

IV.—*Statistics (with some additions) given in evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Houses.*—By James Haughton, Esq.

[Read before the Society, Dec. 18th, 1854.]

GENTLEMEN,

The object of this society being the collection of facts, with a view of applying our knowledge to the purposes of life, in the doing away of error and prejudice, and implanting truth in their stead,—it is obviously our duty, individually and collectively, to keep these objects steadily and constantly in view, in order that the largest possible amount of advantage to our fellow men may be the result of our labours. Many of our members may not have time to spare from their various pursuits in life for the collection of statistics, but all can aid in diffusing a knowledge of the facts laid before us at our monthly meetings, and in our publications. Hitherto our meetings have all been rendered interesting, our Council having brought under our notice a sufficient number of papers, most of them of a highly instructive character, and affording evidence of no little care in their preparation.

I have no reason to fear that we shall not be always supplied with papers of this description; but I feel that it would increase the usefulness of our society, if a larger number of our members were to favour us occasionally with papers. I would have all bear in mind that, however humble our attainments, we may yet be able to impart some information to others, if circumstances permitted us to devote a very small portion of our leisure to the task.

Having frequently appeared before you in this character, I make these remarks by way of preface or apology for the paper I have now to bring under your notice. The subject of it is not popular among our educated classes; but it is, in my humble judgment, a subject of the deepest importance; and I hope to lay before you, on the present occasion, such a body of evidence in favour of my views, as will convince your judgment that it is a subject well deserving the most serious attention; not alone of our members but of the entire community; not alone of the political economist but of the statesman also. No other question strikes my mind as of equal importance to the people of these lands; it is practical in its results, and its settlement is essential to our progress in wealth, virtue, and civilization.

The drinking customs of our people destroy an amount of property so enormous, and turn into unproductive channels so large a portion of the earnings of all classes, as to render it a hopeless task to create a wise and proper distribution of the annually gathered up resources of the country, so long as these customs shall be allowed to fritter away, and render altogether useless those products of industry, which would otherwise be made available as individual and national capital, in the production of added wealth, that would again, by

calling into activity, and abundantly remunerating the industry of our people, soon contribute to lessen, if not entirely do away with, the vice and misery which are now so prevalent, and which entail heavy burthens on the industrious and prudent portions of society.

In June last I was summoned to London, to give evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on public houses.

I was informed that the Committee were desirous to obtain information as to the results of opening our Zoological Gardens to the public on Sundays, at the small charge of one penny, which privilege was granted by the Council in the year 1840, and which measure, in conjunction with our much respected brother member, Doctor Ball, I was instrumental in bringing under the notice of that scientific body.

I was also advised that I should be questioned as to my views respecting the public house system, and on the temperance reformation generally.

Some of the statistics which follow were prepared by me for that occasion. In order to show the good done by opening the Zoological Garden at a low price of admission on Sundays, I handed in the following table of visitors for the last fourteen years:—

| Years. | At One Penny. | Free. | Total at various Prices. |
|--------|---------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1841 | 81,404 | 2,387 | 97,405 |
| 1842 | 96,425 | 4,726 | 109,706 |
| 1843 | 70,415 | 4,444 | 89,706 |
| 1844 | 91,284 | 5,524 | 111,341 |
| 1845 | 98,704 | 4,987 | 132,485 |
| 1846 | 97,084 | 3,446 | 111,865 |
| 1847 | 73,107 | 3,501 | 88,685 |
| 1848 | 51,634 | 2,998 | 66,167 |
| 1849 | 51,095 | 3,332 | 64,328 |
| 1850 | 49,096 | 2,694 | 60,276 |
| 1851 | 55,807 | 2,342 | 66,160 |
| 1852 | 79,908 | 2,240 | 92,096 |
| 1853 | 65,346 | 2,977 | 78,049 |
| 1854 | 87,325 | 2,987 | 114,238 |

I was asked, "taking the year 1841, when the numbers on Sunday were 81,000, what do you say was the gross number who went to the Zoological Garden?"—"Ninety-seven thousand."

