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THE "TRUTH"

ABOUT

Sunday Closing and Local Option.

Being a reply made on the 10th April, 1883, in the Town Hall, Rugeley, by the

REV. R. M. GRIER, M.A., R.D.

Vicar of Rugeley, and Prebendary of Lichfield.

TO SPEECHES DELIVERED ON THESE SUBJECTS, BY

H. C. EDWARDS, ESQ.,

Secretary to the Licensed Victuallers' National Defence League, and others in the same Hall,

ON MAUNDAY THURSDAY, 1883.

REPRINT FROM THE RUGELEY ADVERTISER.

On Tuesday evening, April 10th, a large and influential audience was attracted to the Town Hall, Rugeley, to listen to an address by the Rev. R. M. Grier, in reply to the statements recently made at a meeting in that hall, in connection with the Licensed Victuallers' National Defence League. There was a large attendance, chiefly of working men, large numbers being unable to obtain admission, on account of the crowded state of the room.

D. WOODROFFE, Esq., occupied the chair, and in a brief but telling speech, introduced the Vicar, asking for him as fair a hearing as had been given to the speakers in connection with the Licensed Victualler's Meeting.

The Rev. R. M. Grier then rose, and was most enthusiastically received. He said, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Temperance party in Rugeley, have, I think, good reason to congratulate themselves upon the important meeting, which has recently been held by the Licensed Victuallers in this Town Hall. It is, in my opinion, a very flattering recognition of the efforts which we have made to promote the sobriety of the country; and I honestly think that we deserve it. For it was in this parish that mainly through the exertions of my dear and honoured friend, the late Mr. Horton, nearly all the work of the well-known Clerical Memorial to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England was done. Rugeley, therefore, may be held responsible for the appointment of the Lords' Committee on Intemperance and its consequences, the evidence which that Committee collected and the report which

they issued. Let me not, however, be misunderstood. Long before that memorial was thought of, long even before I became Vicar here, there was in this parish a Temperance Society, which was chiefly organised and officered by working men. It was not I who first converted any of them to teetotalism: it was they who converted me. (Loud applause.) The Temperance movement is not in its origin a clerical one: the clergy, thank God, are joining it in numbers now, but they were not the authors of it. I wish, for the credit of my order, that they had been: but, as a matter of fact, it sprang from the intelligence, and was for a long time, almost exclusively supported by the burning enthusiasm of the poor. (Cheers.)

I say this, because an appeal is now being made by the licensed victuallers to the poor man to defend his rights by protecting their interests. At their recent meeting here they actually imported a working man to advocate their cause. I do not complain of their action: I am too deeply indebted to that gentleman. He has furnished me with a most apt quotation for my temperance addresses, in the concluding words of his eloquent speech:—

The branch, that stooping to the hand, is pleasant to behold,

Gather not, although its fruit be streaked with gold;

For bitter ashes lurk concealed beneath that golden skin,

And, although the coat be smooth, there is but rottenness within,

words which I think you will agree with me

day Closing and Local Option—(hear, hear)—but very appropriate, as a warning against beverages which sparkle and foam and exhilarate, and demoralise, and torture and kill. However, I am free to confess that he did not come here to help teetotalers: he came here as—what shall I say? a decoy duck. No, that will hardly do. It is not to, or upon the pure element that he would lead his fellows: he evidently does not take kindly to the water. (Laughter and cheers.) Let me suggest another illustration. In India tame elephants are sometimes trained to lead their wilder brethren into the hands of the hunter. Mr. Edwards and his friends are pursuing similar tactics. They have trained, I can hardly say *tamed*, a working man to lure his less civilized brethren into “traps to catch men.” I doubt, however, whether the stratagem will succeed. (Cheers and counter cheers.) I hold in my hand a copy of a Statement and Protest addressed to Members of both Houses of Parliament, by the Central Executive Council of the Licensed Victuallers National Defence League, and signed on behalf of the Executive Council, by Joseph Wadhams, president, and H. C. Edwards, general secretary, and in it (page 38) I find the following words—“One of us may have built or rented a house costing thousands of pounds, have furnished and fitted it in every way for public accommodation and comfort, and when all this is done, half-a-dozen people—a sweep, a scavenger, a costermonger, a cobbler, a coal-heaver, an errand-man—may set up as our rivals, in little hovels situated within a stones-throw, their licenses being paid for by the brewer on condition of his supplying.” Working men, there you see the contemptuous way in which the licensed victuallers, I do not say of Rugeley—many of whom are very kind hearted men—but at the top of the tree, Messrs. Edwards & Co., speak of you and regard you, when you cease to be their patrons, and venture to become their rivals. A sweep, a scavenger, a costermonger, a cobbler, a coal-heaver, and an errand-man! (Laughter and applause.) I feel, I can feel no scorn for these poor fellows any more than I do for the licensed victuallers: they have been created by the same God and redeemed by the same Saviour as myself, and frequently discharge the duties of their humble, but honourable callings more nobly than I discharge mine: and, indeed, I had rather be a sweep, a scavenger, a costermonger, a cobbler, a coal-heaver, or an errand-man, than the proudest millionaire that ever rose to fame and power over the accumulated ills which strong drink is inflicting upon his fellow-men. (Loud applause.)

