

Friendly societies and charitable institutions are allowed to invest sums not exceeding £300.

The increase of savings banks has been great beyond all expectation. On the 20th of November, 1833 there were 355 savings banks in England, holding balances belonging to 413,014 depositors, which amounted to 13,375,243*l.*, being on an average 34*l.* for each depositor. There were at the same time in W. & S. savings banks, having balances amounting to 361,150*l.*, belonging to 11,264 depositors, being an average of 32*l.* for each depositor; while in Ireland there were 79 savings banks, with funds amounting to 1,380,718*l.*, deposited by 49,312 persons, the average amount of whose deposits, was 28*l.* The total for England, Wales, and Ireland, was consequently 484 savings banks, with funds amounting to 15,715,111*l.*; the number of open accounts was 475,155, and the average amount of deposits was consequently 33*l.* The system has not hitherto been adopted in Scotland, where it appears to be less needed in consequence of the facilities afforded by bankers in receiving sums of money in deposit, and allowing interest on them. The establishment of savings banks in Scotland, would, however, extend this advantage to a very large number of persons who are unable to get together the lowest sum that the bankers will receive on interest. On the 20th November, 1833, there were 211,575 depositors of sums under 20*l.* in the savings banks of England, Wales, and Ireland, whose savings amounted to 1,734,709*l.*, being an average of 7*l.* 11*l.* for each depositor; the smallest sum received in deposit by bankers to bear interest in Scotland is 10*l.*

By a recent act (3 William IV. c. 14) the industrious classes are encouraged to purchase annuities, to commence at any deferred period which the purchaser may choose, the purchase money being paid either in one sum at the time of agreement, or by weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly instalments, as the purchaser may be determined. The transactions under this act are to be carried on through the medium of savings banks, or by societies established for the purpose, and of which the rector or other minister of the parish, or a resident justice of the peace, shall be one of the trustees.

Rules framed in agreement with the statute have been issued by the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt. These rules provide, among other things, that no person being a trustee, treasurer, or manager of the society, shall derive any emolument, direct or indirect, from its funds, that the treasurer, and the paid officers of the society, shall give security for the faithful execution of their trust; that the age of the party, or parties, upon whose life the annuity is contracted, must not be under fifteen years; that no one individual can possess, or be entitled to, an annuity, or annuities, amounting altogether to more than 20*l.*; and that no annuity less than 4*l.* can be contracted for; that minors may purchase annuities. The annuities are payable half yearly, on the 5th January and 5th July, or on the 5th of April and 10th of October. If any person wishes to have an annuity payable quarterly, this object may be accomplished by purchasing one half payable in January and July, and the other one half payable in April and October. Upon the death of the person on whose life the annuity depends, a sum equal to one fourth part of the annuity, beyond all unpaid arrears, will be payable to the person or persons entitled to such annuity, or to their executors or administrators, if claimed within two years. These annuities are not transferable, unless the purchaser becomes bankrupt or insolvent, when the annuity becomes the property of the creditors, and will be repurchased, at a fair valuation, by the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt. If the purchaser of an annuity should be unable to continue the payment of his instalments, he may at any time, on giving three months' notice, receive back the whole of the money he has paid, but without interest. If the purchaser of a deferred life annuity should die before the time arrives at which the annuity would have commenced, the whole of the money actually contributed, but not with interest, will be returned to his family without any deduction. If a person who has contracted for, or is entitled to, an annuity, becomes insane, or is otherwise rendered incapable of acting, such weekly sum will be paid to his friends for his maintenance and medical attendance as the managers shall think reasonable; or any such other payments may be made as the urgency of the case may require, out of the sums standing in the name of the party. Any frauds that may be committed by means of misstatements and false certificates will render void the annuity, and subject the parties offending to be ordered to carry into effect the purpose of this act must be signed by trustees, certified by the barrister appointed for the purpose, and enrolled with the clerk of the peace for the county or division, in the manner already described with regard to the tables of savings banks.

Annuity tables, calculated under the direction of Government, for every admissible period of age, and for every probable deferred term, may be had at the office of the commissioners.

This measure appears to be well calculated for enabling the industrious classes to secure a small provision in the time of their youth and strength, for the days of their age and decline, and for inciting them, while yet unencumbered, to apply the surplus of their earnings to meet the wants of those who may become connected with or dependent on them in after life.

GREAT BRITAIN.

ENGLISH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.—THE REACTION!!—The Conservative journals have been singing Panselately over a pretended reaction in the public mind. According to their accounts, the whole population were disgusted with the Whigs and O'Connell, and on the first opportunity would declare for the Tories with an overwhelming majority! Well, the Tories for opportunity has come. On Saturday last the municipal elections took place in the English burghs, and brought the state of the public mind to the test; three-fourths of the electors consisting of the middle and upper classes, to whom the Tories specially affect to appeal. We subjoin a gaudy sample of the results to-day, and on Saturday we shall have many more. In every large town of which accounts have reached us, THE TORIES HAVE BEEN SIGNALY DEFEATED. In some they have not been able to return a single member to the Town Council; and generally speaking THE REFORMERS ELECTED ARE TO THE TORIES AS FIVE OR SIX TO ONE! This decided demonstration of popular feeling is a triumph to the ministry, and will operate powerfully in keeping the waverers and conformers to their duty. Bravo, Good Members of the House of Commons! Bravo, Good Members of the Conservative—we congratulate you on the thriving posture of your affairs! LONG MAY YOUR SUCCESS BE PROVED BY RE-ACCTION!—*Scotsman.*

The result of the Municipal elections, so far as it is known, is, without exception, in favour of the liberal party! The Tories are signally defeated, not on one single occasion, but in ALL. From their strongest holds, from their best dens of infamy, the "worse people of England" have dragged the Tories, and expelled them forever.—*Globe.*

PETERHEAD, Dec. 24.