"Am I to understand that 81,000 went on Sundays, and that the difference between 81,000 and 97,000 was filled up by all the other days of the week?"—"Yes; admitted at various prices, from 6d. to 2s. 6d. each. Two shillings and six-pence is the price of admission on fete days."

"Eighty-one thousand is the direct gain in the number which were admitted on Sunday?"—"I should say so."

"In fact, it makes up four-fifths of the whole number?"—"Yes. I also beg to hand in the following extract from a memorial of the Council to the Lord Lieutenant, which is contained in the

Twenty-second Annual Report of the year 1854, ending in March last:—

“‘ And, above all, we have afforded to the working classes a most attractive place of rational recreation, one of which they fully avail themselves, and in which they manifest a conduct so decorous as to claim still further indulgence; upon this we chiefly found our claim to public consideration.’”

“Are any liquors sold in the Zoological Gardens?”—“No intoxicating liquors of any kind. There are some refreshments sold.

“I have also a copy of a letter from the secretary of the Dublin Mechanics’ Institution to the secretary of the Zoological Society, just after it was opened at one penny in the year 1840; it is dated November 5th, and is of an exceedingly pleasing character:—

“Sir,

“I am instructed by the Board of Directors to express their gratitude to the Council of the Royal Zoological Society of Dublin for the valuable means of improvement and innocent relaxation which they have placed within the reach of the working classes, in opening their gardens on Sunday at a premium so very low that the humblest may (if so disposed) participate in the advantages and enjoyments they afford. May we not hope that other public institutions will follow your praiseworthy example, particularly those at whose disposal large public funds are placed. To such opportunities of improvement as your society now affords are mainly owing the intelligence, the appreciation of works of art, and that polish of manner so marked in the natives of those countries, whose higher tastes and educational wants are consulted and provided for.

“By order,

“ZECHARIAH DOWLING,

“Honorary Secretary, and
Operative Printer.”

“You have a good deal of communication with the working classes?”—“I have been constantly in communication with them for many years.”

“Do you think the letter which you have read is a fair representation of their feeling?”—“Yes, I think so.”

“You think they would desire to have places of recreation more extensively opened to them on Sunday?”—“Unquestionably.”

“Would a large class of these persons be found in public houses if they were not amusing themselves in this way?”—“Certainly; they consist chiefly of tradesmen, and their wives, and daughters.”

“Do you infer from that, that if the people had other attractions, and had not the temptation of public houses and beer houses open to them, they would resort to those places?”—“To a very large extent; the temptations of the public houses are, however, so great, that I cannot imagine any thing short of closing them altogether, would do away with the evil.”

The Committee asked my views relative to opening other places of public amusement on Sunday. I suggested that the Museum of the Royal Dublin Society, and the Botanic Gardens, at Glasnevin, might be thus made instrumental in the production of much good.

The Museum at Stephen's-green should also be made available, in this way, for public benefit; and the Royal Irish Academy would likewise be a place of great popular resort. Experiment on one or two occasions has proved the correctness of this opinion.

All these instrumentalities, if placed within reach of the working classes, would refine them, by creating a taste for innocent and intellectual pleasures.

The remainder of my examination had a more direct reference to the results of our drinking customs, regarding which I submitted the following details:—

“I learned from the Collector of Excise a few days ago, that the Excise receipts in Dublin in 1840 were about £240,000; last year they amounted to nearly £500,000.”

“Were these receipts for duty on spirits?”—“They were excise receipts, I believe on other articles as well; tobacco is an excisable article, and some others. The increase was chiefly on whiskey, showing that there is a considerable increase in its consumption. The consumption of whiskey has increased about three millions of gallons beyond the lowest point to which teetotalism had reduced it, which was, I think, from about twelve millions to five millions of gallons.”

“To what period do you refer when it was the lowest?”—“I think it was about the year 1842.”

“Was there not a great temperance movement in Ireland at that time?”—“Yes.”

