

believe that such is the case. But we are also sure that, if it were so enforced, as if any serious and thorough effort were made so to enforce it, the opposition would be even more serious than it has been.

It is not at all difficult, for those who are in any way acquainted with the counties which have shaken off the tyranny, to follow the course of reflection which has led to this result. In the first place, the most devoted advocates of temperance, or even of total abstinence (which is a very different thing), cannot regard with complacency the fining and imprisonment of their neighbours for doing what they have always done, and what is done in most parts of the world, without let or hindrance. Knowing that these persons consider such legislation to be oppressive and tyrannical, it is impossible for them to regard them as mere criminals, and even if they disapprove or condemn the cause for which they suffer, they do not like the notion of making martyrs of their opponents. It is not very easy for those of us who live in cities or large towns, and who can change our friends and acquaintances without being left alone, to understand the powerful influences of such considerations in smaller places. In many of the villages and towns of this Province, contentions have been engendered and feuds have sprung up which will not be appeased for many a day. Such strifes have burnt in society, in business, in churches, and in the family. We cannot wonder that people get weary of them and disgusted with the cause. And these reasons become more imperative when it is seen that the end which was proposed by the measure has not been reached. Every one must desire the suppression of drunkenness, and be willing to employ every legitimate means to bring it about. Many who would have preferred a different method were induced to vote for the Scott Act, or at least to abstain from voting against it, by the hope that it would at least tend to put down drinking, even if it inflicted some hardship upon the community at large. But it is the opinion of many who have ample means of knowing that the Act has not even diminished drunkenness, much less abolished it; but that it has introduced many other evils alongside the one which it was intended to suppress.

For instance, it is certainly a bad thing that men should be encouraged to break the law, and still worse that they should be led to despise it. Not only has this been the result of the imposition of the Scott Act, but a habit of thought towards the law has been engendered which is destructive of that spirit of subordination to lawful authority which certainly stands in no need of weakening in this country.

Another evil has resulted from the operation of the Act. People who either could not or would not desist from the use of alcohol have in many cases given up the drinking of beer, which is more difficult to convey from place to place, and have taken to drinking whiskey, which is certainly a more dangerous habit; and not only so, but to drink bad whiskey, which is poisonous, instead of good whiskey, which, taken in moderation and at proper intervals, is a wholesome beverage and often medicinally useful. And still further, the hours of drinking, not being recognized by law, have not been regulated, and so it has come to pass that drink has been sold and bought and consumed at all hours of the day and night. It is a simple fact that, in a certain town of no great size, where there were five public houses a few years ago, there have been ten or eleven places where, since the introduction of the Scott Act, liquor has been sold every day in the week, including Sunday, and not only every day but oftentimes all night. In point of fact, the operation of this Act has done a good deal to annoy respectable and law-abiding people; but it has seldom diminished drunkenness, and it has sometimes increased it.

When, besides all these consequences of the Scott Act, we remember that the public treasury has been mulcted of its revenue, which has had to be drawn from other sources, we add another count to the indictment which we bring against this unhappy measure. It is one of the soundest principles of political economy that the incidence of taxation should lie as much as possible upon articles of luxury, and as little as possible upon articles of necessity, and that it should be particularly heavy upon those things in the use of which there is any danger to society. Upon this principle, it is agreed in all civilized countries that the heaviest taxes shall be imposed upon alcohol. In this way, when Mr. Gladstone lowered the duty on French wines in England, he made the amount of the tax on certain kinds of wines to depend upon the percentage of alcohol they contained. This principle is doubly violated in the working of the Scott Act. It encourages the drinking of whiskey, instead of beer or wine, and it practically removes the tax from alcohol to the necessities of life.

"It will not and it cannot come to good." No end, however good, can justify such means, neither can it be reached in any such way. When we give the fullest credit to the good intentions of many of the promoters of the law, we do not the less believe it to be unjust and mischievous. Oliver Cromwell and many of his supporters intended to rule the people of England in truth and righteousness and to promote the glory of God. As a matter of fact they engendered an immense amount of hypocrisy, and produced one of the most frightful reactions recorded in history. Savonarola tried, by similar means, to bring about the reign of holiness in Florence, and only produced an outbreak in which great part of his work was undone and himself perished. Our Maker has not ordained that the regeneration of mankind should be effected by such measures; and we may be sure that as they have failed in the past, so they will fail in the future. M. A.

LONDON LETTER.

