

EDITORIALS.

STRONG DRINK.

PERHAPS there is not a more positive and pitiable demonstration of the weakness of human nature than the hold which the taking of intoxicating drink has upon those who have been foolish enough to contract the habit of drinking the same to excess. Instances are not wanting where the appetite for strong drink has recked men, and women too, of splendid natural abilities, extensive and varied culture, brilliant accomplishments, great intellect, fine parts, even genius. Truly enough does poor Rip Van Winkle tell his child that a man in such accursed thralldom would cut off his right arm for a continuation of the damning supply.

But the question of how to prevent men making such abject slaves of themselves is a very difficult and perplexing one, and as yet it is far, very far, from a satisfactory solution. In the east the prohibitory policy has been tried, but with not very satisfactory results. Massachusetts has tried it, is now trying it, but with no flattering success. Mr. Martin Griffin, in resigning his position as a member of the Massachusetts State Board of Police Commissioners, writes to Governor Washburn in the following style: "Satisfied that the most earnest and conscientious efforts are comparatively futile, and that the law, its mode, manner and agencies of execution are not instruments of justice or temperance, I beg leave to tender my resignation, to take effect on the 1st proximo."

Mr. Griffin further says—"I am now fully convinced that the prohibitory law, as it now stands on the statute books, is detrimental to the cause of temperance, and that it leads to corruption and inefficiency." In regard to the officers, he stated that complaints were daily made against the constables, and that a great portion of the time of the commission was spent in investigating charges of malfeasance against officers. He firmly believes that a good licence law would be the best means of arriving at the results now desired by temperance people.

We have a license law here, and even that is fiercely opposed, both in private and in the courts. That there should be some sufficient method of regulating this liquor business, is patent, and no good citizen will set his face against any reasonable legislation to accomplish so desirable an end as the prevention of drunkenness, so far as can be. In Massachusetts, according to Mr. Griffin's reported experience, it is not the weakness of drunkards so much as official corruption that renders the Massachusetts law comparatively inoperative. Here it is chiefly the corruption of the friends (enemies, really) of the drinkers and of judicial officials that causes what difficulty there may be in the endeavor to more satisfactorily control the liquor business and prevent drunkenness.

OCEAN MAIL STEAMERS.—The Washington Star gives the following list of steamers and lines contracted for to carry the ocean mails from New York for Europe, for this present month, the contract it is said, being given mainly on the basis of speed—"Holsatia, American Packet Co.; Baltic, White Star Line; Rhein, North German Lloyd; Wisconsin, Williams & Guion; Calabria, Cunard; Cambria, Hamburg-American Packet Co.; Oceania, White Star; Weser, North German Lloyd; Nevada, Williams & Guion; Algeria, Cunard; Hammonia, Hamburg-American Packet Co.; Republic, White Star; Nurnberg, North German Lloyd; Manhattan, Williams & Guion; Russia, Cunard; Silesia, Hamburg-American Packet Co.; Adriatic, White Star; Main, North German Lloyd; Wyoming, Williams & Guion; Herder, Eagle Line; Java, Cunard; Trisia, Hamburg-American Packet Co.; Celtic, White Star; Donan, North German Lloyd.

Some of the vessels named are certainly not among the fastest afloat.

LAW QUIRKS.—The opinion of the City Solicitor of Boston, Mass., that the women recently elected as members of the school board of that city, were ineligible on account of their sex, is said to have been based on a decision of the Supreme Court of the State, that females cannot hold the office of justice of the peace. But it is believed that the elected women will be admitted under the State statute which provides that the board shall consist of "any number of persons divisible by three."

The ladies elected are described as very intelligent and capable, and it is hoped that they will have the benefit of any doubt, and be permitted to serve in the office to which they have been elected.

