

## THE DRINK TRAFFIC IN CALEDONIA FIFTY YEARS AGO.

(From "The Caledonian.")

The drink question is at present occupying the minds of many statesmen, so it may not be out of place to enlighten the rising generation of teetotalers, local abolitionists, prohibitionists, Good Templars, blue ribboners, and other fraternities, of the position the traffic occupied in Auld Scotia fifty years ago and upwards. At that period, any respectable individual, whether a grocer, draper, tailor, mason, sign, shoemaker, or other tradesman, if he could have obtained a license for alcoholic liquors. Suitableness of premises was never taken into consideration, and there were no restrictions whatever as to hours of opening or shutting. The traffic was allowed to go on without hindrance, morn, noon, and night. The only supervision was against smuggling; but, with every precaution, many a smuggled tanker found its way to the public. There were many excitements of Burns' mind and method. In his "Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons," he says:—

"Tell them who have the chief direction,  
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,  
E'er sin they laid that curse restriction  
On a'na wite;

As' rouse them thro' to strong conviction,  
An' tell your hell yer pity, i'

Stand forth, an' tell your Premier youth  
The honest, open, naked truth;

Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drought,  
His servant bound;

The muckle deevil baw ye booth  
If ye dissemble!

Paint Scotland grovin' ower her thrissie—  
Her muckle in stye as toon's a' wissie;

An'—at excitements, in a busie,  
Sedition a' dottle;

Triumphant crinlike 'in a mussel  
Or limpet shell.

Then on the tither hand, present her,  
A blackguard smugger right behind her.

An' cheek-for-cheek a' chuffie victim,  
Collapsing join,

Pickin' her pouch as bare as winter  
Or a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,  
But feels his heart's bliss rising hot

To see his poor sold miller's pot  
Thus dugh in staves,

An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat  
By gillies knaves?"

In our towns, cities, and villages, licensed and unlicensed property, fifty years ago, was of equal value. What, then, has enhanced the value of licensed premises? Why, monopoly, and monopoly alone. The Tories and Unionists talk of giving the publicans compensation. Give every individual who is able, willing, and has a good character, a license, and the traffic will soon compensate itself. Property will again stand on its own merits.

A leading Scotch newspaper had a leader the other day on the drink traffic, in which it was said:—"We suppose

there has always been some sort of supervision or other over the liquor traffic." It is truly amazing, considering how much has been said and written regarding the drink question, that few or any take the time or trouble to trace out or inquire into its history or origin. It is less than 250 years since the first duty of 3d. per gallon was imposed on alcohol by Charles I., and a tax of 4s. per acre taken off the land to please the King's nobles. There was no duty previous to this, consequently no need for either license or supervision. The present state of affairs in the drink traffic has been solely built up a' hedged round by teetotal faddists and fanatics, who have no art nor part in its use, but to denounce its abuse. They hold up the moderate consumers of alcoholic liquors as some that drankards! Temperance with them is another word for teetotalism. Neither the moderate nor immoderate users of alcohol are taken into consideration. The faddists go in for heavy duties, restrictions, and all the frauds of city licensing and mischievous monopolies. With them there is no sin in robbing through the drink traffic.

It is strange, yet true, that the very men and women who, to a certain extent, were fed, clad, and bred by the liquor traffic in our beloved land fifty years ago, are now among its greatest opponents. True, the trade is more potent now, by its reason of its monopoly. It is doubtful that monopoly! In how few instances, was a livelihood obtained by the traffic alone at that period. It was generally sold as an auxiliary to those days by the tradesmen already referred to, just as ginger beer and lemonade are now-a-days by the small dealers.

The teetotalers—they cannot be termed the temperate party—are in great straits for scriptural authority for prohibition. What would they not give for a proof of the non-intoxicating character of the wine our Saviour made at the marriage feast? How they would glory in a Bible beautiful like this:—"Blessed are the teetotalers, for they are the salt of the earth! Teetotalers have organized a new species of hypocrisy, stamping the very Bible as imperfect. They hold up the words of Auld Caledonia to scorn—the four B's—Burns, Burns, Tannahill, Nicholl. Take away alcohol from our land and our literature, is their cry. They forget that

"Freedom and whisky gae together."

This line is over 100 years old, but it is over 500 years since Wallace and Bruce won both of these for us. England, as we have said, enslaved alcohol again for us, putting it into bonds. Caledonia has been robbed of millions yearly, and had fusel oil, "kill-the-carrier," and innumerable blends and bombastic brands palmed off as the pure mountain dew! The price of such poisons spreading poverty and misery, death and destruction all around.

Burns was right, freedom and whisky must go together, in spite of fads, cranks,

and imus. Bigots would separate the sheep from the goats, and divide the tares from the wheat here on earth. We look to a higher power, far away above and beyond either a bacchanalian, vegetarian, or a teetotal standard. If an apple caused the fall of our first parents, teetotalers are certain the drink traffic is the cause of keeping their children from getting back to Paradise.

