

# 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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TORONTO, FRIDAY, APRIL 24TH, 1885.

## MEN, WOMEN, AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

The Scottish Land League of America is pursuing to some extent the same objects as the Irish Land League, but it does so by different methods. It addressed recently a formal letter by the hand of its Secretary to Mr. Gladstone, and this document is singularly moderate in tone as compared with the Irish League manifestos. The letter reminds the Prime Minister, in terms of manly appreciation, of his former efforts on behalf of human freedom—specifying the Irish Church disestablishment bill, the Irish Land bill, and the recent franchise bill—and also of the readiness with which he issued a Royal Commission to inquire into the grievances of the Scottish Crofters, and of his promptitude in promising to bring in a measure based on the Commissioner's report. The letter winds up with the following appeal and assurance, which are alike creditable to the men who promulgate them, and honoring to the man to whom they are addressed:—

We are convinced that the time has come to deal thoroughly with the acknowledged grievances of the Crofters, and as we have the utmost confidence in you as a man of sound principle, as a statesman of consummate ability, and as one above all whose life is ruled by the spirit of Christianity, we feel assured that you will not only accept our assurances of good will, but also give due weight to our wishes. Her Majesty's Government may rest assured that the Scottish Land League of America will ever use its influence to consolidate and perpetuate the friendly relations now existing between Great Britain and the United States.

The appeals of the Irish Land League in America are backed up with threats of dynamite, which are apparently connected with such fiendish atrocities as the attempt to blow up the Tower of London and the Parliament Buildings. If the Irish people on both sides of the Atlantic would deal more fairly with Mr. Gladstone and the English Liberals they would win friends instead of alienating them. There are growing signs that their violence is doing their cause very serious injury in America. Many of them abandoned the Democratic party at the late election to support Blaine in the well founded hope that he would not mind giving the British lion's tail a twist now and then to please them. But the solid good sense of the mass of the American people revolted at the prospect, and President Cleveland will give that good sense steady and firm expression for the next four years. By that time, let us hope, the causes which brought the Irish and Scottish Land Leagues into existence will have to a large extent become matters of history, and that Ireland may be entering on a long period of much-needed rest.

If it is true that some Irish members of the English House of Commons were present when the Prince and Princess of Wales were mobbed at Mallow and Cork, and that they were inciting to greater violence the roughs who threw missiles at Her Royal Highness, the facts are not at all creditable to those gentlemen. It was open to the Nationalist leaders to frown on the Royal party by their absence; it was not open to them to take part in annoying them by vulgar insolence. There is good reason to believe that the common people of Ireland, one of the most hospitable countries in the world, would not dream of insulting a lady, and no one denies to the Princess her title to be regarded as one. It is not unlikely that the London journals did exaggerate the cordiality of the Royal reception and base wrong inferences upon it, but that does not justify such undignified rudeness on the part of the Nationalists. That they have injured their cause by it will probably soon appear. The Prince and Princess will go on with their tour, will be alike affable to the highest and the humblest, and will renew their visit next year. If they do, not all the efforts of the Nationalists can keep them from becoming popular as they deserve to be.

I have been greatly amused with the confusion of thought displayed during the past few days by the promoters of the "Liberal Temperance" movement. Their aim is to prohibit absolutely the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits, and to allow under proper restrictions the manufacture and sale of light wines and malt liquors. This policy has been advocated at several public meetings at the West End, and in the columns of the *Week*, which is persistent in its denunciation of the Scott Act as a specimen of "sumptuary legislation."

The first example of the confusion of thought referred to above, which I shall cite, is the wrong use of the term "sumptuary." The writers and speakers who support the "liberal" movement evidently think that any law which in any way interferences with perfect freedom of traffic in what may be eaten or drunk is an exercise of "sumptuary" legislation. Now a sumptuary law is one that aims at regulating the people's eating and drinking on the score of expense only, and without any reference to considerations of police. This is the view taken by such lexicographers as Skeat, Stormont, Ogilvie, Worcester, and Webster. History affords many examples of such laws, and the *Week* is right in asserting that they have proved failures. Any attempt to limit by law the proportion of a man's income which he spends on food and drink must fail, for there is no way in which it can be enforced.

Another example of confusion of thought on the part of the liberal temperance advocates is their failure to see that all restrictive legislation is *pro tanto* prohibitory, and that a license law is as certainly an exercise of sumptuary legislation as the Scott Act. While I contend that neither of them is so, any one can see that if the Scott Act is a sumptuary law the Crooks Act is one also, though of a less extreme character. I can understand the position of one who is opposed to all legislative interference with freedom of traffic in what is eaten or drunk; I cannot understand the position of those who are willing to confine the privilege of selling to a few favored individuals and yet object, as a matter of principle, to what is only a more stringent restriction.

But worse still—the liberal temperance advocates are themselves the most extreme of prohibitionists in so far as ardent spirits are concerned. They would utterly abolish brandy, gin, and whiskey, while they would allow the use of wine and beer. This would be a most absurd and invidious distinction to make, and those who prefer brandy or whiskey to water colored with logwood have good reason to protest against it. Such a law as these people are asking would be more "sumptuary," in their own sense of the term, than a law prohibiting traffic in all liquors containing alcohol, for the latter would treat all drinkers alike, while the former would make fish of one and flesh of another.

One of the liberal temperance advocates rides one of his own confused notions as a hobby, of which he has a monopoly. He thinks it has been proved that alcohol can be assimilated by the human body and that it is therefore a "food." Scientific opinion has surged backwards and forwards about this point for many years, and probably we have not yet heard the