RUNNING RASCALS.—There are a great many rascals in this country, and they do not all belong to the poor and uneducated, by any means. Many of them find their way into public and other offices of trust and importance, and after carrying on their games of dishonesty and swindling, suddenly disappear about the time they are particularly wanted by the officers of the law. Some hide in their own country, but it is not very safe to do so, consequently others run off to Canada, though they are not entirely secure there. Others, still, more thorough in their endeavors to escape punishment for their crimes, take ship and cross the sea to a foreign country. America, at one time, was the great country of refuge for British and European criminals, who incontinently left their own country for their country's good. But steamships and telegraphic cables and extradition treaties have made such escape dangerous and uncertain, and there is much less of it attempted now than formerly. From this country, criminals who are determined to escape capture are more likely to direct their course to a country with which the United States has no extradition treaty, such as one of the Central or South American States, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Russia, etc., where the fleeing criminals hope to find secure refuge.

To prevent as much as possible this running away, it is suggested either that the United States Government endeavor to speedily procure extradition treaties with such foreign governments as are not now so connected with the United States, or the negotiation of a universal extradition treaty by a congress of representatives of all nations, between each and all of which powers such treaty to be binding. That would lessen the chances of the escape of rascals, and it might or might not result in the increase of rascality in this country. There is enough of it now, Heaven knows.

BEAUTIFUL AND BEAUTIFUL AND LOVELY.—This is the kind of reading that so delightedly interests some of the ladies, and we take it from the Washington Star of Dec. 31—

One of the most beautiful brides that the sun ever shone upon was Miss Hebe Gedney Barney, who was married last evening at 6 p.m., to Mr. Jas. C. Haynes, of New York. As the bride, in her rich robe of white silk with long train, which she managed most gracefully, passed up the aisle of the church with her gallant-looking husband, murmurs of admiration escaped from many lips. The toilette, of silk, illusion, and flowers, divided the admiration of the audience.

One of the most beautiful weddings that ever took place in this city was that of Mr. William Oswald Charlton and Miss Mary Campbell, which was solemnized at St. Matthew's church at one o'clock this afternoon. The bride's exceeding loveliness is too well known in Washington to need any mention here. Let it suffice to say that in her bridal toilette of pure white she made a living picture which those who saw can never forget. Her dress was of illusion, with sprays and wreath of white flowers. Similar flowers fastened on her veil, pearl ornaments, and a superb bouquet fan, and exquisite lace handkerchief completed the toilet. The groom wore the English morning dress, as also did the "best man," Captain Charlton, of the British army, the brother of the groom. Eight lovely young girls attended the bride. These were Miss Katy Wise, Miss Charlton, Miss Cotts, Miss Sally Fredlinghuysen, Miss Edith Fish, Miss Freeman, Miss Nina French, and Miss Daisy Davis. The dresses of bride and bridesmaids

were all from Paris. The latter wore Paris muslin, with puffs and ruffles of the same. Four of the bridesmaids wore pink flowers and four blue. Each carried a magnificent bouquet, presented by the groom, and each wore a locket, also presented by the groom. The lockets worn with the toilets of rose and white were set with pearls and coral; those worn with blue and white were set with pearls and turquoise. The group which stood at the chancel rail, formed a tableau of striking beauty.

The girls who may feel slightly envious on reading the above, will be somewhat mollified by the recollection that the two charming brides were draped in "illusion." Let us hope that the "illusion," either with the brides or the grooms, extended no further than the drapery, not to the character.

CHECK-BANKS.—In England a system of check-banks has recently been inaugurated, which proves to be of great convenience to the public. The chief bank of this kind is situated in Pall Mall, London, but banks all over the country have been placed in business relation with it. The operation of these banks is thus described—

All you have to do, if you wish to begin business with the check-bank, is to send, for example, £10.1s. to the bank; you receive in return a check-book of ten checks each of the value of one pound, which you can fill up and pay away as you may require. Any one will take your check; it is as good as a post office order, and it is much more convenient, safer and cheaper. You have not been obliged to ask any one to introduce you to the bank; your money was your introduction; you are under obligations to no one, and your banking account has cost you only one shilling. You can buy a book of £1 checks, or 2 checks, or £10 checks, all at the same rate. Each check is stamped so that it can only be drawn for £1 or £2, or whatever amount it bears. If your check-book is stolen the thief would probably not know how to sign it; if he did, the bank has a means for detecting the forgery. Already this new system—simple, safe, cheap and convenient—has won great favor in England.

