

Temperance Column.

THE NATIONAL DRINK BILL

DR. BURN'S figures for 1891 are not at all promising. It appears that the drink expenditure in 1891 reached a total of £141,220,675, as compared with £139,495,470 in 1890. The increase on British spirits was £1,333,778, and on beer £1,129,869, a total increase of £2,463,647. On foreign and colonial spirits the decrease was £591,664, and on wine £145,778, a total of £733,442. The net increase was £175,205. The population of the United Kingdom last year, according to the census returns, was 37,740,383, so that the expenditure of 1891 was equal to £3 15s. for each man, woman, and child, or £18 15s. for each family of five persons. The estimated expenditure per head in 1890 was £3 13s., but as this calculation was based on the official estimate of population, which the census proved to have been exaggerated, a corrected calculation would give £3 14s. 4d. per head in 1890, as compared with £3 15s. in 1891. In England it seems the expenditure amounted to £10 1s. 6d. per head, or £20 7s. 6d. for each family of five persons; in Scotland to £3 5s. per head, or £16 5s. per family of five persons; and in Ireland to £2 2s. 4d. per head, or £10 11s. 8d. per family of five.

The aggregate increase in 1891 is greatly to be lamented, but, as it falls far short of the increase in 1889, we may hope that the tendency to increase will now give place to tendency in the opposite direction, grateful to the economist and social reformer, perhaps not even distasteful to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, like his predecessors in office, has publicly deplored the amount of spoil derived by him from the "fatal rush to alcohol." A rush from alcohol would not be described as "fatal," except by those who, though always claiming to enjoy the people's strenuously resist being placed under the people's control.

Dr. Burns, in commenting on the National Drink Bill, says:—"Those who are disposed to attach due weight to the issues, for good or evil, which must result from the wise or unwise expenditure of so vast a sum, can judge what the country lost by its expenditure in one year of 141 millions sterling upon intoxicating liquors. They will not be deceived by such sophisms as that private extravagance and vice are public benefits; or that money is well spent because it circulates in the country and is profitable to some trades; or that because the Exchequer got one-fifth of the total, the other four-fifths were not wasted; or that because an imaginary fractional expenditure by each person on each day will amount to so great a sum in the year, therefore the aggregate is not much to speak of. The facts remain that a vast sum equal to one-fifth of the National Debt, not far from twice as large as the annual national revenue, and compared with which all our boasted contributions to benevolence, science, and education are insignificant, was poured, last year, down the throats of a part of the people,

in the form of liquors which made them neither wiser, nor richer, nor stronger, but, on the contrary, placed fresh burdens on the national shoulders, added fresh stains to the national conscience, and embittered with fresh miseries and troubles the national life.

"There are no doubt some, perhaps many, who will say, 'What is all that to us, so long as we can have our glass and enjoy it?' But I would hope that many more will hold a different language, and will be urged to adopt such methods of reformation as lie within their reach; and such methods there are which all may honourably engage in, and the benefits of which even those who oppose them will ultimately share."—*The News.*

CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

THERE is on branch of the work of the Church of England Temperance Society which deserves cordial support, whatever may be thought of total abstinence as a doctrine for universal acceptance. We have just received from the secretary an account of the work done by its police-court missionaries, which, it should be stated, is recognised and cordially approved by the magistrates at the several courts. The society employs forty-one agents in attendance at the courts for the purpose of taking charge of persons who have come to grief through intemperance, and in other forms of rescue work, the cost of which is about £5,000 a year. According to the figures with which we have been furnished, the missionaries visited at their own homes last year 18,721 cases; 13,290 prisoners were met on their discharge from prison; while 815 persons were placed in homes or restored to parents or friends, these being chiefly young women and girls. Employment, either temporary or permanent, was provided for 1,123, and the number of cases assisted with money, shelter, food, clothing, tools, or stock-in-trade was 10,357. It is stated that these figures are not complete, but they embody returns made by thirty-three out of the forty-one police-court missionaries employed.—*Family Church man.*

A GENTLEMAN sitting in a public room at C.—, where an infidel was haranguing the company upon the absurdities of the Christian religion, was much pleased to see how easily his "reasoning pride" was put to shame. He quoted those passages:—"I and the Father are one," and "I in them and Thou in Me"—in reference to the doctrine that "there are three persons and one God." Finding his auditors not disposed to applaud his blasphemy, he turned to another gentleman, and said, with an oath: "Do you believe such nonsense?" The gentleman replied: "Tell me how that candle burns." "Why," replied the infidel, "the tallow, the cotton, and the atmospheric air produce the light. Then they make one light, do they not?" "Yes." "Will you tell me how they are one in the other, and yet but one

light?" "No, I cannot." "But do you believe it?" He replied: "He could not say he did not." The company instantly made the application by smiling at his folly, and the conversation was immediately changed. This may remind us that if we only believe what we can explain, it will indeed be but little, for we are surrounded by the wonderful works of God, whose ways are past finding out.

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