

The Canada Citizen

AND TEMPERANCE HERALD.

A Journal devoted to the advocacy of Prohibition, and the promotion of social progress and moral Reform.

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F. S. SPENCE, - - - MANAGER.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JULY 20, 1883.

SOBER BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT.

There are some very common expressions, oft-quoted sayings, that embody serious fallacies. They have an oracular sound, and an aphoristic style, that mislead those who do not take the time and trouble necessary to investigate them. One of these is the title, would-be maxim—frequently used as an argument against the prohibition of the liquor traffic:—"You cannot make men sober by Act of Parliament." We reply:—You must! That is what Parliament is for. The object of law is the well-being of the community; the protection of the rights and interests of the individuals that constitute society. Now a drunkard is a danger to society. The inebriate without mental restraint to control his inclination to crime is, as far as his fellows are concerned, on a par with the scoundrel without moral restraint to keep him from crime. Both must be dealt with by the same authority, that is, by law. We have laws framed expressly for the suppression of gambling-houses, brothels, places for the receipt of stolen goods, and other agencies that facilitate certain crimes; why not for the suppression of the liquor traffic that facilitates drunkenness and all its attendant woes and crimes? True, there are crimes to-day notwithstanding good laws relating to them, and probably there would be intemperance, notwithstanding good laws relating to it. But good laws restrain and minify those evils, so they would this. If we keep drink from drunkards, we make them sober. The drunkard is a danger to society. Law is intended for the protection of society. If law cannot protect us against the drunkard, then government is a failure and legislation a humbug. You must make men sober by Act of Parliament.

LAW DOES MAKE MEN SOBER NOW when it finds them drunk. We would change the plan of doing it, because the protection to society, thus secured, is only temporary. We want it permanent. Who ever heard of fines or imprisonment curing a confirmed drunkard? We complain of the present *expensive* system, because it is ineffectual, and plead for better and cheaper protection, by the simple method of *locking up the drink instead of locking up the drunkards*, or fining them, generally at the expense of those who are already the greatest, and often innocent sufferers.

LAW WORKS AGAINST CRIME in two ways. It provides deterrent and reformative penalties. It also provides preventative enlightenment and education. It assumes that intelligence will act in discernment of the nature of wrong, and moral principle will impel to avoidance of it; so it furnishes agencies for the development of intelligence and moral principle. Drunkenness

prevents appreciation of the penalties, and destroys the intelligence and moral principle. If the operation of law is to be effective at all upon those who need it most, the counter-working agency must be removed. Law ought to make men sober, because intemperance is the deadliest foe to the carrying out of the object of right legislation. It can do this only by putting down the drink-traffic. Freedom for the right means suppression of the wrong.

SPECIAL ATTENTION is called to some letters under our "Correspondence" heading in last week's CANADA CITIZEN, and in the present number.

MR. THOMSON thinks that the temperance party needs a personal leader. It certainly needs some unifying agency or force. We cannot help regretting that when the new License Act was before the Dominion House of Commons, our temperance representatives, known and notable friends of our cause, were arrayed against each other in the opposing ranks of their respective parties. There was no union of Reformers and Conservatives, rising above all mere sectarian prejudice, regardless of mere personal interests and political connections; Reformers of everything that needed reform, Conservatives in all that ought to be conserved, and anxious to make petty partizanship give way to outspoken maintenance of principle and right. Had this been done the Act would have been even more stringent than it is. A splendid opportunity was missed. There was no one to grapple at the outset, with the first clause in the preamble of the Bill, and divide the House on the statement to which temperance men should never assent:—"it is desirable to regulate the liquor traffic." There was no one to challenge every section and clause to the very end, backed by a following of solid, united, determined men from both sides, that, holding the balance of power, could have stamped the Act with a character that no one could mistake or dispute. Whether Mr. Thomson's proposal be the right one or not, it is certain that he is voicing the sentiment of the temperance community when he says our forces want 'consolidating'

W. A. D. in this number discusses the subject of a yearly ballot on the question of "'License,' or 'no license.'" It is worth discussing. W. A. D. presents a real grievance in his own particular case, and doubtless there are many similar. The new license act goes a step or two in the direction named, in giving a veto-power against the issue of licenses in any polling subdivision, to a petition signed by two-thirds of the qualified electors in the same; but this still involves the labor of getting up petitions, and two-thirds is an unreasonably large number of signatures. Some municipalities will also (if the new act comes into force) have the privilege of demanding a poll on the license question, by a petition signed by one-fifth of the ratepayers, but even then it will require a three-fifths majority to carry "no license," and the provision does not apply to cities. On the whole W. A. D.'s letter presents a serious grievance, for which a remedy ought to be provided. Even those who will not go so far with us as "total prohibition," will admit this. We hope the matter will be discussed.

IT IS INTERESTING and instructive to note the various phases of the warfare in the different countries, and especially the growing popularity of restrictive measures: not only among so-called Temperance people, but with the general public. Witness the following significant figures:—

IRISH SUNDAY CLOSING.—The *Times* Dublin Correspondent says:—"The battle of the publicans and the Sunday closers is being fought out with great determination, and no means are left untried on each side to turn the flank of their opponents and bring public opinion to bear upon their position. A demonstration of an aggressive character was made yesterday by a deputation of electors of the city, who waited on Dr. Lyons, M. P., at his residence, Merrion Square, to state the results of the recent house to house and electoral canvasses held in the metropolis and the four other exempted cities under the Sunday Closing Act. The returns showed that the vast preponderance of opinion is in favor of