But the licensed victuallers are not content, it seems, that their trade in this dangerous drug should, like other trades, be confined to week days. I again quote from the Protest (Page 17):—“words of sympathy with barmen and managers, in reference to their long hours of labour, have succeeded in getting a few signatures to petitions for Sunday Closing, and these have been represented as the signatures of proprietors, but where we have followed up the signatures we have invariably found that a very small percentage of actual license holders are favourable to the change.” In other words some of those, who do the work, want rest on the Lord’s Day, but hardly any of those who make the money, are willing that they should have it, Not (Protest page 10) that they want “Parisian Sundays” introduced into England. Why should they? It would hardly suit their purpose; they are far more likely to have customers if their shops are the only ones open: and so they calmly argue, that, whereas it would be an infringement of personal liberty to close theirs, it is not an infringement of it to close others. Now it is possible to talk nonsense of this kind in England, for the simple reason that it is an apology for things as they are, and that naturally from the mere force of habit, we are readier to submit cheerfully to old restraints, than to accept new ones. But go to Paris and propose to the people there that all theatres, and dancing saloons, and drapers, and grocers’ and confectioners shops shall be closed by law on Sunday, and see whether they will regard it as a very slight infringement of personal liberty: and then proceed to suggest that at the same time, one particular trade shall be allowed to carry on its operations, and see whether they will not think this the height of injustice: and then explain that that trade is the one in drugs, which degrade and kill, and see whether they will not regard this as the very quintessence of human unwisdom. (Applause.)

We must, however, remember, in justice to licensed victuallers, that (as the Protest informs us, page 21) “the inn or public house is not a mere drink shop.” It ought not to be; and there would be no desire to interfere with it, if it were not so at all. (Laughter and applause.) If the licensed victuallers will consent to let people meet on their premises without supplying them with alcohol, they will find very few voices raised against their trade. What right-minded persons object to, is not social intercourse (we all desire to promote it) but habits which lead to social disturbance, and domestic brawls, which benefit no one except it be the vendors of intoxicants.

But Sunday, we learn from the Protest (page 9), is the soberest and most orderly of days, and the convictions for drunkenness are not, we learn from one of the speakers at the recent meeting here, more than 250 per Sunday. Not more than 250! 250 persons convicted of one of the worst of crimes upon the best of days week after week in this professedly Christian country. 250 convictions per Sunday, that is to say 13,000 convictions for Sunday drunkenness in a year!! Is that so small a matter? The convictions for drunkenness, remember, bear but a small proportion to the cases of drunkenness, and in England a person charged with any offence, other and greater than disorderliness, committed in a state of intoxication, is not charged with being drunk at all. Thousands of persons are punished for breaches of the law, of which they never would have been guilty if they had not been inebriated, and yet they do not appear in the category of those who are convicted of drunkenness. But supposing that no more than 250 people could be proved to be so drunk in England on the Lord's day as to fall into the hands of the police, I should maintain that a strong case had been made out against the present state of things. In the Protest we are entreated to let well alone. 250 convictions for drunkenness per Sunday in England is, in my judgment, extremely ill.

But would matters be improved if liquor-shops were closed on Sunday? They have been closed in Scotland since 1853, in Ireland since 1878, and in Wales since September 1882. What has been the result? The same quantity of alcohol is now consumed in Scotland in proportion to the population as before, replies Mr. Edwards; the convictions for drunkenness during the last year in Ireland were much more numerous than the year before, and convictions for drunkenness on Sunday in Cardiff have increased quite fifty per cent. The first statement is not quite accurate, but if it were, what would it show? Why simply this, that whilst in England, where public houses have been open every day in the week, the sum expended on alcohol has increased enormously during the last thirty years, in Scotland, where they have been closed one, it is no more than it was. In England drinking has grown with the prosperity of the people; in Scotland, which has largely shared in that prosperity, it has been arrested. Certainly that country is far less sober than it ought to be; but as Mr. Edwards is so fond of gauging the intemperance of mankind by the prosperity of the business, which he so strenuously defends, let me point out, that comparing the years 1880-81-82 with 1850-51-52, we find in Scotland a diminution of spirits consumed to the extent of 8 per cent, and in England an

increase of no less than 76 per cent. Scotland is a whiskey-loving country, as Mr. Edwards has informed us, and though more beer is now drunk there than used to be the case, there is still much less in proportion to the population than in England. On the two items of beer and home spirits the consumption is 1.43 gallons per head there; with us, it is 2.47. In the foregoing statement nothing is said about foreign spirits and wine, but assuming that the per head consumption is the same in the two countries (as a matter of fact it must be far greater here than across the Tweed), it is hard to see how Scotland can be more drunken than England, though very possibly the police are more vigilant there, than here. It is, however, sufficient for my purpose, to show that in spite of greatly increased means of purchasing alcohol, the Scotch are not, what alas! the English are, a great deal more drunken than they were in 1853. Do not imagine that I ascribe the whole of this result to Sunday Closing. I am of Mr. Edwards' opinion, that other methods of restricting the sale of alcohol have had some effect. Increasing the duty on spirits has no doubt done something. I only maintain that closing public houses on Sundays has done something too. One thing it has assuredly done, it has greatly lessened Sunday drunkenness. In Edinburgh during the years 1852-53, under the old law there were respectively 729, 641 arrests for drunkenness on that day: in 1855-56 under the new, there were 382, 436. In Glasgow during the earlier years, there were 1330, and 1218; during the two latter 581 and 521. I have received the following letters from Ex-Bailie Lewis and Dr. Wallace, of Glasgow:—

