

purposes, and she is inclined to tell Englishwomen in forcible language that much of the bad dressing which prevails among them is due to this desire for making the same garment serve many purposes. Fitness is one of the most important items in the art of dressing well, and the higher you go in the social scale the better it is understood. Bonnets made of soft undressed leather in *écru*, pink, chocolate, grey, seal-brown, and *bège* are the last novelty in millinery we chronicle here.

Next season in London you will find that startling contrasts will prevail in evening dresses, for the Parisian world are now adopting them, such as pink and green, pink and blue, or straw and lilac. On white dresses, as on cream, wide scarves of crimson silk are carelessly tied across the skirts, a half-handkerchief of the same being neatly pinned sideways on the head with diamond pins. Everything bizarre finds favour,

among them the "Mirliton"—a dress covered throughout with cross-bands of a colour, put on as though they were twisted about the skirt, after the manner of pink and white sticks of sugar-candy. One "modiste" has introduced a novelty in the "Buisson," generally made in tulle, the flowers so scattered over it that it looks as if the wearer had been into the woods, and the flowers and leaves had become entangled in it.

In the make of dresses generally, the chief features are narrow lace flounces arranged one over the other, belts worn with basqued bodices, high bodices with yokes, and low bodices with points.

The "Empress" is another of this season's creations, and is a marked contrast to the "Princess;" it is not caught up, but falls in graceful folds. It is short in front, and has a tablier and side trimmings, the back totally untrimmed.



COFFEE TAVERNS.



AMONGST the many attempts, some to abolish and some to moderate the consumption of alcoholic drinks in this country, few deserve more attention than those which provide the comforts and attractions of a public house in some other form and with less pernicious surroundings.

Most of the really formidable evils of modern society are the immoderate extension of a popular want, and in the case of the liquor traffic this is pre-eminently so. We sit in our comfortable and well-lighted drawing-rooms, and regret that the lower orders of society frequent public-houses; but we forget that humanity craves a change of scene after work, and if there is no alternative but a public-house, to a public-house humanity will go. It is proof of the practical necessity of some place of evening resort that the publican, particularly in London, can do so little for his customers and yet command so extensive a support.

With a view of counteracting in some measure the intemperance spoken of, some institutions have been opened lately by a company formed for the purpose, called "The Coffee Tavern Company, Limited." The object is to furnish a comfortable, cheerful place for working men to use after work or during meal times, where cheap and wholesome food can be obtained, and where newspapers and periodicals can be seen: in a word, to give them light, warmth, and

comfort—without gin. Two such houses are already open and in full working, others are imminent. The largest of the two is "The Market Tavern," in Lower Thames Street, and to this, with the reader's permission, we will pay a visit first. A walk through the City, and down past the Monument, brings us into Thames Street, with an odour of fish hanging about the atmosphere which betrays our proximity to Billingsgate Market. Turning to the left we soon pass its imposing portals, and soon after arrive at the Custom House, opposite to which is "The Market Tavern." The aspect which first strikes the observer is the closeness of its resemblance to those places it is designed to rival. Its external appearance is that of a public-house. Plate-glass front, swing-doors, rows of gas-lights in the windows, attractive drink-bills catch the eye at once. A closer inspection, however, shows that the name of every inebriant is conspicuous by its absence, and it scarcely needs the bold announcement in white letters on a black ground across the front of the house, "No Intoxicating Drinks Sold," to assure the beer-drinking visitor that he is on the wrong tack. Searchers after intoxicating drinks are not, however, necessarily clear-headed, and on several occasions the management has been asked by intending customers to supply beer, whiskey, &c., requests which we need hardly say are not complied with. On one occasion two sailors presented themselves, and, unaware of the social movement which had been taking place in their native land during their absence, entered "The Coffee Tavern" and asked for a pint of beer. The attendant, wise in his generation, promptly drew them some "Lupulum," a newly-invented drink, compounded of hops and soda—a coquetry with beer, as it were—but non-intoxicant. The confiding nauticals drank it up, remarked it was a good drop of beer, asked what was

to pay, paid it, and then further remarking that it was the cheapest pint they had had for many a day, which very possibly it was in more senses than one, they departed contented.

