

OUR CHICAGO LETTER.

During the past two weeks a war of a rather unique character has been in progress in this city. Locally it was characterized as the "beer war." Today the war ended, for the present at least. It will be remembered that some time ago a syndicate of English capitalists obtained control of a number of our largest breweries. These were all reorganized and incorporated under one title known as The United States Brewing Association. This powerful company at once commenced to pave the way for a great brewery trust. It began to cut prices in a quiet way. It turned out beer made from corn instead of malt. Of course it was fast gaining a vast trade and quietly sapping the foundations of the smaller brewing firms both in this city and Milwaukee. But the small firms aroused themselves and began to turn out pure unadulterated beer and sell it openly at \$5 a barrel. The market price was nominally \$8 a barrel. The syndicate at once cut their prices openly to \$4 a barrel; and for two weeks the saloons have been reaping the richest kind of a harvest. Notwithstanding the cut prices, beer was sold over the bar at the usual figures. Glasses contained as much foam as formerly. The "growler" was not filled any higher. Here then, was a case where the producer was plucked and the consumer not benighted, while the middleman waxed fat. Finally the brewers "took a tumble" to themselves, and to-day put the price of beer at \$6 a barrel, this figure to be maintained for two weeks, when the price will be advanced to \$3, the normal rate. But it is supposed that if the small brewers can be got to sign an ironclad agreement, or permit themselves to be swallowed altogether, that the price will go up to \$10 and possibly \$12 per barrel. It is reported that his conscience smote one republican during the war and that he advertised two glasses of beer for five cents, but the brewers refused to supply him until he pulled down the generous placard. With beer made from corn and sold at \$12 a barrel there is a bonanza in store for stockholders in the U. S. Brewing Co.

Beer is also causing a mild war of another kind in our city. Englewood was formerly a suburb of Chicago, and it was a close prohibition town. When Chicago absorbed all her outlying towns a year ago, Englewood consented to an annexation on condition that her prohibition regulations would be recognized under the municipality of Chicago. A few days ago M. J. Morrison was refused a saloon license, and he then resorted to the courts to compel the mayor to grant him a license. Feeling runs high over the license in Englewood. If the saloon is opened even with a license duly granted it is certain that the house will be wrecked and its contents scattered to the floods and winds. And Mr. Morrison is likely to have "a head put on him," Michael J. Morrison is a branch of the Arizona judge's family of that name. The Morrison

family are all publicans and politicians, and odious, aggressive and offensive ones they are.

Though the saloon was hitherto unknown in England, yet the "Club" was a recognized institution. A few persons obtained a State charter and organized as a club, but really as a saloon. The keeper was denominated president and his bartender steward. A nominal fee was imposed for membership, and members only supplied. But latterly even these restrictions were disregarded, and any person who had ten cents could get a measure of corn juice. The reporters and police visited the so-called clubs and obtained drinks without any formality. Even throwing dice for drinks was practiced openly. The clubs, of course, paid no license, and when the "presidents" were occasionally fined, the fines were paid and no reform effected. The moral and religious element of the community is terribly exercised over this state of things, and well it ought. The brewers, distillers and saloon keepers are becoming lords of the realm, and in a short time pork barons and board of trade kings and government contractors will have to give way to Bacchus, Gambrinus and Kentuck.

Have serious persons stopped to consider the extent of the liquor industry, or rather liquor iniquity, in the country. According to the report of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, 27,000,000 barrels of beer were consumed in the United States during the year ending May 1, 1890. The *Brewers' Journal* is jubilant over the returns of the revenue department. Proudly it says:

"And very creditable returns they are. For the year, in spite of a cool summer, of fanatical intolerance and so-called temperance opposition—directed most virulently at the true temperance beverages—sales of malt liquor increased during the twelve months by 1,722,118 barrels, amounting altogether to 26,820,953 barrels. How these returns compare in the various States with those of preceding years our first table fully reveals, nor is it a difficult matter to trace the increase when in six States the amount of malt liquor sold and consumed has grown by upwards of 150,000 barrels in twelve months, two of them showing an increase of nearly double this quantity. The banner States for 1890, each of which brewed more than 1,000,000 barrels during the year just closed, are:

New York increase	235,829 barrels.
Pennsylvania "	203,271 "
Wisconsin "	191,688 "
Ohio "	187,641 "
Illinois "	179,820 "
Missouri "	152,581 "
New Jersey "	144,673 "

"The Empire State very properly leads the van, close pressed by Pennsylvania, worthily following the example of her founder, himself a brewer and a firm believer in John Barleycorn, thus piling up a further protest against prohibitory amendments on top of the big majority with which she recently put the prohibition advocates to sleep. Our Western sisters have done nobly for Gambrinus, and New Jersey proves her right to membership in the 'brotherhood of beer.'"

Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, Vermont and Maine

are the six States which brew no beer. The *Journal* apologizes for the first four on account of climatic disadvantages, and for Vermont and Maine it says beer is too inconvenient for the lawbreakers to handle without detection. The *Journal* deplores the fact that production and consumption have fallen off in ten States owing to "tyranny, hypocrisy, humbug, intolerance, and to the enactment of prohibition fanatics."

27,000,000 barrels at \$8 a barrel makes \$216,000,000 paid for beer by saloonkeepers, which quantity retailed over a bar will net about \$324,000,000. It is estimated that there is a profit of 50 percent in beer to the brewer. The saloonkeeper has 50 per cent more, and to the beer-drinker gets slop for his money, slop that would make hogs sick. Add to these figures the whisky returns, and then ask yourself seriously is the prohibitionist wrong, or is the country going to old Nick?

Prominent politicians from other States, and especially from the South, are anxiously sought after at the hotels by newspaper men, in order to obtain from them opinions on the Lodge Federal Election bill. John M. Thurston of Omaha, president of the National League of Republican Clubs was interviewed today on the Lodge bill. Mr. Thurston says it will pass the Senate. He says that a congressional reapportionment bill will also be passed this session. He says the republicans will carry Nebraska this fall. He says the Farmers' Alliance is quite strong in his State, but that it is divided by former democrats and former republicans each seeking supremacy.

Mr. Thurston further says that republican clubs are being organized in the South, one hundred such being started in Florida alone within the past few months. These are waiting for the Lodge bill to become a law when they can claim federal protection. The white republicans in the South need protection as much as the colored ones. He says the South cannot afford to boycott the North because northern credit, capital and commerce make the business vitality of the South. He says:

"If the boycott plan was ever attempted Northern credit and business would be withdrawn from the South and the South can't afford that. Why, Secretary Humphreys of our league tells me since the Nashville convention in March over \$5,000,000 that he knows of has been invested in the South either by delegates or their friends who became interested in the South at that convention. The South threatened to boycott us if we did not let slavery alone. Let the South threaten. Southern intimidation or Northern intimidation and fraud as well, if there be such, must cease at Congressional elections."

Southerners at present sojourning in Chicago are averse to discussing the Lodge bill. However, one was found, Charles L. Brown, of Richmond, Va., who says that if the Lodge bill becomes a law, he would not blame the South for refusing to take part in an Exposition fostered by a government which thus insults us.

Charles D. Nave, a wealthy ship-