“Do you account for the reduction in that way?”—“Entirely in that way, no doubt. A reduction in consumption attended the extraordinary enthusiasm which followed the labours of Father Mathew in Ireland.”

“He was supported by O'Connell at that time, was he not?”—“Yes, he was supported by almost the whole population.”

“Were the consequences apparent and useful? Were the people better clothed?”—“Yes, as was apparent to every observer. The people were better clothed, and better behaved in every way; indeed, I am happy to say, they continue so, to a very great extent.”

Last year the quantity of whiskey on which duty was paid in Ireland was, 8,136,362 gallons. Some stop must be put to this waste of our national resources—to this downward tendency—or poverty and demoralization must increase.

“The revenue from spirits in Ireland was, doubtless, much reduced by the temperance reformation?”—“I have not been able to ascertain how far that reduction was compensated for by an increased consumption of other excisable articles; but the following table, exhibiting the consumption of spirits, tea, sugar, &c. taken from official returns, shows that a considerable increase did take place in several other such articles about that period. In sugar, there appears to be little change in the revenue; but it is supposed there was also a large increase of duty in this article, as refined sugar is largely imported into Ireland, the duty on which is paid in England and Scotland.

“The paper manufacture in Ireland shows a large increase; it was in 1835 2,700,000 lbs.; in 1840, 3,590,000 lbs.; and in 1850,

6,719,000 lbs. The revenue, of course, was largely benefitted by this increase in consumption, paper being an excisable article. We may infer that this increase was, in a considerable degree, owing to the increased capability of the people for consuming the paper, having money to spend in this way, which used to be expended in the public house."

"Do you know whether articles of necessary consumption have been equally consumed to a greater extent?"—"I can give you a considerable amount of information upon that point; for, as I have stated, I have a list of the duties received on spirits, tea, sugar, and tobacco, from the year 1836 to the year 1853; and it shows, that when the receipts for spirits were reduced, the revenue was increased on other articles, which then came much more largely into consumption. The amount is as follows:—

| Years. | Spirits. | Tea. | Sugar. | Tobacco. |
|--------|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1836 | £1,436,191 | £476,239 | £406,601 | £727,642 |
| 1839 | 1,510,092 | 409,553 | 395,647 | 766,668 |
| 1840 | 1,402,130 | 437,480 | 403,788 | 782,788 |
| 1841 | 1,032,582 | 453,924 | 413,106 | 830,345 |
| 1842 | 964,711 | 534,563 | 428,181 | 863,946 |
| 1843 | 1,005,986 | 556,030 | 449,092 | 852,542 |
| 1844 | 942,988 | 602,005 | 443,979 | 837,373 |
| 1845 | 1,014,505 | 640,048 | 458,205 | 880,073 |
| 1846 | 1,196,837 | 723,925 | 346,131 | 927,311 |
| 1847 | 1,288,529 | 763,047 | 404,696 | 939,904 |
| 1848 | 986,843 | 712,475 | 433,603 | 805,739 |
| 1849 | 1,096,852 | 737,307 | 352,573 | 811,691 |
| 1850 | 1,050,765 | 701,145 | 272,160 | 749,238 |
| 1851 | 1,000,570 | | | |
| 1852 | 1,247,029 | 755,199 | 222,129 | 706,723 |
| 1853 | 1,482,308 | 759,864 | 267,376 | 730,832 |

The foregoing figures, which are taken from annual official returns, show, that, as the consumption of whiskey decreased, the consumption of tea, sugar, and tobacco increased, so as to protect the revenue from serious, if any, loss.

There is no reasonable ground for apprehension that the revenue would suffer from a total disuse of intoxicating drinks. Statistics bear me out in this opinion; and when we add to these the moral results of such a reform in our national habits, surely there ought to be no hesitation as to the course which government ought to pursue. All practices that are more hurtful than beneficial to society should be discouraged; or, if need be, prohibited altogether. Revenue derived from the vices of the people must really weaken the resources of the empire.

