

evidenced by the enormous increase in the consumption of malt liquors, being 1.87 gallons in 1863 against 10.69

gallons in 1886—would hardly indicate that a high tax on the liquor traffic operates as a temperance measure.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

A Rule for Capitalization.

I HAVE been endeavoring to hit upon some uniform system of capitalization. But I am endlessly bothered by the lack of uniformity in books and papers. Different publishing houses seem to have different rules; nor have I as yet been able to discover a publishing house that adhered uniformly to any one rule. Can you help me out of this difficulty?

A LITERARY CLERGYMAN.

There is certainly very little logic, system or sense in the prevailing customs with regard to capitalization of such words as church, state, court, territory, etc. These words are to capitalization what the words would and should, shall and will, are to grammar—ever-recurring stumbling blocks. For instance, there is the word church, meaning in one case a building; in another case, a society; in another case, a sect; in another case, the universal body of worshippers. In one line it may refer to a particular building, or society, or sect, and in another case to no one of these in particular. The same perplexity occurs in the use of the word state, sometimes meaning a civil division (as Ohio), sometimes the nation as a whole, sometimes civil government in an abstract sense (as, conflict between church and state). All this complexity and perplexity can be avoided by applying to these words the primary purpose of capitalization, which is to distinguish some one object from all others. The chief purpose of capitalization is to designate a Proper name—that is, one's own name (from *proprius*)—and nobody else's.

If this conception is held to, we will capitalize church whenever it is part of a proper name, and at no other

time, as Calvary Baptist Church (whether referring to the building or to the society); the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. But we will not capitalize in the following: No church can exist without the spirit of self-denial. Each church in the Methodist denomination is under supervision of a presiding elder, etc., etc. The same rule ought to apply to the word state; e. g.: The State of Ohio (proper name) became a state (not a proper name) in 1800.

It may be difficult to cite authority for this proposed rule. But it has the merit of injecting system where it is badly needed; of applying to these words the same primary purposes of capitalization which are kept sight of with other words; and it is a simple rule, that is easily adhered to, and requires no exceptions.

The following general rule, if strictly followed, will overcome many a perplexity:

GENERAL RULE. — In general all words which are used sometimes alone and sometimes as part of a proper name or title should be capitalized only in the latter case. Examples: The Mississippi River is a river of vast proportions. A committee was appointed to be known as the Committee on Ways and Means. A new territory was organized under the name of Washington Territory. The Methodist Church is a church of 2,000,000 adherents. The State of Ohio became a state in 1800. So of such words as court, legislature, convention, conference, society, county, island, avenue, street, etc. When these words are used with some designating word, so as to refer to a particular court, legislature, etc., they become part of a proper name and should be capitalized. Otherwise not. So of all titles, such as senator, general, doctor, bishop—e. g.: There is no braver general living than General Sherman.