It was a spouter, holding forth in one of our provincial villages on the abuse of alcoholic liquors, less than sixty years ago, that gave rise to the name and term teetotaler. He was impressing his audience on the merits of teet, and advising them to stick to that beverage. One of his hearers cried out—"Would you drink tea totally?" "Yes," he replied; "teetotaler." And from that time abstainers glory in a name which covers many a sin as heinous in God's sight as drunkenness. It is a good Tory maxim:—"Have reverence for the past and caution for the future." Teetotalers care neither for the one nor the other, despising the liberty of the individual, and burining the moderate and temperate with a double portion of the State's revenue. They consider it just and proper to plunder and rob all who choose to use alcoholic liquors! How very different was it in Caledonia fifty years ago. The inhabitants lived in harmony with one another. They were honest, frugal, clean, tidy, and courteous, with a local option of that period of license and liberty in full swing. The teetotal efforts in reducing licenses, and raising the duty on alcoholic liquors, goes for nothing so far as sobriety is concerned. High prices, inferior drink, and debasing shebeens, have been the fruits of fanatical opposition to Caledonia's native cup. The Premier, in a letter the other day, denounced restriction as a fraud; and who sane person think Auld Scotia will ever submit to prohibition? The only just, true, and perfect plan would be to go back to "Freedom and whisky." Let the government leave the drink traffic to the people, and let them make, sell, and drink, as they did before the days of Charles I. The drink traffic occupies a place and position never intended by the Creator of all. It could not have been raised to its present throne unless by the aid of the Devil and all his angels. Pride, place, and power are in its grasp, and nothing short of freedom can work a cure.

Nicholl, the good, the pure, and true poet, in his courting expedition to Kate Carnegie, sings out:—

"Gudwife, bring a bicker! I'll slooken my drouth  
That she wassa spoll't the brewin'!"

And then winds up with

"Jist a'ither stour; what the de'il mak' me see!  
(Gae, ladie, an' maddle my naigie;  
Gin any are mither wha' I'm tae the laird—  
I'm awa' to court Katie Carnegie!"

Is there any sin in the song?—

"I ance was a waster, as happy's a bee;  
I meddled wi' name, and name meddled wi' me;  
I whilso had a crack o'er a cog o' guld yill—

Whiles a bicker o' swats—whiles a heet—  
And I aye had a groat if I hadna a pound;  
On the earth there were name muckle heppier found."

There is not a truer line among all the teetotal roll of celebrities than that of Robert Nicholl, poet and editor.

Tannahill sings of the "coggie":—

"In days o' yore our sturdie sirs,  
Up on their hills sae ardent,  
Glow'd wi' the true Freedom's warmest fires  
An' focht to save their coggie sirs;  
Chorus—Then oh! reverse the coggie, sirs!  
Our brave forefathers' coggie;  
It wou'd them up to douch'd dreads,  
O'en whil' we'll lang be voggie.

Then, here's—May Scotland never fa' down,  
A cringin' coward daggie,  
But bauldly stan' an' boog the lion  
Wha'd reave her o'er her cogie!  
Then, oh! reverse the coggie, sirs!  
Our guld auld mither's coggie!  
Nae let her haggie o'er be drain'd  
By any foreign daggie."

and in many other pieces he upholds the "coggie."

Robert Fergusson, in his "Drink Eclogue—Brandy v' Whiskey," winds up with the landlady's verdict:—

"In days o' yore I could my living prize,  
Nae better than to toon the biggest bicker,  
But noo-a-days we're blyth to hear the thriff,  
Our heads, bonn' license and excise to lift,  
Inlance brandy we can soon supply,  
By whisky unctur'd wi' the saffron sirs."

Even in his day, there is a cure for a "driven" too much in "Caller Oysters."

He finishes with:—

"A' ye wha' canna stan' see sicker,  
Whien tairn ye're toon the biggest bicker,  
If muckle oysters w' yer liquor—  
An' I'm yer debitor,  
Inlance brandy we can soon supply,  
Will thole it better."

The privilege of distilling whisky free of duty was accorded by the Crown to Forbes of Culloden, upon his bounty of Forintosh in Cromarty, in consideration of certain good services done by him at the time of the Revolution. Such rivers of whisky streamed from that distillery, many a name for us to remember. The "Scotch Distillers Act of 1785" abolished this monopoly. Mr. Forbes shortly afterwards, under the decision of a jury, receiving, by way of compensation, the sum of £21,580. Hence the name of Forintosh in Burns' "Scotch Drink":—

"The Forintosh! oh, sadly lost!  
Scotland lamnae frae coast to coast!  
Nae colic gripes, an' barkin' hoast,  
For loyal Forbies' chartered hoast  
It is."

"This curd, hooch-leeches o' th' Excise,  
Wha' mak' the whisky stills their prize!  
Haud up yer han', [he'll] ance, twice, thrice!  
Then send the blunkers!  
An' bake them up in bristoun pie  
For poor o'—d' drinkers."

Fortune! if thou'll but giv' me still  
Falk' cracks, & roons, an' whisky gill!  
An' outh' e're rive to rive at will—  
Tae the 'bines,  
An' den! about as thy blind skill  
Directs thee best."

Dr. Farquharson said the other day that he could not go on in volume with verses in praise of strong drink—and that