

## CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

Good service has been done by the *Globe* in sending a commissioner to report on the working of Prohibition legislation in the Maritime Provinces. The result seems to be that the legislation is ineffective where it was needed, and is apparently successful only where it was superfluous. In the native place of the Scott Act liquor is to be had freely, both within doors and without; men carry about whiskey in their pockets and retail it at ten cents a drink. Where the Act is in force the sale of beer is stopped, while worse whiskey than would have been sold under the license finds customers under the system of contrabandism. Prohibition, being supposed to be the law, all other safe-guards are of course removed. Witnesses ascribe the failure to the obvious cause, the absence of any general feeling of responsibility for the enforcement of the Act. This notoriously is the weak point of all sumptuary legislation in a free country. When the act prohibited is one by which the law-breaker does harm to his neighbours his neighbours will assist the police in enforcing the law; when it is one which does no harm to anybody but himself, they do not care to inform against him or to provoke his enmity by interference. By working up enthusiasm and by applying moral pressure to waverers, a majority, perhaps a bare majority, is obtained in favour of prohibition, but there the success ends. The trade only assumes a contraband instead of a lawful form; the evils of habitual law-breaking are added to those of drinking; worse liquor is drunk; it is drunk in more disreputable places; and instead of being drunk in company and convivially, it is drunk in solitude, with increased liability, as all experience proves, to excess. Hence the statement which appears paradoxical may very well be true: that where Prohibition prevails there is less drinking but more drunkenness. We are all agreed as to the object. We all alike desire to put an end to drunkenness, and to the misery which it brings upon the drunkard and his family. We differ only as to the means. In these papers it has always been maintained that to compel the human race, all at once, to give up stimulants of every kind is impracticable, even if it is desirable; that ardent spirits, especially when they contain a large proportion of fusel oil, are the poison, and that to stop the production or importation of these, except for medical or scientific purposes, and under the control of Government, would, of all legislative remedies, be the surest and the best.

WE need not be afraid that in openly discussing immigration or anything else relating to our own affairs we shall be lowering the reputation of Canada in England. If you want to conceal anything effectually from the English people you can hardly do better than publish it in a Canadian paper. To be silent on the subject of immigration is impossible for those who have any interest in this Province. Those who have a stake in the North-West are plying all engines and using every advertising agency that they can command, from ex-Governors-General downward, to draw emigrants to these shores. We all heartily wish them success in their enterprise. But even they cannot afford to be indiscriminate. When we hear of a number of families of Londoners, wholly unused to agriculture, under tents and with very slender provisions, much as we respect the beneficent intentions of the Lady Bountiful who is understood to have sent them out, we feel misgivings as to their fate in a North-Western winter. We feel some misgivings too as to the effect which their fate may, in the end, have upon the popularity of the North-West among their compatriots; for the English have grown, by bitter experience, rather deaf to the voice of the advertiser, and the wail of one disappointed emigrant tells more with them than a good many puffs. However, let the North-West look to its own interests; they are commercially quite distinct from those of Ontario, which will reap hardly any benefit from the opening up of that territory, while it has carried off many of her best farmers and lowered the value of her farms. Ontario cannot afford to be saddled with the burden of providing for the refuse of North-Western immigration. It is preposterous to charge the St. George's Societies with getting up a false alarm. Four hundred and ninety-five applicants for a night's shelter at a single police station in one month, more than eighteen hundred families relieved by two private associations in Toronto in the course of the winter, the street outside the House of Industry blocked by a destitute crowd, and men by scores sent to the city gaol to save them from starvation are surely signs of danger not to be disregarded. The conduct of Protectionist organs which denounce all warning as unpatriotic and call for the continuance of assisted immigration cannot be termed inconsistent, because keeping down the price of labour is manifestly a part of the same policy as keeping up the price of goods. But it is rather hard that while the community is taxed to protect the capitalist against natural competition the artisan should thus be exposed, not only to natural, but to artificial, competition of the importation of which he as a taxpayer partly bears the cost.