The statistics on this subject are quite consistent, as may be seen from the following tables, showing the results in the United Kingdom for thirty years, comprising a period of fifteen years before the temperance reformation had commenced, and fifteen years after:—

| Years. | Lbs. of Coffee. | Lbs. of Tea. | Lbs. of Cocoa. |
|--------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1821 | 7,103,409 | 22,426,627 | 276,321 |
| 1822 | 7,598,001 | 22,496,571 | 283,735 |
| 1823 | 7,659,351 | 23,559,155 | 267,495 |
| 1824 | 8,454,920 | 23,762,470 | 286,657 |
| 1825 | 8,262,943 | 23,784,838 | 318,941 |
| 1826 | 11,082,970 | 24,830,015 | 347,251 |
| 1827 | 13,203,323 | 25,238,067 | 344,776 |
| 1828 | 15,566,376 | 26,043,223 | 385,793 |
| 1829 | 17,127,633 | 26,790,481 | 354,407 |
| 1830 | 19,476,180 | 29,495,214 | 393,847 |
| 1831 | 22,691,582 | 30,255,299 | 425,382 |
| 1832 | 22,740,627 | 29,997,055 | 502,806 |
| 1833 | 22,952,527 | 31,548,381 | 1,150,193 |
| 1834 | 22,741,984 | 31,829,620 | 1,268,287 |
| 1835 | 23,785,095 | 34,969,651 | 1,173,795 |
| 1836 | 23,295,046 | 36,574,004 | 1,084,770 |
| 1837 | 24,947,690 | 49,142,236 | 1,130,168 |
| 1838 | 26,346,961 | 30,625,206 | 1,416,613 |
| 1839 | 25,765,673 | 32,351,593 | 1,608,787 |
| 1840 | 26,789,945 | 35,127,287 | 1,606,800 |
| 1841 | 28,664,341 | 32,252,628 | 2,041,678 |
| 1842 | 28,370,857 | 36,665,667 | 1,928,847 |
| 1843 | 38,519,646 | 37,355,911 | 2,246,569 |
| 1844 | 29,979,404 | 40,293,393 | 2,547,934 |
| 1845 | 31,352,382 | 41,363,770 | 2,589,977 |
| 1846 | 34,293,190 | 44,193,433 | 2,579,497 |
| 1847 | 36,754,554 | 46,740,344 | 2,950,206 |
| 1848 | 37,441,373 | 46,314,821 | 3,079,198 |
| 1849 | 37,077,546 | 48,734,789 | 2,919,591 |
| 1850 | 34,431,074 | 50,024,688 | 3,233,372 |

These figures indicate this fact, that, if the earnings of the people be not spent on intoxicating drinks, they will be laid out on other articles productive of revenue.

I have taken the foregoing returns from the "Scottish Temperance Review," of April, 1851, and the editor, to place the idea in a clearer point of view, gives the following summary, and says—"That the contrast may be more apparent, we shall put together in one amount the whole of the non-intoxicating stimulants of the first and last years, and in juxtaposition with them, the total amount of intoxicating drinks for the same years."

| | | | | Lbs. | |
|------------------|---------|----|----|------------|------------|
| 1850 | Coffee, | -- | -- | 34,431,074 | |
| " | Tea, | -- | -- | 50,024,688 | |
| " | Cocoa, | -- | -- | 3,233,372 | |
| | | | | <hr/> | 87,689,134 |
| 1836 | Coffee, | -- | -- | 23,295,046 | |
| " | Tea, | -- | -- | 36,574,004 | |
| " | Cocoa, | -- | -- | 1,084,170 | |
| | | | | <hr/> | 60,953,230 |
| Actual increase, | | | | -- | <hr/> |
| | | | | | 26,735,904 |

Were a proper allowance for the adulteration of coffee with chicory, of late years, made, this result would present a much more favourable appearance.

