

## THE ENGLISH DUTIES.

How the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Proposed Increase is Regarded.

OPINIONS gathered in the brewery districts of England show that the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the enormous profits and the capabilities of the trade to bear additional burdens can only refer to exceptional cases, and, in proof, the balance sheets of some recently converted firms are pointed to; while it is stated that even the financial statements of some London houses are not so rosy as Sir William Harcourt would have people believe. The principal complaint of Burton brewers, however, is that, while they have never objected to contributing their share to the National Exchequer, they have been specially selected for attack. One prominent brewer said the inconsistency of the Government's action was remarkable. They brought in the Ceto bill, the effect of which must be a reduction in the consumption of alcoholic liquors, and followed up this futile effort with a proposal to place an additional tax on the produce, while it is stated that the Government intend to obtain a large sum by a new revenue. Why should the French and other wines so largely consumed by the wealthy be allowed to escape?

With regard to the action of lager brewers, nothing has been decided upon, inasmuch as the board meetings are not yet due, but the Budget will form a subject of engrossing discussion when the directors of the various companies meet. It is naturally interesting to learn the extent to which some of the more important firms in Burton will suffer, and it is stated, on indisputable authority, that one establishment will be at a loss of about £30,000 per year, while another estimates it will lose £15,000 per year. "I have nothing to say against the rate of sixpence a barrel," said the director of a great concern; "we shall get it back, either in malt or meal. That is to say, if any one suffers, it will be the consumer, and the producer will be benefited. It is impossible to give exactly the same quality of beer. But it must be understood that the reduction of gravity which would thus ensure would be so infinitesimal in its effect that the consumer will be unable to perceive it."

At a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of the Country Brewers' Society a resolution was adopted deploring the principle adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposing to tax selected manufacturers in such a manner as designedly to prevent the impost being borne by the consumer; denying that the interest earned on the capital of ordinary country brewers and spirit merchants is excessive; and, in view of there being no finality in the attacks of the present Government, and especially of Sir Wm. Harcourt, on trade and agriculture, that a meeting of the society be called forthwith, the object of such a meeting being actively opposing the Budget proposal.

At a meeting of the Central Board of the Licensed Victuallers' Protective Society, a feeling was expressed that it was the duty of the trade to fight the proposed increase in the wine and spirit duties by all the resources at their command. It was resolved to hold a mass meeting of the trade to emphasize this resolution. It was pointed out that the impost would not, as intended, fall on the great brewers and distillers, since brewers had a free hand in deciding the specific gravity of beer, and distillers the alcoholic strength of their products, and needed only to produce a slightly inferior article.

A Glasgow correspondent learns that Scotch distillers will not suffer by the Budget proposals, since it is not believed the consumption will be reduced. The impost only affects those who break bond and sell duty paid whiskies. Neverthe-

less, the impost might be detrimental to distillers of fine whiskies, because wholesale dealers may sell more plain whiskey and less fine. One large Scotch firm has given notice of an increase of 1s. per case of two gallons.

An Edinburgh correspondent says that enquiries among distillers lead to the impression that the proposed increase of duty on whiskey will make little difference to the trade. The increase made by Mr. Goschen made no difference. The new increase means 1d. per bottle; but no actual increase will be made in the price of any measure. The publican will add a little more money when reducing the spirit from proof, and a gill per gallon will make up for his loss. The fact that an additional duty is imposed on beer is regarded as equalizing matters. Among brewers it is considered that the result will be a very considerable diminution in brewers' profits.

The Cork distillers view the increase of duty on whiskey with apprehension, being of opinion that it will for some time greatly reduce, and perhaps paralyze their trade. They will be obliged to raise their prices, and they fear this will result in a large decrease in the consumption before the equilibrium of supply and demand is attained again. Distillers have followed the example of the distillers, and increased the price by 1d. per pint.

The feeling among the distillers and the export wine and spirit merchants in Danzig is one of dissatisfaction. They, however, declare that they will not suffer by the extra duty. They will charge it to customers, who, before retailing, will recoup themselves by adding an additional quantity of water to the whiskey. The spirit merchants claim that spirits are already overtaxed, and contend that the extra duty should be imposed on beer; but brewers assert that spirits only can satisfactorily bear the additional tax.

## CHAMPAGNE THROUGH A STRAW.

WITHIN a few days the bartenders at several San Francisco hotels have learned a thing or two. They know how to mix a drink that a week ago they had not heard of, and they have found out how Southern people like champagne. The knowledge in both instances was imparted by James B. Alexis, of New Orleans.

"Will you do me the honor to take a drink?" was the part of a formula of an introduction. It was his compliance with this request that was the cause of teaching the barkeepers a lesson.

"A little anisette and absinthe, if you please," said Mr. Alexis.

The man in the white apron had both liquids in stock, but the combination was new to him. Yet he was too proud to ask questions. He poured the two in a brandy glass and showed it across the mahogany.

"Just turn that into a whiskey glass," directed Mr. Alexis, and the barkeeper did so with a puzzled air.

"Now fill it up with beer,"

The liquid was squirted in. It was a creamy, odorous mixture, and Mr. Alexis swallowed it. The proportions did not seem to please him.

"You ought to come down South," he said, "and find out how to mix drinks."

It was suggested that anisette and absinthe was a novel venture in the way of drinks. "Why, down our way," explained Mr. Alexis, "it's as common as champagne."