A WRITER of a letter in the *Globe* on the question whether there is any growth of Canadian sentiment seems to have an eye to a recent paragraph in these papers; but if he has, he has not read the paragraph rightly. What the "Bystander" said was not that the proportion of native-born persons in the population had increased; but that the high places of public life, of all the professions and of commerce, which in the last generation were filled by Englishmen, are in the present generation held by native Canadians, and that this was a new and important factor in Canadian sentiment. Let the writer of the letter look round him and he will see that this is true. He avers that there is no growth of Canadian sentiment, and that what is taken for it is only the growth of hostility to England, which he finds pretty much the same here as in the United States, France, and other countries. This the "Bystander" ventures to question. That the growth of Canadian sentiment is not large, he must sorrowfully admit; but it seems to him that what is called hostility to England is, in truth, nothing more than jealousy of English intrusion into Canadian professions and employments. Still, if there is a sentiment generally prevailing which can be taken for hostility or in any way partakes of that character, England can hardly reckon on very strong and devoted attachment. She can scarcely rely with confidence on the aid, in case of need, of those Canadian armaments which applicants for Imperial honours or English capital have represented as ready to start out of our loyal soil at the first trumpet-call of approaching war. There may still be affection and genuine affection at bottom, but it will hardly produce regiments. Political withdrawal from a continent on which her position is now one of mere danger and liability is the advice which sincere attachment would give England. But such advice does not find a hearing. A system runs on in the ruts which it has worn, till it is jolted out of them by disaster. The present Governor-General, however, is a man apparently of a character different from those of his two predecessors. He may, at least, do the British Government and people the service of telling them the truth.

A POLISH Diet is the laughing stock of history, and the elective monarchy of Poland is commonly supposed to have attained an evil eminence among all human institutions; but the palm of absurdity may be disputed by a nominating convention and by the elective Presidency of the United States. What could Sir Lepel Griffin imagine worse than the Convention at Chicago? Behind the scenes intrigue and corruption were doing their most noxious work. In public, the scene was like a mob of lunatics. When New York was reached, on the roll of States, there were twenty minutes of wild and prolonged uproar. The mention of Blaine's State was the signal for a general outbreak of sheer frenzy. The delegates from California mounted on chairs, hoisted their white hats on canes and waved them in response to an ocean of handkerchiefs. The roar of the crowd, we are told, was like that of a tempest, while the crashing of the band swelled the din. One gentleman in his delirium opened his umbrella. Such is the outcome of the arrangements devised by the sage framers of the Constitution to secure the calm selection of the best citizen as the head of the Republic. One thing is to be said for the Chicago Convention. The machine there did its work and produced its natural result. The nomination of Garfield with his independence, his rectitude, his singleness of aim, was a by-blow: when his name was first brought forward, he had not more than half-a-dozen votes. But the present nomination is the legitimate offspring of the caucus. Mr Blaine is a typical politician, the authentic product of the demagogic system, the Stump and the Boom. With all popular passions, prejudices, beliefs and fallacies, from Protectionism to hatred of the Chinese he is, or can affect to be, thoroughly in unison, and this, more even than his unquestionable brilliancy as a speaker is the source of the magnetism in which he is always said by his partisans to abound. His Presidency, if he is elected, is likely to be a fair trial of Magnetism as a paramount influence in the government of nations. The result will be awaited with interest by the political observer; but if Jingoism is a part of Magnetism, the experiment bids fair to be tried at some expense to the commerce and industry of the United States. Happily, Mr. Blaine is not only a stump orator and a "telegraphic controller of his own boom," but a man of genuine ability; and the period of courtship over, he may be content to merge the lover in the husband and to use power like a wise man. If his Jingoism goes no further than an increase of the attention to the relations, long neglected, of the United States with other communities on this continent, it will be desirable in itself, and will take off the eyes and thoughts of the people from the narrow cock-pit of domestic faction to which they have been far too much confined. However, Mr. Blaine is not yet President. We shall see what effect his nomination produces on the Reform Wing of his party.