Roselea Villa, Grange,
Edinburgh. April 6th, 1883.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your note, with accompanying "Eloquent Defence of the Trade," wherein, along with my friend Dr. Wallace of Glasgow, I have the distinguished honour of being quoted by Mr. Edwards as a witness "for the defence of the trade." That gentleman represents me to have said that Scotland was three times as drunken as England, although they had fifty-two days less to drink in, a statement which was received with cries of 'hear, hear, and loud cheers,' but which, unfortunately for the eloquent defence, Mr. Edwards failed to state when or where I either penned or uttered. Scotland, it must be admitted, like England, is sufficiently cursed with drunkenness, but the Scottish people have the satisfaction of knowing that but for the benign and salutary results of "Sunday Closing" the evils which we deplore would have been incalculably greater. Before the Sunday Closing of liquor-shops came into operation in Scotland upwards of 40,000 men, women, and children entered the licensed liquor-shops of Edinburgh every Sunday. As the result, the drunkenness, and riot in the public streets, were a scandal to a civilized city. The police cells were filled with drunken victims, and the Edinburgh prison was crowded to such an extent that a large sum of money was voted by the Board to

increase the accommodation. No sooner did the Act come into operation than quiet, order, and decorum, pervaded the streets on the Sundays. The police commitments were so remarkably diminished that the police were largely relieved of the duty of gathering drunkards from the streets, while the proposed extension of the prison was found to be unnecessary, and an expenditure on that account saved to the ratepayers. Similar results were experienced throughout the whole of Scotland. The number of cases of drunkenness and crimes, for the first three years after the Act came into operation, in the 17 leading Scottish towns were reduced by nearly 30,000, while the number of cases of drunkenness on the Sunday were reduced by nearly two-thirds. For upwards of 20 years I have taken a pretty prominent part in all the social and political questions which have agitated Scotland, and during that period no measure has been passed, which in the almost unanimous opinion of the Scottish people has contributed more to the moral, social, industrial, and religious well being of the community, than the Sunday Closing Act.

I am, most faithfully yours,

DAVID LEWIS.

P.S.—I have communicated with Dr. Wallace, who is one of the most uncompromising enemies of the drink curse. We have not in Scotland a more unflinching enemy of Sunday trading in all its forms.

Wester Craigs, Glasgow,
9th April, 1883,

Rev. Dr. Wallace to Rev. Prebendary Grier,

My Dear Sir,—Scotland *never got such a boon* in connection with the restriction of the Liquor Traffic as the Sunday Closing Act has proved to be. Mr. Johnston, Secretary to the Scottish Temperance League, 108, Hope Street, Glasgow, could furnish you with ample proof of this. As to my statement in the "Defence," it has been utterly mutilated and torn away from its original setting. This is how it was. A very loose regiment occupied the old barracks near my church, which are now abandoned for those out of the city Barracks Street too was inhabited by the worst characters, male and female, and it was alleged that the soldiers were supplying drink from the canteen. My elders, etc., got up a memorial to the Lord Provost, and to the Chief Constable in reference to this state of matters. On the Sabbath morning referred to in the statement, I traversed the whole length of the barracks to my church, and found matters to be in the state as reported, but this was amongst the very lowest of the population. The commander of the Regiment was at once communicated with, and a great improvement at once took place. What would the state of matters have been, had all the Public-houses been open and in full swing? Scotland will never give up the Sunday Closing Act. Shebeens are comparatively rare, and only found amongst the lowest *debris* of the city. When discovered the punishment is very heavy. We have heard nothing of them for a long time, and the quiet and order of our streets on a Sunday are very marked as compared with our old state of matters before the passing of the Act. You should ask Bailie Lewis to address a meeting in Rugeley, he is the man to set matters in a proper light, as far as Scotland is concerned. I shall be glad to hear the result of your reply. Meantime, with kind regards,

I am, yours very sincerely,

ALEXANDER WALLACE.

I now pass on to Ireland. There in several counties the Assize Judges have recently noticed an increase in cases of drunkenness, not, mark, on the figures of 1877, but in the last half year, as compared with the pre-

vious one. Mr. Edwards is jubilant. "Sunday Closing in Ireland has been in operation for nearly five years. It has been followed by a marvellous diminution in drunkenness, both on Sundays and weekdays. But in the fifth year of its operation there is in certain places, a large increase in arrests for drunkenness, and we are told, 'See what your Sunday Closing Act has done.'" Now this increase may possibly be due to the fact that the police having less to do in other ways have been better able to look after drunkards, and is certainly in some measure due to the fact, that the people in the country districts have had more money to spend upon alcohol. In 1882 the Irish wasted on beer and spirits £1,867,717 more than they did in 1880; but even so they wasted less by £1,154,395 than they did in 1877, the last year that public-houses were open on a Sunday. Mr. Edwards ought not, I submit, to have compared the convictions for drunkenness in a few places here and there in 1882 with those in 1881, he ought to have accounted for the fact that in 1881, the last year for which, I believe, we have any official returns, they were throughout the whole of Ireland 78,573 as compared with 110,903 in 1877, the last year during which public-houses were open on Sunday, shewing a reduction of no less than 32,330. Besides, even in 1882 the increase in drunkenness is by no means so general as Mr. Edwards would lead us to suppose. "There has been," said Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, within the last month at Cork, "in your city a large decrease in each class of crime arranged in the table, assaults have fallen from 105 to 77; larcenies, from 78 to 32; and convictions for intoxication, from 716 to 367. It is not for me to speculate as to the causes of this change, a change, however, not peculiar to your city." But Cork, it may be contended, is one of the exempted cities: no doubt, but even in them the hours for drinking have been reduced from seven to five, and a slight restriction upon temptations to intemperance, in a crowded thoroughfare of life, where intemperance abounds, may effect a more marked improvement than more stringent measures in places where it is not so prevalent. But to one inconvenient fact Mr. Edwards made no allusion. Whilst the general drunkenness of Ireland has diminished more in the exempted towns than elsewhere, this is not the case with drunkenness on Sundays. "In the year 1877-78 in the exempted towns where seven hours for the sale of alcohol were allowed there were 2,822 arrests for drunkenness taking this year as a standard of comparison the arrests for 3½ years would have numbered 9,877. Under the Sunday Closing Act which the hours for sale were shortened