TOM BENTON'S FAMILY.—The family of the late Senator Benton have not been among the most fortunate mortals of late. Here is a passage relating to them—"Baron Boileau, who was sentenced to imprisonment by a French court for his connection with the Memphis and El Paso railroad affair, is confined in the Conciergerie. Mme. Boileau is at Boulogne. She and her six children live through the generosity of their friends."

The St. Louis Dispatch gives the following particulars relating to Mr. Benton's family—

"Nine or ten years ago Baron Boileau was the French consul at New York city, trusted and respected by the government, and popular and accomplished in his intercourse with the people of America. He married, while consul at New York, Susan, daughter of Colonel Thomas H. Benton. The marriage was a most happy one. Baron Boileau was afterward appointed Minister to Ecuador, and it was while performing the functions of his office in that locality that he was recalled and discharged by the French authorities. During his stay in New York he had become involved in railroad schemes, and had been induced in an evil hour to recommend, in his capacity as an official agent of the government, the negotiation of the Memphis and El Paso railroad bonds. In this he violated the plain law of his country. Rigid in all such matters, the French government carried out the law to its utmost and imprisoned him. Fremont is a brother-in-law of the Baron, and the same court which tried and found his connection guilty also sentenced the general to serve a term of years. He made good his escape from France, however, and in the absence of anything like an extradition treaty will probably keep it good. There was once a period in the affairs of Missouri, when Col. Benton was its political autocrat. Troubles not a few have come to those whom he nurtured and loved. Mrs. Fremont [our Jessie] is the wife of a man who has been declared a felon, because of a speculation which has ruined his brother-in-law, bankrupted his family, and consigned his wife and children to charity. Another daughter, Mrs.

William Cary Jones, now a widow, residing in San Francisco, Cal., has felt almost terribly the misfortune of life, and, though not enduring all the privations of extreme poverty, is supporting herself and children on the small wages paid to her as a teacher in the public schools."

WOMEN ON SCHOOL BOARDS.

THE decision of the Boston City solicitor that the women recently elected members of the school directory of that city were ineligible, was not favorably received there, and it has caused quite a breeze of interest outside of that city. The press generally cordially favors the appointment of the women. The Boston Journal states that the constitution says nothing upon the subject, shows that the general statutes fully warrant the women in taking the positions to which they have been elected; declares that the movement by which they were elected was demanded by the public welfare, and adds—

"The women elected to the School Board will take their places and enter upon their official duties. Then, if anybody wishes to raise the question of the legality of their election, he can do it; but we predict that he will only meet the inevitable fate of those who have undertaken to interpose mere obsolete custom to the irresistible demands of justice and the public utility."

The Providence Journal talks in this wise—

"The Solicitor has jumped at an erroneous conclusion, or some thirty cities and towns have been going on without regard to, or in violation of law. Without having examined the question critically, the appearance of things is that the Solicitor is mistaken. If, however, we come to the real question, whether women should or should not be members of the School Committee, we do not see how there can be two opinions. Taking this as an abstract issue, entirely separate and apart from others, collateral or otherwise, few would be inclined to doubt that the presence, the intentions, the judgment of women, as to children and their management and teaching, would be beneficial. Here, more than anywhere else outside of the family, does their peculiar and excellent ability attach. Nothing, upon the face of it, is more absurd than to say that nine-tenths of our school-teachers shall be women, and that women are unfit for members of the School Committee. If it shall prove that the Solicitor is technically right, which we doubt, still the result will be that the Legislature will make women eligible. But if the Solicitor is right, the Legislature can do no such thing, because the objection is a constitutional one. If this is not so, the Solicitor is wrong, and no new law is needed. Mr. Healy, we guess, has gone beyond his jurisdiction."