"THE existence of women who speak, who write, who belong to professions and are, generally, aggressive, threatens to change the manner of all women; they have already become more assured, more self-reliant, less deferent to men's opinions. . . . They wildly deny any inferiority of intellect, though no woman has ever produced any work which puts her anywhere near the highest intellectual level. They desire a complete equality, which they have hitherto failed to prove." These are unnecessarily harsh words on the part of Mr. Besant, when one remembers Rose Bonheur and George Eliot, not to mention Sarah Bernhardt, who surely runs our best actors very close, and Mrs. Barrett Browning, whose verse any poet would, I think, be proud to own; but they seemed singularly just this afternoon as I looked round at the pictures sent by the Society of Lady Artists to the Egyptian Hall Gallery. Over five hundred pieces, but beyond two or three sketches by Mrs. Merritt and one, slight, but very charming, by Miss Montalba, there is nothing to keep one's attention for a moment: over five hundred pieces, on which the changes were rung on painted flowers, fields in which the perspective was generally wrong, or an occasionally ambitious, unsuccessful portrait. Here and there a glance of prettiness, but of strength not an ounce; here and there a good bit of colour, the value of which was too often counteracted by faulty drawing; everywhere incompetence in some form or other, trickiness and conceit. Surely it is a pity the artists should imagine their productions worthy the public attention, to say nothing of the shilling entrance, the sixpenny catalogue and the hire of the Piccadilly room in which to show off these spoilt canvasses. Thirty years ago they would have been left in portfolios or the best hung in bedrooms and corridors in remote country houses; now, having learnt little or nothing more than the last generation knew, the present-day ladies wish us to believe—and, I suppose, believe themselves—that these are Works of Art. "This is Nelly's," I heard somebody remark, pointing to a particularly feeble picture; "every one says it's so like Millais', only softer." At which speech I fled, knowing I could bear no more.

And from these framed and glazed, much-criticised, and belauded littlenesses, amongst which one could hardly breathe, I went to the panorama of Niagara, where, charmed and interested indeed, I was refreshed by the sight of that great breezy sketch of beautiful country in which the Falls are set, and felt grateful to the dexterous painter for the counterfeit presentment of such magnificence. At first the scene is so complete you feel as if suddenly stricken with deafness, that being the only solution for the mysterious absence of all sound; for these immense cataracts of foaming water, the wooded heights illuminated with certain effective touches of autumnal crimson and gold, the sunny crowded road on the edge of the river, the large hotels standing near at hand, all are of course absolutely silent. This fact necessarily dispels much of the agreeable illusion. Standing on the Observatory opposite Goat Island, one by one those places are pointed out which through our lives we have read and talked of, and those amongst us who are not travellers have yearned to see, and the American and Canadian or Horse Shoe Falls, and the Cave of the Winds (familiar to most of you, I suppose; never to be anything but words or coloured canvas to most of us) are criticised in all sorts of ways by all sorts of timid voices belonging to people who before this pictured grandeur are happily gentle and subdued. Many of us, I am sure, think of Howells' *Wedding Journey*, and I hear Dickens quoted; even some one repeats a sentence from Tyndall; and then I am instructed, as I lean over the railing, that for a mile around Niagara the ground vibrates, but to this piece of information I turn a deaf ear, absorbed as I am in trying to discover the line at which the imitation joins the real gravel walks, growing evergreen shrubs, and slender young trees gingerly putting forth their fresh green leaves, which form so odd a contrast to the September foliage a hundred painted yards off.

Who wants to know the height and depth of these marvellous waters, the number of acres in Goat Island, the amount of yearly visitors to the Prospect House? Not I, forsooth. Such statistics hinder rather than help; so when the showman, standing in our midst, suddenly began to lecture the reluctant crowds I beat a hasty retreat down the stairs, passing the small picture of the scene of Webb's disaster, to the centre of the hall where, to the tunes wound from a wild beast-show instrument (called an orchestra, I believe) two or three Indians in curious costumes were languidly moving about among the sweetmeat and photograph stalls, these gentry, wearing tall feather headdresses, and much resembling the figures which occasionally guard our tobacco shops, were accompanied by a Princess Pocahontas, robed in scarlet and decked with beads and shells, with whom they held conversation in a friendly fashion. Their English proved so good that doubts tormented me as to their real nationality, and it was not till I remembered the Indian child in Howells' story was called Daisy Smith and that her mother spoke fluently in our language, that I felt reassured. Above the clatter of our talk that dreadful organ ground out *Yankee Doodle*, and the *Star-Spangled Banner*, once in a while giving us *Home, Sweet Home* or variations from *Faust*: crowds passed backward and forward through the clicking entrance gates, or bought from the chocolate and trinket vendors, laughing and calling to each other; and as I came out from this noisy little scene into sunshiny quiet old Queen Anne's Gate, with its quaint canopied doorways and air of sober dowager respectability, I met troops of other visitors en route for Niagara, so the panorama is the success it certainly deserves to be. Only I think personally I should have felt more content if the lecturer and the musical instrument had been silent; for both jarred a little somehow.

Are these tiresome lecturers really a necessity? Cannot you clever folks