two, the arrests for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years numbered 6,573, shewing a reduction of 3,304 or 33 per cent. In the rest of Ireland there were in the year 1877, a year under open public-houses, 4,555 arrests for drunkenness, taking this year as a standard of comparison, the Sunday arrests for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years would have been 16,442. During the $3\frac{1}{2}$ which followed Sunday Closing there were only 6,588 arrests, showing a reduction of 9,854 or 60 per cent. : in other words, partial closing to the extent of two hours gives a reduction in Sunday arrests of 33 per cent, total closing gives a reduction of no less than 60 per cent." Now, in spite of the craze based upon hypocrisy with which Mr. Edwards is pleased to charge us teetotallers (I leave him to explain how a craze can be based upon hypocrisy), we have never maintained that closing public houses on a Sunday will prevent people entering them on a Monday, nor that the want of alcohol on the Lord's Day will prevent a man who drinks enough of it from getting drunk on any other.

And now, with reference to Wales. The whole of the Principality, it must be remembered, is not Cardiff. Indeed, important as that place is, it is not even an entire county. The arrests for Sunday drunkenness in a town close to Monmouthshire, where public houses are not closed, may have gone up 50 per cent! I believe that they have; they were two, they are three per Sunday; and yet the Act may be successful in the main. Superintendent Wake, of the county constabulary, has compared the number of Sunday convictions for drunkenness in the county of Glamorgan, the most populous county in Wales, during the three months prior to the closing of public houses on Sunday and the three months after, as follows:—In the Neath division, during the first period, there were 12 cases; during the second, 14. This gives an increase of 2. In the Cardiff division, during the first period, there were 7 cases; during the second there were 8. This gives an increase of 1. In the Merthyr division, during the first period, there were 49; during the second, 37. This gives a decrease of 12. In the Pontypridd division, during the first period, there were 36 cases; during the second, 15. This gives a decrease of 21. In the Bridgend division, during the first period, there were 30 cases; during the second, 7. This gives a decrease of 23. Comment is superfluous.

Mr. Edwards, however, in his great solicitude for the virtue of the people, is extremely anxious that they should not be encouraged to drink in private. On page 18 of the famous Protest, the following question is asked:—"Will the man (and with him in

countless cases wife and children would have to be included)—will the man who is unable to resist the allurements of the open public house, be proof against the readier temptations of the home supply?" This question implies that if public houses were closed on the Sunday, men, women, and children would get drunk at home. (Shame.) Working men, we teetotallers are accused of not trusting you: it is false: we do not trust alcohol, whether in rich or poor: we have the highest authority for saying that "Wine is a mocker," and "strong drink is raging." But we trust you as much as we trust any other class of society, and more than our opponents do. You are told that we want to treat you as children, and put you into swaddling clothes: you can now judge for yourselves whether others do not wish to do the same. The publicans provide the clothes, and you are to pay for them (laughter). They are to stand over you, and take care you do not take a drop too much. (Laughter). They do not object to your being nursed, only they wish to have the nursing of you—(Loud laughter)—: otherwise "in countless cases" you will take strong drink home, and you, your wives, and children all get drunk (laughter.) It is a libel on the working-men (cheers); and I do not believe it of them. (More cheers.) They may yield to the open solicitations of the public house; but if they take drink home they are as much to be trusted as any gentleman or Licensed Victualler. (Cheers.) Hear the reply of the Chief Constable of Glasgow before the Select Committee on the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, when asked whether it accorded with his experience that there was an increase of private drinking there since the passing of the Forbes Mackenzie Act:—(3283), "I do not see any signs of it, and I believe it is not the case. If persons got drunk in their own houses, there would be some disturbance calling the attention of the police to it."

But what about the shebeens, or unlicensed drinking places? "We know nothing of them," said Mr. Edwards, "in England." This is not the case. There are plenty of them in England under another name. "They have increased," he continues, "since the Forbes Mackenzie Act was passed": and the "Public Prosecutor of Edinburgh," he asserts, "said in his evidence before the Lords' Committee, that in one district of Edinburgh there were 127 public houses closed, and 106 shebeens open." But Mr. Edwards forgot to state that a large proportion of these were houses of ill-fame, such as may unhappily be found in every large town in England. Out of 101 shebeens, which were open in 1877, 69 were houses of ill-fame, 27 were only used between Saturday night and

