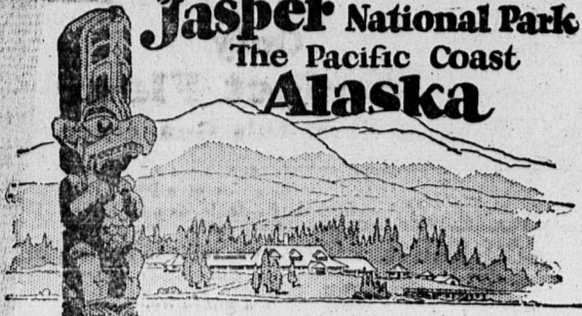


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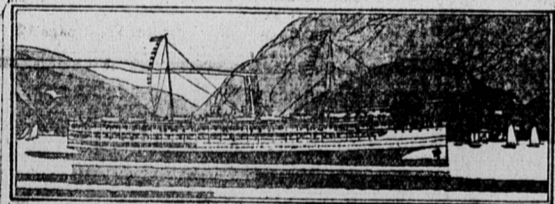
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### A PLEA FOR THE CORRECT USE OF WORDS AS AN AID TO THINKING

The following article is republished from the Casket, a Roman Catholic newspaper published in Anisognish and is addressed specially to members of the League of the Cross Society. The subject, however, is of general interest:—

For really fine unconscious humor the headlines of the newspapers are hard to beat. There one frequently finds that spontaneous explosive and roaring incongruity, the well spring of all laughter, which is so obviously lacking in the made to order "duds" of the smile-columns.

Among the many examples of such headline humor, which it has been my good fortune to discover and enjoy, this inch deep declaration in a local daily of recent date easily "bears the green." Liquor Control Condemned at a temperance meet.

I announced my discovery by a high-pitched giggle which only a totally unexpected and delicious tidbit of humor can provoke. Never have I seen two directly opposite ideas so delightfully combined to produce a roaring incongruity. Let every laugh-enhaloed martyr to an Irish "Bull" extend his hand in greeting to this worthy peer who makes "Temperance Condemn Control of Liquor."

It is passing strange that Temperance, which means control of everything, should be found condemning control of anything. But when temperance in its narrow and popular sense, turns to condemning control of liquor, then the gay little gods of paradox are making merry with the minds of men.

But my first flush of hilarity was followed by a very depressing and even alarming reflection. There came a dark suspicion and it still persists that the joke had failed. If the head line had read: "Firemen Condemn Control of Liquor." I really believe it would have been considered rather funny. Indeed I really believe it would have been considered funnier than the other. And thereby hangs a tragic commentary on current mentality.

Now I know that the writer of the headline was not suffering from any such muddle-mindedness as his unhappy (or happy) combination of words suggest. He was not using the word control in its generic sense, but in its technical application as denoting a particular type of Liquor Legislation. That absolves him at once from the charge of any mental blunder. Certainly I have no intention of affecting to misunderstand his meaning. That is quite clear and according to the condensed manner of headlines, his phrase is perfectly legitimate and intelligible.

But I have a perfect right to take his phrase as it stands, and enjoy it in the sense of a pun. Considered in that light it is a shining symbol of the muddle-mindedness, real or affected, which parades openly through most of the current comment on the present and prospective status of the liquor question amongst us.

#### Confusing the Question

The first feature of the muddle which cannot escape the most casual observer and thinker is the stupidly indiscriminate use of terms which stand for essentially distinct ideas. The words prohibition, total abstinence and temperance are being forever mixed up in the most meaningless manner to the utter confusion of the question under discussion. I will



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not say that those who are misusing the terms are ignorant of their proper meaning. They may be for all I know. But if they are not, then a goodly number of our mentors are deliberately conspiring to create an utterly false mentality in their hearers. At any rate, whether their defect be ignorance or malice, they are poor mentors, and their weird jumble of ideas is intolerable to anyone with a gleam of intelligence, and any sense of the meaning of words.

In this connection it seems obvious that members of the League of the Cross should be capable of thinking straight. They should be able to discuss without any confusion of mind, any question involving the use of these sadly abused words: prohibition, total abstinence, and temperance.

It must be noted at once, that there is no hint of controversy. For the moment is not a matter of judging any form of liquor legislation. It is simply a matter of getting a proper understanding of very fine philosophical question, and grasping the exact connotation and logical relation of certain ideas.

I am at no pains to argue with those who insist on making temperance and prohibition synonymous things. Merely for the sake of stating the truth, let us say once for all that the two things are essentially different both in their nature and their object. Temperance is a virtue which enables a rational being to use something according to reason. Prohibition is an external force which would make any use impossible. To use a rather violent image: There is as much difference between the two as there is between a man deciding to keep his finger nails clipped to a reasonable length and someone else deciding to chop the fellow's hand at the wrist to guard against the danger of developing claws.

