

THE CANADA CITIZEN

AND TEMPERANCE HERALD.

Freedom for the Right means Suppression of the Wrong.

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The Canada Citizen

AND TEMPERANCE HERALD.

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Selected Articles.

THE LICENSE SYSTEM.

BY REV. DWIGHT WILLIAMS.

I.

Selling wrong and vile abuses,
Throwing open dykes and sluices,
Till the land with evil surges
And the flood at last submerges
Dainty street and filthy alley,
Sweeping down from mount to valley,
See the great oppression thriving,
Sordid, cruel, and conniving;
'Tis a bald, unblushing cheat,
Tare amid the nation's wheat,
O'er the land with peril driving.

II.

Is the law but in the letter?
Is an evil deed the better
If it come by State permission?
Has the wrong a right condition?
Can you regulate the evil?
Taking tribute of the devil?
Is he less a fiend abiding,
In the council chamber hiding?
Hear him shout Aha! Aha!
In the shelter of the law,
On a wave of triumph riding.

III.

Would the world's barbaric ages
All might pass in rapid stages,

When the license system scouted
Shall from Christendom be routed;
Ring alarms from all the steeples!
Sound the battles to the people!
Till the taunts of heathen shaming
As they hurl at us there blaming
Cease as we the wrong dethrone,
Thence to move rejoicing on,
Freedom to the land proclaiming

THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF EVIL.

Recent exposures of municipal abuses have emphasized the degradation and corruption for which the government of this city has long been notorious. Our citizens smile grimly over the cartoons in the comic papers representing our local rulers as a gang of ruffianly rum-sellers, low-browed, heavy-jawed, ignorant, greedy, shameless in rapacity. The influence of the saloon in politics is a theme so familiar as to be trite. Against that influence efforts are being continually made to array the intelligence, public spirit and conscience of the community. Temperance societies struggle courageously with the gigantic evil of drunkenness. Preachers denounce and protest against it. But it shakes off all the elements ranged against it, and continues to poison, debauch, brutalize all who come in contact with it. The truth is that the nation has not yet taken this tremendous evil with sufficient seriousness. The early advocates of temperance were looked upon as bigots and fanatics. Now the cause has become respectable, but still popular apathy prevails. Reformers, both political and social, begin, as a rule with the secondary instead of the primary causes of corruption. To remove the abuses which choke healthy progress in all our large cities, it is necessary to do more than change parties or modify governmental methods or shift responsibilities. Municipal corruption, crime, poverty, ignorance, immorality, all flourish rankly because the people tolerate Rum. At the bottom of nine-tenths of all the evils from which modern society suffers, this cause is to be found.

It is not confined to the lowest classes. It weakens the purpose of educated men. It palsies the energies of benevolent men. It breeds allies for the powers of evil in almost unsuspected quarters. It generates a spirit of indifference which is as effective against reform as active friendship for intemperance. The ill effects of drink are known to all: noted by scarcely any. The daily journal presents its perennial records of political abuses, of the franchise marketed, of venal ignorance swamping enlightened patriotism, of plundered treasuries and systematic official chicanery and theft, of private defalcation and bankruptcy, of murders and assaults, of divorce and desertion, of profligacy, destitution, suffering and shame in myriad forms, and behind each and all these calamities and evil deeds may be seen intemperance as the prime cause. It is everywhere. It marks and mars in every relation of life. It pursues thousands from the cradle to the grave. It reinforces every malign influence and agency. It baffles all efforts at better things. Yet the public do not regard it as an enemy to be fought with uncompromising and persistent hostility; they even sometimes seem to think that it is better to let it alone altogether.

But there must be much deeper and more general realization of the necessity for radical reform in this matter. The popular conscience