The initiatory appetizer had simply served to give Mr. Alexis a satisfactory thirst. "Let us have a bottle of champagne, was his next order. "Very fair," was his response, "but to be appreciated champagne should be drunk

through a straw out of the bottle. That's the Southern fashion, and it's a good one."

One more bottle was required to test this proposition. The cork was drawn. The wine had been frapped until it was too chilled to pop much. Mr. Alexis dropped a raisin and almond down the neck to keep the wine from overflowing, but not checking the escape of gas. Then he thrust in a straw. "There, try that," was the order.

To hear was to obey, and never before did wine taste as that wine tasted. It seemed to seak out and sprout and irrigate them. It glided through and permeated the marrow. It was a liquid revelation. But to drink champagne through a straw requires a bottle per man, and it is not always a citizen this obstacle.

## AN HISTORICAL BREWERY.

A EUROPEAN letter says: During Emperor William's recent stay at Munich he created great popular enthusiasm by visiting one evening at the famous Hofbrauhaus, or royal brewery, which was established in September, 1589, by Duke William of Bavaria, and which has become one of the national institutions of the country. No one who has not been in Munich can form any idea of the grinning tavern at which the royal court beer has been retailed for the last 300 years, and which forms part of the ancient palace of the Dukes of Bavaria. There are no waiters, or waitresses, everywhere being expected to attend to his own wants, and the Emperor, together with Prince Leopold, took their place in line and awaited their turn for a stone mug which, in accordance with a time-honored custom of the place, they themselves rinsed at the tank before again forming in line for the purpose of having their mugs filled.

Coleman and generals in full uniform were in this line, along with chimney sweeps, scavengers, students, and Jew peddlers. As soon as their mugs were filled, the emperor and the prince sat down at the rough deal tables, which have done service from time immemorial, and purchased from the perambulating vendors slices of wurst and schwarzbrot.

It would surprise most people that great personages should be ready to put up with so much discomfort for the sake of a mere mug of beer. A draught of the latter is all that is required by way of explanation. The beer is truly royal, and in every way worthy of the ancient ducal city of Wittelsbach which produces it. Nowhere else in the world is it possible to obtain such beer, the receipt for which was obtained by the ducal founder by the famous brewer, Degenberg, and has been kept a state secret ever since.

The net profit of the Hofbrauhaus, the beer being sold only at retail and drunk on the premises, amounts to \$800,000 every year, and constitutes an important source of private revenue for the royal house of Bavaria.

## THE HEIDELBERG TUN OUT-DONE.

The monster wine vat, the famous "tun of Heidelberg," which we have been taught from childhood to consider the most gigantic receptacle for liquor ever made of wood and bound with iron hoops, has at last, says the St. Louis Republic, been excelled in the shape of a giant cask built for the Blatter Brewing Company of Munich. The Heidelberg tun was built during the three years ending with 1891. It was composed of oak beams, each 6 inches square and 27

feet long, and had a diameter of even 18 feet. The figures for the exact weight are wanting, but the item which tells us that the iron of the hoops alone weighed 11,000 pounds is quite suggestive of the great weight of the vat. Nearly 300 years after the first tun was built, a second, of much greater proportions, was constructed. Heidelberg tun No. 3 was 36 feet long and 24 feet in diameter, and had a capacity of 800 hogsheads. In 1820, Stretton & Co., the London brewers, constructed a beer vat at their works near Norwich, which was 36 feet in diameter and 34 feet deep. The day this stupendous affair was finished the brewing company gave a dinner to 76 customers, all of whom were comfortably seated in the vat.

The Blatter cask, but recently finished is 105 feet in diameter and 51 feet deep. It was inaugurated with a ball, in which 275 couples took part, and at one time it is said, there were 500 people on the floor of the cask, not counting the waiters, musicians, etc. Besides the above, no inconsiderable floor space was taken up by the stage erected for the orchestra, the two pianos, and fine dining-table.

## NO SIN TO DRINK WINE.

"I HAVE NEVER asserted anything so wrong and so foolish as that it is a sin to drink wine. Thus writes Archdeacon Farrar in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, and the bigots would do well to ponder over this confession. According to the fanatics it is "hellish" to touch alcohol in any shape or form, but we are never told why it was allowed in the Scriptures. If wine be a mocker, as the agitators say it is, then it was have mocked our Saviour. Archdeacon Farrar, our favorite theologian himself, makes a handsome apology for the use of wine by the Apostles saying that the liquor drank by them was of very low alcoholic strength. It is not a question of degree, however, and if alcohol were beneficial in those days, how is it that the fanatics claim that it can never be of any good now? The very fact that alcohol was in extensive use in the time of Christ is proof enough that the best judges of what is good and bad for mankind did not seek its extinction. And the Archdeacon further asserts the equilibrium of the crank when he candidly admits, as he is bound to do, that St. Paul advised Timothy to take a little wine to strengthen his bow. If wine were a strengthening factor to the days of the Scriptures it must be still, or the cranks are right and the Apostles were wrong. As the public are inclined to accept the decision of Christ and his Apostles before that of the fanatics, and as the fanatics are busy advertising and money-making by displaying of bombast and misrepresentations, the latter are never likely to make a head-ditch part of the headway they claim to be doing. It is the temperance crank who popularizes drunkenness by his undervalued estimate of drunkenness."—*London Living World*.

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