But I am interested in arguing with a League of the Cross man who tells me that there is some connection between prohibition and total abstinence, and I have heard just such statement from just such sort of man.

Prohibition and total abstinence are not only essentially different but mutually exclusive. Total abstinence is a work of noble and voluntary abnegation, and from the nature of the case must always be a purely personal act, and indeed a personal glory. Prohibition is an external agency which must always be an impersonal and decidedly humiliating bit of legal paternalism.

Furthermore prohibition and total abstinence are mutually exclusive. If either one were a universal reality the other could not exist. Mr. Hoover realized that truth when he appealed to the American people in his inaugural address to make prohibition unnecessary by abstaining from strong drink. Which is not the least among the funny sayings of this year of grace. On the other hand if prohibition were an actuality total abstinence would be nonentity or rather a relic of the bad old days, when the demon rum was loose in the land.

(Be patient, dear reader, for I am dealing entirely in hypothesis.) In the happy order of the prohibition world it would be empty pantomime for an L. O. C. man to get down on his knees and say: "I promise in honor of the Sacred Thirst to abstain from intoxicating drinks." He might just as well get down on his knees now and say "I promise in honor of the sacred abnegation vegetarians to abstain from nibbling the drumstick of a dodo." For unhappily, that revered bird has become extinct through the operation of some agency of extermination which our prohibition advocates have not yet discovered. As a last word let me say that one who glories in the self-assumed obligation of total abstinence cannot confuse his voluntary act with the oper-

ation of a law which reduces his sacrifice to a mere matter of civic obedience. The fact of a man being a member of the League of the Cross implies no direct theoretical connection with prohibition or any other type of liquor legislation. As a citizen he is bound to obey the law of the land, but his League membership can in no way commit him to any particular governmental instrument. His own promise, if conscientiously observed must regulate his own personal conduct; beyond that it cannot go. And that brings me to another point which I have heard considerable confusion expressed.

I have heard a member of the League of the Cross say that in his opinion the league must in some way be opposed to government control. Now such an opinion albeit honest enough, is simply an indication of muddled thinking. Again, a member of the league by the very nature of his allegiance can have no direct connection with any scheme of liquor distribution. The organization may if it wishes take a stand on the current discussion just as it might take its stand on any piece of impending legislation. But that is an entirely different matter. Members of the league can have no more direct connection arising from the fact of their membership, with government control, than the monks of Buckfast Abbey can have with the proposal to raise the marriageable age in England. The good monks cannot object to people getting married at a particular age, simply because they themselves cannot get married at all. The members of the League of the Cross cannot object to people drinking in any particular manner simply because they themselves are bound by a personal pledge not to drink in any manner at all. They may, and indeed they must decide upon an attitude towards the alternatives in the proposed plebiscite viewed as an objective fact quite independent of their status in their society.

#### LETTER OF SYMPATHY

To Mrs. A. M. Beaton.

Dear Friend:—On behalf of the members of the Flat River—Pinette W. M. S., we desire to express to you our sincere sympathy in your sore bereavement. We feel assured that your brother has gone to a better home beyond, where he will suffer no more pain nor sorrow. We are told that "here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

There is a world above  
Where parting is unknown,  
A whole eternity of love  
Formed for the good alone;  
And faith beholds the dying here  
Translated to their happier sphere.

Signed in loving sympathy, Mrs. John Riley, Secretary; Mrs. Lemuel Compton, President.  
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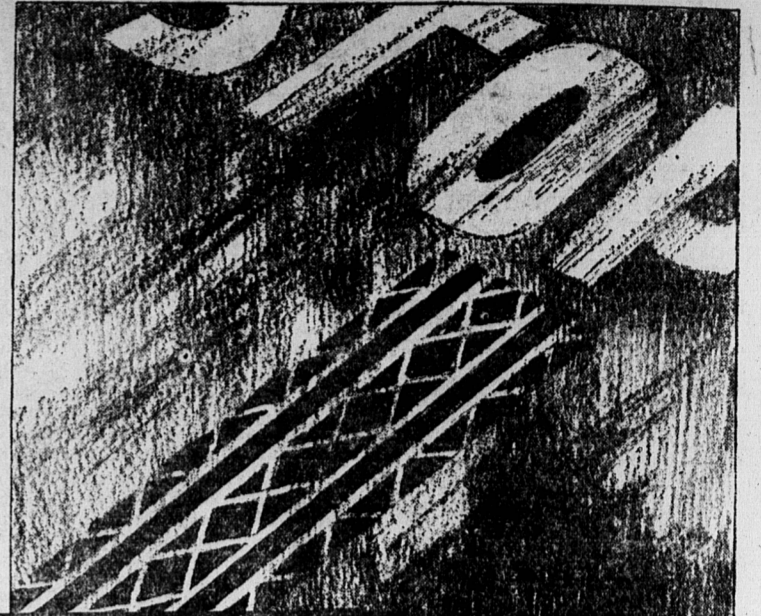
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