

# The Canada Citizen

## AND TEMPERANCE HERALD.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH, 1885.

## MEN, WOMEN, AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

The situation in the Soudan grows hourly more serious, not merely for the British troops on the Nile, but for the British Government at home. At this writing the fate of Sir Stafford Northcote's motion of censure is uncertain, but unless the Parnellites vote solidly against Mr. Gladstone the motion will fail, and failure now means failure for the session which has just begun. The Government have apparently been driven to undertake the task of—to use General Gordon's expression—"smashing the Mahdi," and Mr. Gladstone will have to see that the work is done in no half-hearted way. To temporize now would be to needlessly prolong the war and sacrifice lives unnecessarily. The war must be conducted on a considerable scale; the Government have admitted as much, and if Parliament takes them at their word now they will be allowed another trial. This means that the session will once more be devoted to home instead of foreign affairs, for no expedition can be undertaken against Khartoum until autumn, by which time there will be a railway for some distance inland from Suakim toward Berber. It seems from recent reports that General Buller will be able to make his way back to Korti without much danger, except from bad water and sharpshooters, and the Mahdi is not likely to trust his army to the desert between Korti and Gabut across which Buller is retreating. Wolsley will be able to hold his own at Korti if it is thought desirable to do so, but it is hard to see what would be gained by remaining there. The troops might as well be retired to Egypt proper, until the time comes for an advance on the new line of operations.

Should Gladstone prove once more too strongly entrenched to be dislodged by a motion of censure, it is not likely that his tenure of office will be again seriously threatened. The redistribution bill will probably be passed with as much speed as possible, and both parties will prepare to jump Niagara. The new constituencies and the new electorate are alike uncertain, and the attention and curiosity of the whole civilized world will be earnestly directed to the conflict. The chances seem to be in favor of the Liberals, and especially of the advanced wing led by Mr. Chamberlain. In a recent

speech to his constituents he replied with great effect to those who had condemned him for communistic utterances. He devoted a large part of his speech to proving that the poor under the present fiscal system pay on the average a larger proportion of their income in the shape of taxes than the rich do, the ratio being  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to 6 per cent. In other words, while his poor neighbors pay  $7\frac{1}{2}$  cents in taxes out of every dollar they earn Mr. Chamberlain pays, on his own calculation only 6 cents. This is a most iniquitous state of affairs if it is correctly described, and Mr. Chamberlain's protest against it will appeal with great force to the vast majority of the working classes—all the more so because he is himself a wealthy man.

The other chief topic of his speech was the land question, and in dealing with it he handled it once more in a manner calculated to win the new votes to his support. For what he had previously said he had been taken somewhat to task by Mr. Goschen in Edinburgh. Mr. Goschen is a Conservative-Liberal who is looking to one of the four divisions of Edinburgh for a constituency, and nothing could more clearly show the divided state of the Liberal party than a comparison between his speech and Mr. Chamberlain's. The latter may be trusted, however, to defend himself, and his denunciation of game laws, of laws of entail and primogeniture, and of would-be social tyrants of the Winans stripe will strike a responsive chord in the national heart. In spite of the military spirit which now and then gains a temporary ascendancy, the majority of the British people are opposed to anything like wars of conquest, and the new democracy will soon learn that there are ways of securing a better division of the land of the country among the people who dwell upon its surface. The land-owners who neglect their duties will only hasten a social change which is probably inevitable.

The British Government lost a good opportunity of doing a graceful thing the other day, when they refused John Boyle O'Reilly leave to come to Montreal to lecture to a charitable association. O'Reilly, when a young man, was convicted of high treason in 1866, and was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. In 1869 he escaped and fled to Boston, where he soon, *a la* McGee, rose to distinction as a journalist and lecturer. His coming to Canada could have done no harm to any one, and when he made formal application to the British Government to be allowed to do so, the giving of ready and graceful consent would have tended to smooth away irritation instead of increasing it. The Canadian Government when applied to for permission, readily gave it, but when the home authorities refused to guarantee Mr. O'Reilly against arrest, the projected lecture had of course to be abandoned. Surely it would be better to draw some distinction between a man like him, and one like O'Donovan Rossa.

Speaking of O'Donovan, the question has been raised whether he did not have himself shot, with a view to future financial operations in the capacity of a martyr. It is more likely that his would-be assassin is a person of strong feeling, who had become a monomaniac on the dynamite question, and thought that ridding the world of a monster would be a righteous act. After all it is probably in this direction that we must look for checks on assassination. Operators in dynamite are hard to discover, and their indiscriminate attacks on people who have no sins to answer for, even from the most extreme Irish Nationalist point of view, are very exasperating. In the far west, when the arm of the law is not sufficiently strong to repress horse thieves, the settlers resort to lynching, and on the same principle the assassins are sure to be assassinated whenever public opinion is sufficiently aroused to applaud the deed.

Washington's monument was completed and dedicated a few days ago on his birthday anniversary. In this connection it is extremely interesting to read Mr. Gladstone's opinion of General Washington. In reply to a question from an American journalist in London, Mr. Gladstone says, excluding the last half century from his estimate: "If among all the pedestals supplied by history for public characters of extraordinary ability and purity I saw one higher than all the rest, and if I were required at a moment's no-