| | | Gallons. | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| 1836 | Rum, -- -- | -- | 3,416,966 | |
| " | Foreign and Colonial Spirits, -- | -- | 1,348,740 | |
| " | British Spirits, -- | -- | 24,710,208 | |
| " | Beer, -- -- | -- | 587,880,360 | |
| " | Wine, -- -- | -- | 6,420,342 | |
| | | | | 623,776,616 |
| 1850 | Rum, -- -- | -- | 3,044,758 | |
| " | Foreign and Colonial Spirits, -- | -- | 2,224,709 | |
| " | British Spirits, -- | -- | 22,962,012 | |
| " | Beer, -- -- | -- | 548,772,516 | |
| " | Wine, -- -- | -- | 6,247,689 | |
| | | | | 583,251,684 |
| Actual decrease, -- -- | | | | 40,524,932 |

Although the population had increased four millions since 1836.

"This gratifying result is fairly to be attributed to the temperance reformation. For, I shall show you presently, that, when not arrested by this cause, the growing appetite for alcoholic stimulants gathered strength at a truly fearful rate of increase.

"From the above calculations we learn, that had the population of 1849—50 drunk of coffee, tea, and cocoa, the same quantity per head, as the population of 1835—36 did, the increase in the consumption of these articles would have been only ten millions of lbs., whereas it has been nearly twenty-seven millions of lbs., or considerably more than one third. And that, had the population of 1849—50 drunk of wine, spirits, and beer, the same quantity per head as the population of 1835—36 did, the increase in the consumption of these articles would have been one hundred millions of gallons, whereas there has been a decrease of 40,500,000 gallons, showing the actual difference, taking the increase of population into account, to be upwards of 140,500,000 gallons, or more than a fifth part of the entire quantity consumed in 1836.

"Wine, the drink of the wealthy classes, nearly maintains its consumption. It exhibits very little difference in the two periods."

The Chairman now said—"Your conclusion is, that the revenue has nothing to apprehend from the people abstaining from spirituous liquors, because they would have more money in their pockets to purchase other excisable articles?"

"That is my conclusion. My strong conviction is, that the revenue would, in a little time, greatly increase; because if we increase the wealth of the people, it is quite clear that the revenue must be improved by that increase of wealth. If the consumption of intoxicating drinks have a tendency to decrease the wealth of the people, which I believe it has to a great extent, the abandonment of habits of drinking would necessarily increase the wealth of the people, and increase the revenue at the same time.

I submitted the following statement, taken from "Morewood's History of Inebriating Liquors," in order to exhibit, in a striking point of view, the steadily growing appetite for alcohol in a community. It is a statement well calculated to create a feeling of deep and painful interest in the minds of all who become acquainted with it, and it shows the necessity of prompt measures to arrest the progress of this source of national debasement.

DISTILLATION OF SPIRITS IN IRELAND FOR 114 YEARS,
FROM 1723 TO 1837.

| Years. | | | Gallons. |
|--------|----|----|------------|
| 1723 | -- | -- | 133,733 |
| 1730 | -- | -- | 134,748 |
| 1740 | -- | -- | 239,811 |
| 1750 | -- | -- | 598,546 |
| 1760 | -- | -- | 225,217 |
| 1770 | -- | -- | 801,174 |
| 1780 | -- | -- | 1,229,416 |
| 1790 | -- | -- | 2,926,795 |
| 1800 | -- | -- | 3,621,498 |
| 1810 | -- | -- | 6,412,625 |
| 1820 | -- | -- | 4,636,192 |
| 1830 | -- | -- | 9,208,538 |
| 1837 | -- | -- | 11,809,603 |

The population of Ireland in 1723 was about 2,200,000; in 1837 it was probably 8,000,000. So that while the increase of population was about four fold, the increase in the manufacture of whiskey was ninety fold within the same period. It is no marvel now that Irishmen should be found among the most destitute of the human family—"The worst clothed, the worst fed, the worst housed of any people."