Monday morning, and no more than five were shebeens proper, which were used nightly. Both Mr. Linton and the Chief Constable of Glasgow, state that after the passing of the Forbes Mackenzie Act, the number of unlicensed drinking shops increased for a time, but that since fresh powers of dealing with them have been given to the police by an Act passed in 1862 they have greatly diminished. "The number of houses," said the Chief Constable, of Glasgow before the Select Committee on sale of intoxicating liquors (3286), "where drink is supposed to be sold illicitly in Glasgow at the present time, is not one third of what it was at the time the Forbes' Mackenzie Act came into operation. In 1858 they numbered 327, now (*ie.*, in 1877) they are 122." "In 1853," said the Chief Constable of Edinburgh (3548) before the same committee, "there were 30 unlicensed houses in which liquor was sold, and about 120 house of ill-fame where liquor was supplied after the public houses were shut at 11 o'clock at night. In 1859 there were 117 shebeens proper and 125 houses of ill-fame, 242 houses in all, in 1876, there were 38 shebeens, and 70 houses of ill-fame." Mr. Linton also stated (3553) before the Select Committee—"I find that in a street where there are the largest number of public houses, there are also the largest number of shebeens;" and (3554) gave it as his opinion that people begin drinking in the public house, and go from it to the shebeen. It is a fair inference from his statements that the way to get rid of shebeens is not to open public houses, but to close them.

With reference to shebeening in Ireland, which in the Protest (page 18) is stated to have sprung up since the Sunday Closing Act, I can only say that this is distinctly contradicted by Lord Carlingford, who has better opportunities than Mr. Edwards of knowing the truth upon this subject. The Government, he said in the House of Lords on March the 15th, "were satisfied that the Act had not yet had the effect of increasing the number of shebeen-houses which was confidently predicted." Certainly it is true that in Ireland during the last two years there have been 1581 cases of illicit distillation as against 14 in England and Wales. But why did Mr. Edwards omit to say as against 11 in Scotland, where Sunday Closing obtains? Why did he not attempt to explain why detections of illicit distillation there, had gone down from 124 in 1852 before Sunday Closing to 8 last year? Why did he not say that if in the last two years during which public houses have been closed in Ireland the number of these offences was 1581, in 1876-77 when public houses were open it was (see 20th

report of Commissioners of Inland Revenue, page 10), 1775, or 194 more. I protest, Mr. Chairman, in the name of common honesty, against the gross and unscrupulous manipulation of figures of which Mr. Edwards has been guilty. (Loud cheers.)

In regard to Wales, or rather Cardiff (of which alone we have any information on this subject), there is unquestionably truth in the assertion there has been some addition to the drinking clubs there, since the closing of the public houses. How long this will continue is another question. In Glasgow, where public houses have been closed on Sunday for 30 years the Chief Constable stated before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in connection with the Irish Bill, that there were only ten clubs, and those not got up for drinking purposes, but frequented by the upper, and upper-middle classes (No. 3315, 3317, 3318). Still I entirely agree with the Protest that there ought to be legal means of dealing with clubs. Mr. Fairfield seems to think that this can never be. The licensed victuallers and Mr. Gladstone think, on the contrary, that it can be, and every prohibitionist will co-operate with them loyally that it may be, with the least possible delay. (Cheers.) But to pretend, as Mr. Edwards does, that the Closing of public houses on a Sunday has encouraged the formation of such clubs as the Invincibles in Ireland is a pure and simple fiction. The headquarters of the ruffians was Dublin, where public houses were not closed, and the murderers whom they selected met in public houses, both before and after the perpetration of their crimes; and the Corporation of Dublin (upon which there is a large number of liquor-sellers, and which included the infamous James Carey until he turned informer, and which has been elected for far other purposes than to promote the morals of the people) is almost the only public body in the United Kingdom which has protested against the removal of facilities for drinking on the Lord's day. The petitions in favour of Sunday Closing from all parts of the United Kingdom have been discounted by Mr. Edwards. Teetotallers are not merely "humbugs," and "hypocrites," and "bigots," "stone-blind bigots," and "pedestal piety, condescending to gutter grovelling," (whatever that may mean), and æsthetical parsons arm in arm with Blue-ribbon dissenters, but detected forgers too! (Loud laughter and cheers.) Well, let that pass. We can bear a great deal more abuse. But how does Mr. Edwards account for these facts, that hardly anywhere in Scotland would a candidate for Parliamentary honours have a chance of being elected, if he proposed the repeal of the Forbes Mackenzie Act, that from Wales

only two members could be found to vote against Sunday Closing, and from Ireland only eleven; and that now, when public houses have been closed on Sundays for more than four years in that country, not a single judge has said one word in favour of re-opening them? Mr. Edwards is equal to the occasion. "Baron Dowse," he asserts, "at the Limerick Assizes, declared Sunday Closing to be a farce and a humbug." Well, I hold in my hand a letter from the baron. He writes to me:—

Dublin,

April 2nd, 1883.

Dear Sir,—I never spoke of the Sunday Closing Act as "a farce and a humbug." I alluded in the Limerick case to the alleged operations of the *bona fide* traveller's clause, which, in that instance, was followed by a riot and some assaults,

I am, yours, &c.,

W. DOWSE.

(Loud cheers.)

Quite so: it is not Sunday Closing that is a "farce and a humbug," Mr. Edwards, but the *bonâ-fide* traveller. He, if you will, is too frequently a *malâ fide* "humbug." (Laughter.) Let him be abolished, as he has been created by Act of Parliament; and the vendors of intoxicants will have one less argument to urge against their being prevented from vending them on God's own day. (Applause.) And oh! do not be deterred by the unspeakably horrid, monstrous notion that some poor, unhappy fellows will then have to slake their thirst in one way on the week days, and in another on Sundays! There is really only one way of satisfying it—and that is, by the use of water. If anyone thinks differently, let him eliminate all the water from the beverages in which his soul delights, and swallow what remains. Then if he quenched his thirst, it would be by putting himself into a position never to thirst again. (Laughter, and loud applause.) If he wants to satisfy his thirst and live, he must use water—and I advise him to drink it unadulterated—(laughter.)

