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## Temperance Notes.

The fifth International Congress against "the abuse of alcoholic drink" is to be held this year at Basle, in Switzerland. The fourth met at the Hague, in Holland, in 1893, and then accepted the invitation of the Total Abstinence Society of Basle to assemble in August of the present year in the latter interesting city.

In their circular of invitation addressed to members and friends of Temperance and Abstinence Societies—the dual basis being there recognized—the Hague Standing Committee invite all who regard alcoholism as a source of diseases, miseries, and crimes and who see it to be their duty to oppose the scourge from motives of patriotism and philanthropy, to take part in the coming Congress, which will sit on August 20th, and on the two following days.

The deliberations of the Congress are to be classified in two departments, the first dealing with alcoholism in its moral, hygienic, social, and medical relationships; and the second with the means of prevention, suasion and compulsion, to be made use of in combating the enemy.

It has been estimated that Great Britain spends over \$700,000,000 a year on strong drink and only about \$10,000,000 a year on books. As a large portion of the expenditure on books is compulsory, parents being obliged to purchase school-books for their children, Great Britain has nothing to be proud of in the National drink bill. No doubt a comparison between books and beer in our own country would not be encouraging.

The effect of license was plainly seen in Lynn, Mass., on the first day of the operation of the new license laws. Twenty-seven drunkards were arrested that day. That was twenty-four more than were arrested during the entire week preceding.

A law in Denmark provides that all drunken persons shall be taken to their homes in carriages at the expense of the publican who supplied them with liquor. In the Argentine Republic, instead of fining a drunkard, they sentence him to sweep the streets for eight days, and a similar punishment exists in St. Petersburg.

The Countess of Carlisle, in a letter to the *New Castle Chronicle*, denies the assertion that she said she should not object to the sale of intoxicating liquors in the *New Liberal Club* at Brampton if the members themselves decided to adopt such a course. Her ladyship holds that the introduction of strong drink into Radical clubs works havoc and ruin, and she knows that the wives of working men dread those political

clubs in which alcohol can be obtained even more than they dread the public-house itself, because the clubs can keep open all night.

The Temperance Committee of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland have, through Sir John Leng, presented a petition to the House of Commons, in which they say they regard with deep concern the great increase of drunkenness among women. Along with almost all others, they attribute this melancholy state of things to the circumstance that alcoholic liquors and ordinary provisions may be obtained on the same premises, and they hail with satisfaction the introduction of a bill having for its end the abolition of grocers' licences in Scotland.

The yearly meeting of the Society of Friends, sitting in London having received from its representative Committee a report on the opium question, consequent upon the report of the Royal Commission, has adopted the following declaration. "After very careful consideration of all that has been laid before us in the light of fresh evidence as to facts, we are brought to the conclusion that nothing has transpired to shake our deep-rooted conviction that the trade in this drug for other than medicinal purposes is morally indefensible, and that no questions of expediency or of supposed political necessity can justify us in giving the least countenance to that which is the cause of so much evil to multitudes of our fellow men. We therefore desire that the efforts of our own members and our fellow Christians everywhere to bring about the entire suppression of the opium traffic may be prosecuted with unabated vigor until the overthrow of this iniquitous system is complete."

Concerning the drink question in France, the Medical press has the following: "It has often been said that France is a sober country. The fact is true as regards the better class at least. A French gentleman does not drink to excess. He takes his wine or his *aperitif* freely enough but he will not get drunk; the idea of it does not enter his head. Of course there are exceptions, and even these are rare. I regret to say, however, that drunkenness amongst the lower classes is increasing to an alarming extent, and public opinion is being aroused to the fact. The taste for absinthe, the most deadly of all liquors, is spreading rapidly and as a consequence crime and lunacy is on the increase.

A very good authority on this question assures us that fifty per cent of the patients in asylums were absinthe drinkers. The government is studying the whole liquor question at present, and I have no doubt that some means will be adopted to check the evil. Total abstinence societies have been started in several large towns, but their influence is very limited, as the principle is too arbitrary for France. Temperance societies, excluding only alcohol in its varied combinations, would have more chance of success. Wine is the natural drink of the country and forms the complement to every man's principal repasts, so that to replace it by water would require a more than ordinary amount of persuasion."