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EDITORIAL

COMPULSORY TEMPERANCE.

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THE drink evil is declining in Great Britain. The evidence of the decrease is seen in the figures published in the *London Times*, by Dawson Burns, D.D. For six consecutive years the drink bill of Great Britain has steadily grown less, notwithstanding the increase of the population. In 1899 the estimated expenditure for distilled and fermented liquors was \$929,636,135. Each year since then it has decreased from five to twenty-five million dollars, so that the total decrease in six years has been \$108,796,430. That is, while the population has increased 8½ per cent the expenditure for liquors has decreased almost 12 per cent.

During the same period Great Britain increased its imports and exports, its unemployment and pauperism. One million persons were estimated as out of work last year; while nearly a like number were registered as public charges. Imports, exports, unemployment and pauperism—all are said to be unprecedented.

These facts and figures are worthy of analysis. They show, for one thing, what little value there is in the prohibitionists' argument that drink causes both unemployment and pauperism. If this were so then Great Britain should show an increase of employment and a decrease of pauperism along with the decline in the drink evil. The sight presented is just the reverse. Drink declines, while unemployment and pauperism increase.

The argument may be pressed even further. It can be shown that unemployment and pauperism increase, with increased labor and increased sobriety. A nation can only increase its imports and exports, as Great Britain has done, by increasing the productive powers of its inhabitants. This is attained by means of machinery, concentration and intensification. These, by creating an oversupply of labor and imposing a greater strain upon Labor, either deprive Labor of wages, or else compel it to subsist on reduced wages, in a manner that enforces

economy. That is what is happening in Great Britain. The English capitalist class is introducing American machinery and perfecting greater combinations of capital, both of which displace Labor and render it idle. It is also destroying the canny policy of restricting output, that is, intensifying labor. As a result, Great Britain's imports and exports grow unprecedentedly, as do also its unemployed and pauperized workmen, while drink declines. The displacement and intensification of labor bring about a loss of wages through the increase in the supply of, and the decrease in the demand for, labor. Labor is compelled to skimp and to keep the body in repair, in order to meet the economic and physical strain imposed upon it by capitalism. This is illustrated in the lower wages paid by corporations, most of whom refuse to employ drinking men, claiming that alcohol renders them unable to fulfill the exacting demands of modern industry. Thus, England's greater sobriety, unemployment and pauperism, are a reflex of capitalist evolution, and the accompaniments of increased labor and riches.

And, by the same token, so are the growing excesses, idleness and wealth of the British capitalist class. Thanks to their private ownership of the improved means of production, and the exploitation of labor arising therefrom, the capitalists are enabled to gratify every inclination to the fullest, amid an increasing superabundance of riches. When Labor throws the capitalist class off its back and inaugurates the social ownership of the improved means of production, then will its increasing deprivation amid increasing luxury cease.

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