"Honest water which ne'er left man in the mire."

A short time is left me for the consideration of Local Option. In the Protest—which, as requested, I have read, and marked, and pondered—the licensed victuallers speak of themselves as badly used, because all the evils which flow from the use of strong drink are laid to their charge. They misrepresent prohibitionists. We object to *anyone* selling a potent and demoralising poison. To us the controversy between Mr. Edwards, the representative of the licensed victuallers, and Mr. Gilbey, who may be regarded as the representative of the licensed grocers, would be a very entertaining if it were not a very painful one. Years ago Sir Alexander Cockburn, who was

on a visit to Sir Richard Bethel in the country, went out one morning to join a shooting party. Reaching the ground, he was shocked to find the gamekeeper at full length and evidently in pain, and his host in high altercation with his eldest son, Richard. "Who did it, who shot him?" asked Sir Alexander. "Richard," said the father. "Papa," retorted Richard. "Now, Richard," said the Solicitor-General, "if you say that, you add the sin of mendacity to what may very probably prove to be the crime of murder." Greatly perplexed, Sir Alexander went to the gamekeeper, who, fortunately, was more frightened than hurt, and said, "Who did it?" "Both on 'em"—(a laugh)—replied the fellow: and this is what England—poor sprawling and peppered England—will, I trust, say with reference to the two parties in the pretty quarrel between various retailers of alcohol. For we teetotallers are perfectly impartial: it is with strong drink that we are at war, not with men. (Cheers.) We assert that all experience proves it to be poison, and poison of the worst kind. This, however, is, I find, denied by Mr. Fairfield. "Men," he is reported as having said, "could not take strychnine and arsenic without the poison being dangerous; but they could take drink in moderation without running any risk of being killed." Mr. Fairfield, I suppose, has never heard that in Styria ladies take arsenic as a regular thing to improve their complexions, and that far less harm comes of it than comes of their sisters' drinking wine in England. Any poison, even strychnine, may be taken into the system day after day, if sufficiently diluted, and no known poison, I say it deliberately, is capable of inflicting so much misery upon the human race as alcohol. Alcohol does worse than kill: it demoralises, brutalises, maddens, and incites to every species of crime. Mr. Edwards knows this: He has signed a protest, in which free trade in strong drink is vehemently opposed. "The theory (Protest, page 45) it is said sounds well, and that is all; but the exceptional nature of our trade fully justifies a departure from strict economic rules." So far we agree with him—the nature of his trade is exceptional—but we hold that there should be no departure from strict economic rules. It appears to us an incontrovertible axiom in political economy that when a trade is good, it cannot be too free, and when it is exceptional, as he calls it, or bad as we should say, it cannot be too restricted: and, observe, he quite admits that it is bad, as carried on by all other people except his clients. (Hear, hear.) He absolutely quotes with approval (Page 40, Pro-

test) the following words from the Report of a Royal Commission on Off-Licenses in Scotland—

“It appears to us that the combination (spirit sales with groceries) is fraught with great danger, and has been productive of great evil, and we incline to believe that the only perfect solution of the difficulties or complete cure for the evils complained of, would be the entire separation of the two trades.”

We thoroughly agree with him: but, “with what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to him again:” we feel that similar evils, equally complained of, can only be cured by the entire separation of the licensing victualling trade from that of liquors. For I would have you remember, why beer houses and grocers were licensed. It was because public houses were the source of so much mischief. The Legislature hoped that if the people were encouraged to drink beer, they would cease to drink spirits, and that if they were able without difficulty to get drink, they would avoid the contamination of the public house. It was a huge blunder; but the fact that it was made, proves conclusively, that the public houses of the good old times were not such homes of Arcadian innocence as Mr. Edwards would have us believe, and, surely, if the increase of intemperance during the last 40 years, is in any measure due to the fact that grocers and beer house keepers have had licenses, the intemperance which induced the legislature to license them, must in some measure be due to the fact, that others had licenses before them. Why then, when Mr. Edwards says neither grocers nor beer house keepers ought to have licenses, should he feel so very much aggrieved with us for adding, no more should your clients? (Laughter and cheers.)

He and his friends go a very long way with us in the belief that measures of restriction upon the trade, would be beneficial and are right. They point out that raising the duty on spirits has checked the use of it. We agree with them. They believe that the want of means to purchase alcohol is one reason why less is used. We agree with them. They object to drinking clubs: so do we; and to off-licences: so do we; and to grocers' licences: so do we. They are of opinion that the closing of 520 drinking shops in Dublin is the real cause of the diminution of intemperance there. So are we. They would like to forbid the sale of new spirits, (Protest page 55). So should we, and of old as well. (Laughter.) They propose that a temporary Suspensory Act should be passed, as applied to licenses of all kinds. We hail them; we welcome them; we embrace them as allies, and when it is passed we will do our very best to make it permanent, and appli-

