

The Canada Citizen

AND TEMPERANCE HERALD.

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MEN, WOMEN, AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

There is a great outcry in England against the proposed increase of the tax on beer. The increase has been rendered necessary by the expenditures incurred on account of foreign complications, and when this truth dawns on the mind of the mass of the beer-drinkers, it will go far towards destroying any liking they may have left for a "spirited foreign policy." If the Englishman must pay for Herat with his beer, he will elect to let Herat go.

There is less talk of "sumptuary" legislation among the anti-Scott Act people since I exposed a few weeks ago their inexcusably stupid blundering in the use of their favorite word. They seem to think still, however, that a sumptuary law is in some sense a law to prescribe what shall be eaten or drunk. Supposing this to be correct, a law to permit the use of beer and wine, and forbid the use of whiskey or brandy, would be a sumptuary law of the most invidious kind. If I were disposed to use alcoholic liquors as a beverage at all, I would prefer pure whiskey to either beer or wine, partly on hygienic grounds, and partly because its taste is less repugnant to me than that of wine, while I cannot tolerate beer under any name. Why should my tastes in the matter of beverage be interfered with by those who prefer beer or wine? Such a law as these people ask for is infinitely worse and more tyrannical than the Scott Act, which is not directed against any class in particular, and aims simply at the repression of public drinking places.

One aspect of the beer and wine movement has not been made sufficiently prominent. This is the bad faith of the Legislature, which assumes to emasculate the law after the people have adopted it in so many localities. The Scott Act originated in the Dominion Senate, and was merely assented to by the House of Commons. It was not such a law as the temperance people wanted, but they were told that it was the best they could get, and that they would have to make the most of it before any further concessions would be made. They went to work in good faith and secured its adoption in a few counties, only to find their hands tied by litigation involving the constitutionality of the law. When this was finally affirmed,

the rapid adoption of the law by overwhelming majorities, induced its opponents to appeal once more to Parliament, which now threatens to substitute for the Scott Act an entirely new measure of partial prohibition. The spectacle is a most humiliating one, and the Parliament which would be guilty of such a breach of faith with the people, must make up its mind to be called sternly to account.

It is sometimes asked why, if the brewers are willing to throw the distillers overboard in this struggle, the latter are keeping so quiet, and are even found aiding and abetting the promoters of the wine and beer movement. The explanation is obvious. If licenses are granted to sell wine and beer, the vendors will easily evade the prohibition in respect of whiskey. In other words, under cover of a mere wine and beer license a large retail trade in whiskey will be carried on, and for the privilege of selling it the vendor will have nothing to pay. It would be infinitely better to have the Crooks Act, pure and simple, for it requires a license for all liquors alike.

It is easy to predict with some certainty the future programme of the temperance party in Canada, if the House of Commons endorses the Senate's action in relation to the Scott Act. That Act will be nominally in force in a large number of counties during the next three or four years. In its altered form no one will have any interest in enforcing it and there will be virtual free trade in liquors of all sorts, and no license paid. The demoralization will be so great that the time will be favorable for a general prohibition movement and undoubtedly one will be made. Already the note of preparation comes from St. John, New Brunswick. At an Alliance meeting there, the other day, resolutions were passed affirming that the Senate amendments to the Scott Act were passed in defiance of the temperance sentiment of the country, that neither of the two existing political parties can be depended on to take up and press prohibition as a political question, and that "in the opinion of the Alliance the time has arrived when the creation of a third party is necessary, fully pledged in the interests of a prohibitory law for the Dominion." It will be interesting to note the extent to which the new party will draw from each of the others, and to watch the kind of treatment it will receive from them. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the end of the long struggle is approaching. There is time to do something between this and the next general election in the way of organization, but it will require years of sustained effort to bring to light the full effect of the application of this touchstone.

The young women have carried off their full share of the honors awarded this year at the Arts examinations in the University of Toronto. Five of them take the degree of B. A. with honors, and three of these attended lectures during the session. The names of the graduates are Misses Margaret and Edith Brown of Toronto,—daughters of the late Hon. George Brown,—Miss Gardiner of Hamilton, Miss Langley of Brantford, and Miss Bald of Welland. The last named took Greek and Latin as her honor Department; the other four took the Department of Modern Languages, which includes English, French, German, Italian, and Ethnology. The gold medal for proficiency in Modern Languages was carried off by Miss Margaret Brown after keen competition. In the third year class, Miss Balmer, of Toronto, who last year took two scholarships, came within a few marks of taking two this year, one in Modern Languages and one in Historical and Political Science. She also took honors in Mental and Moral Science, and won easily the Governor-General's gold medal for general proficiency in the work of the year. No more brilliant stand has ever been taken in the history of the University, and it is made still more phenomenal by the fact that Miss Balmer has had no exceptional training, but rather the reverse. In the second year, Miss Spence, of Mount Pleasant, who won a College prize recently in Mental Science, took at the University examination first-class honors in Classics and in Mental Science and Logic,—a remarkable achievement when it is known that she spent the term before Christmas at the Normal School, and did not begin to attend lectures in University College till after New Year. Several young ladies took good standing in the first year.