DAVIS' STRAITS WHALE SHIPS.—Yesterday morning our town was delighted with the prospect of a whale ship in the offing. A boat was immediately dispatched with provisions; but as the wind was fair, the vessel did not leave to, and the boat never reached her. All the captains and officers of the whale ships, who saw the vessel, seem to have no doubt that it was the Harmony of Hull (one of the best ships); and from the particular appearance of the vessel, they are confident it was her. As she was fast in the middle of the ice, there is every prospect that the others have also got clear; and as the Harmony was one of the vessels reported to be short of provisions, it must be a very gratifying circumstance her having got away.

Duncombe, arrived—having got clear 11th Novr., lat. 64 deg.—was 103 days in the ice without a single accident.

Harmony, reported as in sight from Lerwick. Durdon, Abram, Lady Jean, and Grenville, brigs, of Newcastle, seen on 7th November, 30 miles from the edge of the ice, lat 64, 40, and 70 miles from the western shore.

Norfolk, of Berwick, within a few miles from the edge, 11th November.

These ships had drifted down from lat. 69, 30, where they were beset on the 4th October, at the rate of about twelve miles a day.

[FOR THE BEE:]

MR. EDITOR,

In my last Communication, I took an estimate of the weight of an objection which, with an air of triumph, has been often urged against Temperance Societies, viz: that the advocates of the system would substitute it, as a means of moral reformation and improvement, in place of religion. How utterly fallacious this plea is, I endeavoured to show; and that it does not, in the slightest degree, affect the nature and merits of the cause under view.

The opposers of the Societies in question, frequently seem to imagine that they give them a deadly thrust, when they tell us, that members are often found to violate their own rules. But let us observe how the case stands. It is certainly true, that all who subscribe their names (voluntarily of course) as members of any Society, are, in consistency with themselves,

sacredly bound to observe its regulations. If they do not act according to the self-imposed obligations under which they have come, they do a positive injury to the interests which they have professedly espoused. It must be admitted, that not a few members do disregard the engagements, to which they have formally testified adherence. But where does the whole blame lie? Is any part of it to be attached to the principles of the Societies themselves? These still may be excellent (and their value has never yet been disproved, but much to the contrary demonstrated) although every individual should violate his pledge. Is it an infallible proof, that a law is faulty, because it is transgressed? At this rate, how does it fare with religion itself; for who of us does not in some shape or form, frequently condemn its sanctions? The whole blame therefore of the violation of which we speak, falls on members themselves; and is in no degree attachable to the cause itself. This we regard as the just view of the case. Neither let it be pleaded, that some of the regulations may be unwise, and impracticable; and that therefore violations may be palliated, or excused. Laws the most judicious, affect not the worth of temperance principles. Besides, all who become members of such Societies, have an opportunity to examine, with the utmost strictness every particular statute; to propose any alteration they please, or if they will not observe the regulations, they are at liberty to have their names expunged. No man need be incoherent unless he pleases. The objection therefore which we are considering, is, by the enemies of the system, either ignorantly or maliciously carried too far. All that in justice can be said is, here is a person who has violated a rule which he himself has subscribed; but to hold up this violation as a proof, that the cause is in itself vicious, is very illogical reasoning. It is to confound too things essentially distinct.

But while we view the former objections as utterly invalid, there are, at the same time, among some of the friends of the cause, sentiments and opinions with which we cannot agree. It were to be wished, that these were forever dismissed, (and we hope they are on the decline;) as they are incorrect in themselves, and at variance with the interests which are meant to be supported. To say, for example, that if any person taste ardent spirits, or even take a small portion daily, he must of necessity be a drunkard, is an utter misapplication of language. There are some that indulge selves to the extent now mentioned, all their lives, and never proceed farther, to what the above appellation is always inapplicable. We state the fact. Generally speaking however, judging from the actual results, there is the greatest danger of moderate indulgence terminating in confirmed habits of inebriety. It is for those therefore, who drink but in small portions, to keep such pills fully in view; and without doubt the safest course is, to observe total abstinence.

We have understood, that it has sometimes been maintained, that all such as indulge, even in moderation, are no christians. This we account a very rash observation, and calculated to produce mischief. The fair state of the case is, whether, other things being equal, is the man who observes total abstinence, or he who drinks but in a moderate degree, the better christian; and which of the two is pursuing the safer course. Besides, were the objection founded in truth, practical christianity is but of very recent date in the world; we were all unchristian till Temperance Societies commenced. At the same time, it is for those who bear the name of religious persons, and who, it is hoped are so in reality, to take care, that their hitherto moderate indulgence do not issue in higher degrees, which shall dishonour the christian name, and deaden that piety; which we are most willing to allow, they now possess. The steps to this, although none at present can justly couple their names with inebriety, may unfortunately prove rapid and easy.