise. The principles it teaches and the spirit it inculcates are for all time and of universal application. Can any candid man read the Sermon on the Mount, or the eighth chapter of Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians, and conceive of the author of either as discouraging or opposing the total abstinence men in these days?

The hackneyed aphorism that you can't make men moral by Act of Parliament is surely untruthful as well as stale. What is the object of any and all criminal law but to make men moral? If these laws do not diminish crime they are useless. If they do by just so much do they promote morality? Any law or agency which removes a temptation to wrongdoing out of the way of a man too weak to resist it makes him a more moral, or what is the same thing, a less immoral man. This surely is too transparent to need serious argument.

What matters it whether alcohol is slightly nutritive or slightly poisonous? No one but a fanatic would ask to have whiskey or wine prohibited simply because he believed it to be injurious to the health of the user, and no one but a fanatic would argue that either is a necessary article of diet. The testimony of facts would be overwhelmingly against both. On the one hand the tens of thousands of healthy, long-lived men who have always used liquors freely; on the other the tens of thousands of equally healthy, long-lived men who have never used them at all—to say nothing of such evidence as that of the two North-West Military Expeditions, or the recent one to the Soudan—are trumpet-tongued against all such extremist dogmas.

The politico-economical questions are not so easily disposed of. We Anglo-Saxons may well cherish the constitutional freedom which cost our ancestors, and some ancestors not very remote, so dear. There is nothing more difficult than to draw the line which limits the sphere of constitutional legislation, and to cross which is to infringe upon the liberty of the subject and be guilty of tyranny. In reality there can be no such hard and fast boundary. Mathematical lines cannot be drawn in moral planes. Statesmanship is a practical business, and its true sphere is continually shifting with changing conditions. But it is needless to discuss this point. Both THE WEEK and the Liberal Temperance Union consent to, if they do not advocate, the prohibition of the more fiery liquors. In so doing they concede the principle of the prohibitionists, and put themselves upon the same constitutional platform. If no law of abstract right is violated by prohibiting the poor man's whiskey, the way is clear to cut off the rich man's wine, if logic or the public interest demands.

Does Prohibition prohibit, or rather can it be made to do so? That is the crucial question. It cannot be decided on abstract or general principles. The frequent assertion that the Scott Act cannot be enforced, and will simply drive men to evasion and clandestine drinking, surely needs proof. No law ever has been or ever will be absolutely enforced. But who are going to violate a Canadian Prohibitory Act when it is made the law of the land? Not the thousands of total abstainers who have no use for the forbidden liquors. Not the respectable, law-abiding moderate drinkers, for however strongly they may disapprove the law, however earnestly agitate for its appeal, they will honourably observe