Behold how steadily the progress of desolation moved onwards during these decennial periods. At first it was slow, and then, like a falling body whose speed is accelerated in its descent, it became fearfully rapid. Fortunately it was arrested for a while by the temperance movement, and we have had breathing time to consider the measures necessary to be adopted for national safety. Appetite is, however, working hard against reason and judgment, and we are again going down-hill; slowly, it is true, but it must be rapidly again, by and by, if wisdom and strength do not take the reins. This result is inevitable if the check be not again given, there being a steadily increasing physical predisposition to the use of alcoholic drinks. Within four years the consumption of whiskey has increased in Ireland about 3,000,000 gallons.

After a number of questions relative to the drinking habits of the people, and to the opening and shutting of public houses, I was asked—"Is there any other suggestion you would make for amendment of the law?"

I submitted copious extracts from a work published in 1830 by a well known Dublin merchant, entitled, "An Inquiry into the influence of the excessive use of Spiritous Liquors in producing Crime, Disease, and Poverty in Ireland," with a view of proving that, in every point of view, it would be attended with advantageous results to prohibit altogether the destruction of grain in our breweries and

distilleries, and thereby arrest the otherwise inevitable pauperization of the people.

The writer of that pamphlet goes at length into these topics. He shows that several times within the past century distillation from grain was prohibited, in order to secure the people from the horrors of starvation, and that in all cases a great diminution of crime was the result, attended by an immensely increased ability on the part of the people to supply themselves with the comforts of life, which was largely availed of; and although scarcity of food, bordering on actual want, was apprehended, greatly increased exportation of oats took place at those periods, to enable us to pay for our larger imports of various articles, thus proving that no real deficiency of food existed; that all we needed was to avoid madly destroying the products of our fertile soil.

The details of these results are very interesting. I will now shortly give you a few of them. During the years 1809 and 1810 distillation was stopped in consequence of an apprehended scarcity of food. The result was highly gratifying, but very different indeed from what might have been anticipated; for there was a large increase in our importation of drapery, both new and old—of blankets, cotton goods, haberdashery, earthenware, black tea, sugar, and hops. The same results took place in 1813 and 1814.

So long since as the year 1843, I petitioned parliament to the following effect:—

“To the Honourable and Right Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament Assembled,
 “The Memorial of the undersigned respectfully prayeth,
 “That your Honourable House shall forthwith pass a law prohibiting altogether the manufacture of intoxicating drinks in the United Kingdom; it being a fact well ascertained, and not now disputed, that nearly all the crime and misery in the land is caused by the makers of these drinks; the judges and magistrates of the kingdom having frequently declared that, to the use of the deleterious articles manufactured by them may be attributed nearly all the wickedness of the people. Your petitioner, therefore, entreats your Honourable House to grant the prayer of his petition, as it seems to him unwise of any Government to permit the continuance of practices which, by universal consent, are so destructive of the best interests of society.”

And, for still further evidence of the rapid growth of sound views on this question, I refer our members to a long and interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review* for July last, “Teetotalism, and Laws against the Liquor Trade.” Truth, though often long overborne by prejudice and selfishness, always triumphs in the long run.

I annex a table of imports, an examination of which will at once satisfy you of the reality of this pleasing picture. It is only necessary for us to make a good use, instead of an evil use, of the bounties of Providence, to place our people in a condition of abundant comfort and happiness.

A STATEMENT of the Quantities of particular Articles conducive to the comforts of the People, which were imported into Ireland from the year 1806 to 1818, in order to show the increase in their Consumption caused by the Diminished Consumption of Spirituous Liquors in the years ending 1809 and 1810, and in those ending 1813 and 1814; during which Four Years Distillation was prohibited to prevent apprehended Famine.