The Charlestown Advertiser, though with a wry face, accepts the policy as being likely to prevail—

"Women are not entitled to seats in the School Board, according to an opinion asked for by the school committee of Boston, and rendered by city solicitor Healy. We think that women can be far better employed than in legislating for the public schools, but still we doubt if the opinion of the city solicitor of Boston will go far, since the women have been elected to the committee almost unanimously, and are not prohibited from acting under the Constitution. Then again public opinion is getting to be pretty good law, even though in this case it is only a weak piece of popular sentiment born of a few weak souls who own neither babies nor lap-dogs, and appear to have nothing else to do but to crave notoriety by drinking tea at club-rooms and getting their names in the newspapers. The first baby always cures the suffrage question, and since such is the fact, the duty of all sensible masculines is apparent; and pray don't waste time in appealing to their judgment. Swear solemnly that Woman Suffrage will set the world right, and then send forthwith for the orange blossoms and the clergyman."

A correspondent of the Boston

Woman's Journal is satisfied that things will work right—

"It is so eminently fit that women should hold responsible places whenever the interests of children and young people are concerned, that there is no doubt of the final result in this city. The public opinion will sustain the appointments, and four very excellent and superior women will bring their large experience as educators for the benefit of our public schools."

The new constitution of Pennsylvania makes women eligible to hold any office on school boards, and the Philadelphia Press expresses satisfaction with the provision, and thus comments upon the Boston case—

"Women will, after the first of January, be eligible to any office of control or management under the school laws of Pennsylvania. There is an eminent fitness in this provision of our new Constitution. In the public schools a majority of both the scholars and teachers are usually of the female sex, and there are no duties connected with the office of director for which an intelligent lady is not rather better fitted than the average man, especially if the latter be a politician. We may expect hereafter that School Boards in this State will contain at least a minority of ladies, and in consequence be more zealous, considerate, and efficient than hitherto. In Boston, at the last election, four women were chosen school directors by very large votes, but the city solicitor has decided that 'in my opinion women cannot be legally elected to or perform the duties of that office.' In consequence there is a commotion among the 'strong-minded,' and the end is not yet. It seems that the Constitution of Massachusetts says nothing about the office of school director, and the general statutes prescribe no qualifications which the fair sex may not possess. The Supreme Court of the State, however, recently decided that women could not legally officiate as justices of the peace, an office recognized in the Constitution, and the city solicitor has applied the reasons given in that decision to the present case. But it is safe to predict that he will be overruled or ignored, and that the four Boston ladies will serve."

Of course we fling up our hats for the ladies, for we know that they would spend their last cent for us.

"IRREGULARITIES."—Says an exchange, "Irregularities in the conduct of bank officers are becoming alarmingly frequent."

A very mild term for a felony, a crime, worthy of severe and protracted punishment. This matter of unfaithfulness in offices of trust is one of the greatest curses to this nation, and should be promptly and rigidly dealt with, and faithfulness in office should be correspondingly encouraged and rewarded. The poor loafing vagabond who steals a dollar is made a public example of, while the corrupt official, who embezzles or otherwise misappropriates thousands of dollars, is frequently let down so easily that he hardly knows he has fallen, and is scarcely hurt in the least, his moral cuticle not showing the slightest abrasion.

Crime is crime, corruption is corruption, whether in high or low life, but in the former case it is always more dangerous and often infinitely more disastrous, than in the latter. Therefore, it should be more certainly, promptly and severely punished.

HARD TIMES.

Of late years Nottingham has been one of the most flourishing towns in England, the lace, hosiery, and ribbon trades having been largely instrumental in multiplying the prosperity of that growing and attractive place.

Before the recent sharp rise in the price of coal and many other necessities of life in England, an empty house in Nottingham was a rarity, almost a wonder, and was snapped up by an eager tenant in "less than no time." Fair wages