

***Glasgow Herald, Monday, January 28, 1856:***

SCRAPS FROM PUNCH

Argyll's Last Proclamation

The Duke of Argyll – the terrible lord and master of the Isle of Tiree, an island at least twice as large as Lincoln's Inn Fields – has been shaking the souls of his island subjects with the thunder of a proclamation. He has forbidden the use of whisky under the pain of dispossession of all lands and tenements. The islanders – according to the insular historian, "M Martin, Gent" – were once upon a time rare boys for good ale, but that time is past. As Wordsworth says –

“It was a jolly place, but now ‘tis curst.”

Argyll's coronet, like a red star, rains baleful influence. In Martin's days, the ale measure “was a third part larger than any he could observe in any other part of Scotland.” The awful Duke has caused the subjoined notice to be affixed to the church doors. As the Emperor of China says – “Read and tremble!”

“Notice is hereby given, that, after this date, no tenant paying under £30 of rent is to be allowed to use whisky or any other spirits, at weddings, balls, funerals, or any other gatherings; and all offenders against the terms of this notice will be dispossessed of their lands at next term. – By order.  
(Signed) Lachlan Macquarie, Factor's Clerk.  
Island House, Nov 16 1855.”

It will, however, be seen that the Duke of Argyll has a sympathetic respect for the rights and privileges of property. Whisky is forbidden to the poor small tenant of £30 per annum; but it is of course allowed to the tenant of thirty guineas: shillings make all the difference.

It is further observable that, although the Duke of Argyll takes due note of weddings, balls, and funerals, he makes no mention of christenings. This is supposed to be an oversight on the part of his vigilant Grace. Every day, therefore, it is expected that an amended proclamation will appear, in which the Duke will not only regulate what is, and what is not to be done, at weddings and funerals; but will also regulate the time of births, and the exact amount of infant population; that is, of course, in so far as applies to fathers and mothers being tenants, “under £30 of rent”.

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[transcription by Jean Little]