| Years ending 4th January. | Total quantity of Foreign Spirits imported and of Whiskey supposed to be made by Li- censed Distillers | Drapery. | | Blankets. | Cotton Goods. | Haberdashery. | Wrought Iron Hardware. | Earthenware. | Black Tea. | Muscovado Sugar. | Hops. |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------------|--------|
| | | Old. | New. | | | | | | | | |
| | Gallons. | Yards. | Yards. | Number. | Value. £ | Value. £ | Value. £ | Value. £ | Lbs. | Cwts. | Cwts. |
| 1807 | — | 659,319 | 1,473,094 | 43,829 | 190,011 | 87,165 | 193,337 | 60,165 | 2,526,852 | 240,523 | 15,682 |
| 1808 | 7,994,904 | 917,055 | 1,545,543 | 50,492 | 110,855 | 93,361 | 265,534 | 77,887 | 3,424,919 | 324,477 | 27,344 |
| { 1809 | 5,335,437 | 1,399,155 | 1,678,945 | 100,704 | 304,982 | 109,210 | 249,373 | 90,423 | 3,616,270 | 411,168 | 28,841 |
| { 1810 | 2,810,578 | 1,484,958 | 1,796,986 | 66,708 | 257,941 | 137,686 | 244,497 | 87,841 | 3,324,216 | 369,041 | 33,700 |
| 1811 | 6,806,684 | 1,155,667 | 1,258,131 | 54,067 | 188,315 | 107,365 | 222,905 | 81,216 | 2,866,618 | 251,191 | 18,275 |
| 1812 | 8,858,106 | 1,421,793 | 1,573,860 | 18,591 | 86,433 | 114,207 | 276,846 | 77,748 | 3,476,441 | 379,747 | 18,301 |
| { 1813 | 5,816,131 | 1,506,832 | 2,970,166 | 24,999 | 116,737 | 151,479 | 414,549 | 87,112 | 3,698,787 | 426,784 | 23,908 |
| { 1814 | 4,393,459 | 1,627,583 | 2,649,432 | 37,607 | 109,134 | 165,370 | 414,907 | 106,191 | 3,483,298 | 318,121 | 18,562 |
| 1815 | 7,471,421 | 967,527 | 1,999,376 | 27,021 | 64,784 | 142,796 | 344,570 | 88,590 | 3,355,118 | 334,702 | 20,545 |
| 1816 | 5,960,952 | 739,078 | 1,064,904 | 12,718 | 74,357 | 109,412 | 278,830 | 67,246 | 3,429,253 | 262,266 | 17,107 |
| 1817 | 4,862,036 | 546,217 | 767,318 | 6,734 | 77,815 | 79,522 | 201,296 | 56,666 | 2,958,351 | 262,179 | 12,844 |

The quantity of spirits includes that charged with duty, and that supposed to be smuggled by licensed distillers, and also the foreign spirits of all kinds imported into Ireland.

The statement of imports is extracted from the returns made to parliament in 1822. (See Third and Fourth Reports of Commissioners of Inquiry.)

In the years 1816 and 1817, in consequence of a great increase in the duty on spirits, illicit distillation was very prevalent, which accounts for diminished imports in these two years.

In order to pay for these large imports of the comforts and luxuries of life, we were obliged, as I have stated, to export increased quantities of grain and other produce. The export of oats (the grain principally used in distillation) during the periods referred to, was, as per returns of the collector of imports and exports for 1809 and 1813, so great, that its increased value was annually, during those years of scarcity, £500,000 over the years 1807 and 1811, which were years of plenty.

But this statement does not give any true idea of what would be the real gain to our country if the destruction of grain by distillation and brewing were entirely put a stop to. We have no means of ascertaining the quantity destroyed by illicit distillation; but it was, and is still, no doubt, very large.

Seeing such advantageous social and commercial results, in the shape of large imports and exports, during seasons of real or apprehended scarcity, what amount of national prosperity might not be calculated on if all our surplus food, in seasons of acknowledged abundance, were exchanged for the comforts and luxuries of life? From the facts I have laid before you, your largest expectations—your most sanguine hopes—could hardly fail to be realized.