cable to the renewal of old licenses, as well as the granting of new ones. (Cheers.) But here, alas! they part company with us; what is more, though they would be perfectly content that not another license was ever granted, they would actually like to have the power to carry their ruinous trade into the happy and well-ordered parishes, where at present there is no sale of intoxicants, and consequently no drunkenness and very little crime. On page 20 of the Protest there is the strongest condemnation of the landowners, who have tyrannically introduced what is tantamount to a Maine law on their estates, and of teetotalers for supporting them in their feudalism. To the virgin soil of these now protected villages the licensed victuallers would wish, it seems, to remove their injurious business from more exhausted districts. Now I say nothing about the inconsistency of gentlemen who prohibit the liquor trade in certain localities and vote against allowing others to do the same. They must defend themselves, but we teetotalers are perfectly consistent in saying that if feudal powers are exercised at all, it is better that they should be exercised to save people from unnecessary temptation, than to tempt them; and that if it be right (and few people out of the trade will pretend that it is wrong), for landed proprietors to protect the people on their estates from proved incentives to evil, it is still more right that people should have the power to protect themselves. (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.) But “white is white, and black is black,” says Mr. Edwards, “right is right, and wrong is wrong; if it is right for a man to sell liquor on one side of the street, it cannot be wrong for a man to sell it on the other.” So say we who would like to prohibit the sale of alcohol everywhere, and so says Professor Leoni Levi who wishes to allow it everywhere. But how can Mr. Edwards say it, who defends things as they are? At this moment in Bow Street on the one side there is a house in which it is right to sell alcohol, on the other side it is wrong for any one to sell it; and if at the next Brewsters' Sessions a person from the latter applied for a license he would no doubt be opposed by the publican who lives on the other. Mr. Edwards approves, but really nothing can be plainer than that if it be fair to allow the sale of alcohol to one person and refuse it to another who eagerly desires it, it is much more fair that, though it be allowed in one place it should not be allowed in another which strongly objects to it. (Hear, hear.) Prohibition, however, we are told, has been tried in America and found wanting. “In the State of Michigan a prohibitory law had been on the Statute book for 20 years and was then

repealed!" The fact is that Michigan adopted the provisions of the Maine Law in 1853; and that recently, that law has been changed for what we want to get here, a Permissive Prohibitory Liquor Act, or Local Option, *i. e.*, the power of suppressing the trade where the people do not want it. In the United States every kind of experiment in licensing has been made; and some years ago the Canadian Parliament sent commissioners, one a Prohibitionist, and the other an Anti-Prohibitionist, into the States to investigate the results, and collect evidence. At the conclusion of their visit they were both Prohibitionists; and the Canadians, who live much nearer to the States than we do, and are far better able to judge of the effects of legal restraints there, than any stray English traveller, whether Mr. Plimsoll or Mr. George Dawson, from the mother country, were so convinced by their report and evidence that they adopted a Permissive Prohibitory Liquor Bill, which is now in operation throughout the Dominion. (Applause). Do you want further evidence? In Switzerland there is free trade in drink, and the result is so disastrous as to cause grave anxiety amongst people of all classes. In Sweden many years ago, there was the same, with the same consequences. Since then, however, a Permissive Prohibitory Liquor Act has been passed, and Sweden has thereby emerged from "the moral and material prostration to which drunkenness had sunk her."

From the *Saturday Review*, December 23rd; 1882, p. 833, I take the following extract:—

"In the whole course of his travels, Mr. Seebohm seems to have found only one model village. In it 'order reigned, and a hundred little details betokened industry and civilization.' The houses were comfortable, their occupants were tidy, the community was free from crime, drink, and illness. These model villagers turned out to be Skoptsy, the gloomy fanatics, whose asceticism, Mr. Seebohm somewhat quaintly describes as 'teetotalism carried out to the bitter end.'"

From an article on "Siberia in Asia," by Henry Seebohm.

Very well then, it is said, but if you suppress the trade you must be prepared to compensate those who are engaged in it, and Captain Graves, whose letter in last week's local paper I desire to commend to the attention both of licensed victuallers and teetotallers, believes that this would be fair. Now all that I can say is, that if the vendors of intoxicants could make out a fair claim to compensation, even though it were to the extent of half the National debt, the £400,000,000, which they modestly ask for, it would be better to pay them and have done with them. I bear them no ill will, and would do them no wrong; but I must boldly state my opinion, that the de-

mand is an iniquitable one. Why should we compensate them? Is it for having enjoyed a privilege which has been denied to others? Is it for having carried on a trade disastrous to the country? Is it for the wholesale depreciation of their neighbours property? Is it for being freed at length from a part of their business, which degrades the rest, and has endangered their lives, and too often made desolate their homes. (Loud applause.)

At a public meeting at which I had the honour of speaking some time ago, an elaborate attack was made upon Local Option by a Licensed Victualler, who was, I am told, one of the most respectable members of the trade. The meeting was a noisy, not to say an uproarious one, and no one but the publican and his friends could get a hearing. Still I felt sorry for the man, who seemed to be distinctly of opinion that his business was a useful one, and I thought well at any rate, this good fellow has never suffered from it. Judge then of my surprise and horror, when I afterwards learned that his own wife had more than once been treated for *delirium tremens*, and threatened to take her life, and had not long before been killed by a fall, the doctor deposing at the inquest held upon her that she smelt terribly of spirits.

