

declaration from an official of high station will have distinct influence in the not distant legislation affecting the drink traffic in West Africa.

Tho the colony of Lagos, as elsewhere, must be self-supporting, it is folly, if not contemptible, to fall back upon revenue from drink. Even if the situation is relieved for the present, "it is at the price of ruining legitimate trade and cutting away the roots of all future prosperity." Most conclusively has it been shown that in dealings with native markets the development of the demand for liquor kills the demand for other goods. Proof of this may be obtained from many sources. If, as is argued, in regard to Lagos, that the value of the imports of gin and rum into Lagos for 1893 only amounted to £93,508, while the value of other imports was £749,027, yet the sum spent on spirits is enormous when compared with the poverty of the natives in the requirements of civilized life. On the other hand, the Niger Company, whose territory is ten times as large as that of Lagos and the Niger Coast Protectorate together, shows that it is possible to keep out the drink practically and yet maintain an effective administration without the "stinking" revenue that drink produces. Its annual import of spirits is 163,000 gallons only, as against 2,000,000 gallons imported into the Niger Coast Protectorate and another 2,000,000 into Lagos, while the governor of the company says that during 1894 no spirits were known officially to have entered their territory.

The unreasonableness of the demand for revenue from drink has a powerful object lesson from Basutoland, South Africa, where, by the fact of its geographical position, its absence of a white population, and the enforcement of a law of prohibition, the development of trade and the elevation of the race has no parallel in any other native community in whose midst liquor is freely admitted. Of the whole import trade with British West Africa it is said that one fifth consists in spirits, plus the duty paid by the native consumer, about one third, but, subtracting that portion of the trade which is created by the wants of the white population, it is undeniable that fully one half of the produce brought to market by the natives is bartered in exchange for spirits. In scathing terms Major Lugard exposed, in the pages of *Blackwood* last June, the rottenness of the revenue plea and of the other one, that if Britain did not import the poison France and Germany would. Notwithstanding that the greater part of the spirits imported by the West African colonies are of foreign manufacture, there is no excuse for this wickedness being tolerated by the English Government, by whom the welfare of the native populations are supposed to be protected. A policy of either total prohibition or the enforcement of uniform and far heavier duties throughout the West African settlements is imperatively demanded. The present condition of an unrestricted liquor traffic with a moderate duty is not less vile than short-sighted. Mr. Fox Bourne, of the Aborigines Protection Society, says that if prohibition is "scarcely possible," two thirds of the whole distance toward prohibition may be accomplished by raising the duties with a dimi-