

## METHODISM AND TEMPERANCE.

WE quote from the London *Methodist Times* the following vigorous paragraphs on this subject :

"One of the most patriotic and most sacred national duties is to dash our whole weight against the existing liquor trade. Whether an innocuous liquor trade could exist in the millennium is a speculative question which, as sensible men, we decline at present to discuss. What we do know is that the liquor trade as it actually exists to-day is the chief instrument of the devil in resisting the evangelization of England. It confronts us at every turn. It is the ceaseless and prolific source of debauchery, crime, disease, pauperism, and death. The public-house is the very vestibule of hell to the countless thousands of the people. We must declare irreconcilable war against it. We are delighted to know that the great majority of the students at our theological colleges are total abstainers. (In Canada all ministers and members are required to be.) If our young ministers wish to gain the ear of the people, if they wish the working-men to believe in them, they must be avowed and hearty total abstainers. If a man will not even give up his glass of beer or his glass of wine for the sake of his less privileged brother, he may have very excellent theological arguments in favour of his self-indulgence, but the poor will not regard him as their friend. The time has come when nothing except downright, practical, self-sacrificing sympathy can influence the masses of the people.

"But if we smash the liquor trade in the name of the Lord, we must put something else in its place. The public-house is the club, the reading room, the debating hall, the committee room, and the parlour of the working-man. We must give him social and business facilities elsewhere. Why not in our numerous unused vestries? Why not light and warm and beautify a vestry in connection with every chapel, and open it to the working-men? Let them read, and talk, and smoke there, instead of in the public-house. Why not place a vestry at the disposal of every benefit club and trade society in the neighbourhood, so that they may hold their business meetings in that vestry, and not be driven to the public-house? Why not keep a vestry open every day during the dinner-hour, so that the working-men may not be compelled either to eat their dinner in the open-air, in the cold and wet, or to go into the warm public-house? Why not open the chapel every night for a bright and cheerful service, or for a lecture, or for a concert? The minister, of course, cannot always be present. But why not give the laymen a chance? We have entered upon a democratic era. Our chapels must be democratised. The middle classes who built them and once used them had homes and all the comforts and conveniences of home life. Thousands of workmen—aye, and shop assistants too—have no home, in the proper sense of the word. The publican and the music-hall manager have taken advantage of this. Let us provide an innocent and blessed counter-attraction in our chapels and vestries, which have cost immense sums of money, and which are now dark, empty, and useless during the greater part of the week. To sign the pledge is not the end, but the beginning of the good work. To keep the pledge is the great matter, and that is possible only by the blessing of God granted to us when we use sanctified common sense."