There is, I believe, no class of persons who would gain more by the abolition of the trade than those engaged in it. Morally, they would be amply compensated. But as for pecuniary compensation, what right have they to expect it? When did the State promise it to them, or encourage them to believe that they would receive it? The hours for drinking have been shortened; public houses have been closed in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; grocer's licenses and beerhouse licenses have been issued; the duty upon spirits has been raised; and no compensation has been given to the publicans. At the next Brewster Sessions the magistrates might so multiply the liquor shops of Rugeley as to render valueless every license in the place, or, as I believe, might withdraw all or any licenses within the limits of their jurisdiction. The factitious value of public houses is wholly due to the action of the Bench. Their occupiers hold their licenses for one twelve-months and no more. If, then, their licenses be taken from them before the expiration of the year, they should have compensation to the full amount of what they would have gained if they had retained them till to its close: more they cannot fairly claim. (Hear, and applause.) At the Edmonton Licensing Meeting, March 9th, Mr. Besley opposed the renewal of many of the off-licenses and the granting of new ones, on behalf of the licensed victuallers, and boldly maintained that the only vested

interest which a person now licensed, possessed, was an interest for the current year. The publicans, who instructed him, did not propose to compensate those whom they wished to deprive of their licenses, although they themselves would have been greatly benefited by the transaction. Again in the Protest (page 13) are the following striking words "Mr. Russell has explained that since Sunday Closing came into force, 559 drinking shops have been suppressed in Dublin. We admit the truth of this and think the explanation very valuable as shewing the real sources of drunkenness, and how that evil can be dealt with, apart from Sunday Closing?" Precisely so, Mr. Edwards; let drinkingshops be closed every day, there will then be no necessity for a special Act to close them on Sundays. "Those 520 houses," continues the Protest, "ought never to have existed, and we supported Mr. Meldon's Bill, which has almost annihilated them." Mr. Edwards and his friends are practical prohibitionists. What compensation then was given by the Bill which they supported? Absolutely none! Not one penny, though the people from whom a trade was taken, were poor and needed it, far more than the gentlemen who can spend a thousand pounds in furnishing and fitting up their houses for public accommodation. But it was just this that made the difference. These dispossessed people had houses that were rated at less than £15 per annum in town, and £8 in the Country: they were only sweeps and scavengers, and costermongers, and coal-heavers, and cobblers, and errand men. (Loud laughter and cheers.)!! Mr. Edwards is in favour of one law for the rich and another for the poor. Indeed it is because the liquor trade is so rich that we are warned against lifting up our hands against it. Professor Leoni Levi has stated that more than £117,000,000 is invested in it. This no doubt is true, but it is not so invested that it would be all lost if the trade were abolished. At least £51,000,000 of the £77,900,000 which he estimates as the fixed capital of the trade would be available for other purposes, and out of the £78,400,000 which he represents as its floating capital, no not more probably than one half would be lost. But this is not a question into which I care to go. We say, and prove, that their business is a nuisance and a curse, and the bigger it is, the bigger the nuisance, and the bigger the curse. How great it is, none but those who live amongst the people, as the clergy ought to do, know, and, now mark well these words, they are from the Protest (Page 8.) "What happens in connection with the drinking habits of the people, the abuses which occur and their attendant evils, these are matters

which no legalised method of public supply will ever be able to prevent or considerably to influence." That is our case. That is what we say, and, therefore, we demand, in the name of simple justice, that at least, in places where a majority of the people desire to do without it, there shall be no method of supplying it at all. If, indeed, strong drink, like speech, were essential to society, we should have to put up with the evil for the sake of the good which it does; but if it be not necessary, and the existence of some 3,000,000 of teetotallers, no less intelligent, or vigorous, or clubbable than other people, proves that it is not; and if the miserable consequences of it be equal, as Mr. Gladstone has told us, to the woes which war, famine, and pestilence combined, inflict on other nations, we should be foolish and inhuman not to endeavour to get rid of it. (Loud applause.) Are these words an exaggeration? Listen: a few weeks ago a woman, in Chester, returned home intoxicated, she found her little child of 14 months old in charge of a neighbour; going to his cot she lifted him up and deliberately put him upon the fire; her friend was just in time to save him; again she seized him and thrust him back into the flames; again her friend rescued him, and then the infuriated mother took the kettle and poured boiling water over her little one and her friend. Oh! when you talk about interference with liberty and the rights of man, have you no thought of the tyranny which strong drink exercises over the minds, even of gentle women, and of the wrongs which it inflicts upon innocent children? is the only liberty which Englishmen can understand, the liberty to use alcohol, and the only tyranny which they dread, the tyranny of being deprived of it? Ah! often and often in some humble cottage, where the hardest labour can just supply the scantiest fare for a large and growing family, have I watched with admiration a poor mother, her eyes sparkling with love and delight, dance and dandle her laughing, crowing child, as proudly as if he had been born in a palace and were heir to a noble title and a great estate; and the words of Holy Scripture have come into my mind—"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" The story which I have told you suggests the context—"Yea, they may forget." Forget! Under the influence of a noxious drug which we permit to be widely circulated, and for the sale of which we license houses all the country over, they may hate, and starve, and mutilate, and torture, and kill him. My God! when shall these horrors cease from amongst us? When shall the spirit of Thy dear Son so permeate all hearts

in this professedly Christian land, as to prevent men in the outraged name of freedom from defending the direct cause of such appalling atrocities. "Lord! how long wilt Thou look upon this? Oh! deliver my soul from the calamities which they bring upon me, and my darling from the lions." My God! Thou hast promised, "Yet will I not forget Thee." I believe it, yes, I do believe that this grand and mighty movement which I am here to advocate this evening for the extirpation as

soon as may be, of a pitiless, unnatural vice, a movement which year by year is gathering volume and force, and is destined ere long to sweep away with irresistible might all the artificial barriers, which now impede the virtue and prosperity of the people, is but one of the rivers, pure as crystal, which have their source in the boundless, infinite, unforgetting, compassion of our God. (Loud and protracted cheering.)



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