Another announcement stretches across the face of the house that "customers may bring their own food and eat it at this establishment." On entering, one still notices that the decorations and *tout ensemble* of a public-house are closely imitated. The ground-floor consists of one large though rather low room, filled with clean marble-topped tables, with fixed seats to them, which are thoughtfully made slightly tilted back, being therefore infinitely more comfortable than the ordinary narrow straight-backed seat of a coffee-house. Around the walls are hung notices of what drinks are sold, and the prices—a capital bill, with a design of a huge coffee-urn in the centre, announcing coffee as "a special brew for working men." One side of the room is occupied by the bar, which, surmounted by three huge urns for coffee, tea, and cocoa respectively, and attended to by clean white-aproned servitors, looks very inviting and business-like. The wall behind is decorated with shelves, containing various coloured bottles of cordials, &c., and silvered-glass behind doubles their beauty. Along the front of the bar runs an announcement of the prices of tea, coffee, and cocoa, which are for the first-named one penny per small cup, and twopence per large cup, and for the two last one halfpenny, and one penny. And they really are large cups, containing about half as much again as an ordinary breakfast-cup. As to the quality of the coffee, the only beverage upon which this article can pronounce judgment from experience, it was good—that is, it was as good as will be found upon the majority of English breakfast-tables, and much better than most coffee-houses afford.



"DECIDEDLY COMFORTABLE."

might easily be construed as offensive, because superfluous. The view of the room at this hour (8.30 p.m.) is decidedly comfortable. The neighbourhood prevents much business being done in the evening, for most

people employed in Lower Thames Street are anxious to get away as soon as possible, in spite of coffee or any other taverns. The few persons, however, present are either enjoying their meals, which they have brought with them, sipping their tea or coffee, or reading the paper; and one, whose childhood was anterior to Education Acts, travels with difficulty over a sheet of note paper with a scratchy pen, and a penny stone ink-bottle. There is room for improvement at the tavern seemingly in the pen-and-ink department. It is pleasant to miss the noise and bad language of a public-house, and to see men in their working clothes taking the wholesome refreshments as they read or chat. On the second floor of the establishment the same accommodation is provided, but here, after the house had been open a week or two, the management found that such a noisy, rough lot of lads used to congregate, that it was deemed advisable to double the price of the drinks. This has had the effect of rendering the room more select—indeed, it is used a good deal by clerks and others from the Custom House opposite, who appreciate the advantage of a cup of good tea or coffee served with cleanliness and comfort, quite as much as those for whom the tavern was founded. It is, however, rather a matter of regret that, having attracted into its portals such members of society as errand-boys, shoe-blacks, and others of the class, the coffee tavern was obliged to reject them again unless they could find room down below. So many benevolent schemes have been framed and executed for redeeming these waifs from the contaminating influence of the streets and public-houses, and have failed, or been only partially successful, that when the grand step of getting them inside was accomplished by the Lower Thames Street institution, one cannot help thinking an opportunity was lost when their patronage was discouraged by an augmented tariff. It does not, however, follow of course that the company were to blame in the matter, and they may plead that they cannot perform the duties of a refreshment house and a night-school as well. The third floor is naturally much less used than the others, and is laid out as a reading and smoking room. The company are prepared to let this as a board-room for friendly societies, &c.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the place is the capacious kitchen, where the work of tea and coffee making goes on. The tea is made in a large urn by means of a small receptacle for the dry tea, made with wire netting sides. This being suspended in the midst of the water, when the latter becomes heated and boils, the tea gives forth its strength and flavour, but does not leave its wire case, and hence there are no tea-leaves at the bottom of the urn; and when necessary the leaves can, of course, be immediately and easily removed by taking out the vessel which contains them. Coffee is made by pouring boiling water on to the coffee, leaving it to settle, and then drawing it off in large cans, in which it is conveyed up-stairs to the urns on the bar. In the small store-room adjoining the kitchen are barrels of sugar and cocoa, and hams are suspended from the ceiling. Everything is of exceedingly good quality, a very wise provision, for it is

quite a mistake to suppose that working men are content with bad food. They are often obliged to put up with it, but in common with the rest of humanity they like and appreciate what is good. There is a very large stove in the kitchen, where the food which customers bring in

—chops, steaks, pieces of fish, &c.—is cooked at a charge of a penny. A quantity of empty meat-tins, which once contained Australian beef, are piled close by. Everything is good and clean in the kitchen, which says a good deal for the system of the place; for an



"LUPULUM."

establishment of the description which will stand the test of an inspection into its kitchen has a decided claim upon our good opinion.

The house we have just been describing is the second of its kind which has been opened in London. Its co-establishment had a little the start of it, and was opened on the 15th of May, 1877, at 344, Edgware Road, the Billingsgate house having been opened on the 19th of June following. At Edgware Road, in order to suit the requirements of the neighbourhood, the house is kept open considerably later in the evening, and we are glad to say is filled continually with those for whose benefit it was instituted. In appearance it is precisely similar to "The Market Tavern," but has a gayer and more brilliant aspect as the evening draws on. There is the large outer room with its seats and tables well occupied, its busy bar, and active attendants. And, oh, what a relief it is to miss the heavy smell of beer and spirits, the sound of oaths and quarrelling, the drivel of the sot and the slattern, which one had almost begun to fancy were inseparable from such a scene! Here at least is comfort, warmth, *attractiveness*, which is so great a thing, without the remotest possibility, to say nothing of temptation, of intoxication. In the inner back room, too, is a pleasant sight. As you enter, so quiet and cheerful is the appearance of the place and its occupants, that you have the impression at the first moment of having intruded upon a family circle instead of entering a refreshment house. At one table a man and wife, who have apparently been marketing in the Edgware Road, have just sat down, and relieved from their burden of parcels, are refreshing themselves with tea and bread and butter. Others are eating ham and beef, cake, or eggs; and tea, cocoa, milk, lemonade, &c., are being discussed. At another table two lads have finished tea, and with their arms on each other's shoulders are looking through the illustrated papers. Upon the whole scene rests an unmistakable air of homeliness

and enjoyment, which makes one involuntarily wish the Coffee Tavern Company God speed. Up-stairs is a smaller room, filled with youths playing draughts, dominoes, and other games. Free from the restraint of the bar, they are perhaps a little too noisy up here, but this is a venial fault.

It is satisfactory to know that advantageous premises have been secured in Seven Dials, which will very shortly be opened. There will be no lack of ground to work upon, at least, in that neighbourhood; and we are glad, indeed, to welcome coffee taverns as among the reforming influences which in a recent paper we hinted were creeping upon St. Giles'. Westminster, Lambeth, Aldgate, Soho, Poplar, Battersea, and Kilburn are, with other great centres of population and labour, contemplated as places for the institution of our new taverns.

Another most satisfactory thing to record is that other large towns are taking up the movement, and working it out to a practical conclusion. Indeed, Liverpool has been foremost in the matter, and had its "British Workman Public-house Company, Limited," before coffee taverns were initiated in London. At that town the takings of the company mentioned were between £500 and £600 per week, and during the same period 7,000 gallons of cocoa, coffee, and tea were sold. Here, too, the publicans used to come and buy the coffee, in order to put rum into it, and sell it in the early morning on the quay to the sailors and labourers. In Bristol, where there is a public-house to every eighty persons over the age of twenty-one, a movement has been set on foot for the formation of coffee taverns by "The Bristol Tavern and Club Company, Limited," whose prospectus lies before us. A new feature in these Bristol houses will be the supply of rice, porridge, and bread-stuffs, &c., and also the idea of providing respectable bed-rooms at low prices, for the accommodation of artisans and labourers who may be travelling about in search of work.

Such, then, are coffee taverns, destined perhaps to play an important part in weaning the nation from the excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages which it



"LOOKING THROUGH THE PAPERS."

has of late years fallen into. It is superfluous to recommend these institutions to public support, since the public already testify to their utility by freely patronising them whenever and wherever established. Our encouragement should rather be given to the promoters, whose success we hope may invigorate them to further efforts in the same direction. A. H.