I was further asked—“Is it the inference which you draw generally, that whenever there has been a temperance movement, the people consumed more manufactured goods?”—“Yes. The period to which I am now referring was long before temperance was thought of; the people were only prevented from drinking whiskey because they could not get the article; it was not manufactured. I draw the inference that if we could now prohibit altogether the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors and other intoxicating drinks, the same happy results would follow, and they would, no doubt, be permanent. The conclusion which seems to my mind inevitable is, that scarcity is created by the destruction of food in our breweries and distilleries, and that we should never have any scarcity of food but for this cause. I doubt that there was ever a scarcity of food in Ireland, bordering on famine, until the years 1846, 1847, and 1848.”

“Your own principles would carry you far beyond closing public houses on Sunday, to the adoption of the Maine Law?”—“Undoubtedly; I see no other real good to be derived from legislation. I do not think that legislation to regulate an evil is either wise or effective. If drinking be an evil it should be suppressed by the legislature; and that it is an evil is universally admitted, for we are constantly endeavouring to limit it.”

“Have you made any calculation as to what would be the saving in the United Kingdom if spirituous liquors were not consumed?”—
 “If there were an entire disuse of intoxicating drinks, I believe the annual saving would be at least £120,000,000, perhaps £150,000,000. Of this amount the sum actually expended yearly on these drinks is probably seventy or eighty millions of pounds. The balance of loss arises from various causes, such as loss of time; cost of punishing crime; feeding paupers; supporting hospitals and lunatic asylums; loss of shipping, &c., &c. Some fairly deduced calculations have raised the annual loss to even larger amounts than I have stated.”

It is full time for intelligent men to take serious thought of these matters. It is the especial duty of an association founded for “Promoting the study of Statistical and Economical Science,” to take earnest heed that society shall not want ample information on such vital questions, or be in any doubt as to our anxiety to use all the intellectual and moral forces it may be in our power to wield, in efforts to save the people from the sad consequences resulting from their drinking usages.

Before concluding this paper, I beg to recall your special attention to the table I have extracted from “Morewood’s History of Inebriating Liquors.” The information it imparts seems to me so startling as to demand our most serious attention. It points out, in the full light of revealed truth, that the appetite for alcoholic stimulants is an increasing appetite—that generation after generation is more and more enslaved by it. The taste for it becomes more and more nearly a universal mania; proving, almost to demonstration, that all who indulge in it are transmitting to their children, and their children’s children, an hereditary craving, which renders them less and less able to withstand temptation, and which, if not arrested, must ultimately annihilate all the manliness and virtue of the people.*

In the year 1834, when Mr. J. S. Buckingham brought before the House of Commons his motion for an inquiry into the causes of an increase of national drunkenness, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Althorp, looked upon it as the dream of a man who was insane on that point, and said that he doubted if even a seconder for it could be found in the house.

* So long since as the year 1743, a bill was introduced into the House of Lords for “altering the duties on spirituous liquors” on which occasion Lord Harvey and Lord Lonsdale spoke forcibly against their use. I quote a sentence from each—“If the use of spirituous liquors be encouraged, the diligence of the lower classes, which can only be supported by health, will languish.” “Those women who riot in this poisonous debauchery are quickly disabled from bearing children, or, what is yet more destructive to general happiness, produce children diseased from their birth by the vices of their parents; children whose blood is tainted with inveterate and accumulated maladies; and who must be supported through a miserable life by that labour which they cannot share, and must be protected by that community of which they cannot contribute to the defence.”

Prophetic words these, as witnessed by our crimes and our poorhouses.

“Drunkenness appears to be in some measure hereditary. We frequently see it descending from parents to their children. This may often arise from bad example and imitation, but there can be little question that, in many instances at least, it exists as a family predisposition.—*Macnish on the “Anatomy of Drunkenness.”*”

Mr. Buckingham, however, made out so triumphant a case, and his speech on the occasion was of such thrilling interest, the house was constrained to grant the motion, and a most important parliamentary inquiry was the result.

I subjoin but one extract from Mr. Buckingham's powerful address:—

“The second document to which I wish to draw the special attention of the House, is one of the most appalling, perhaps, that the history of intemperance has produced. It is a report of the number of men, women, and children who entered within a given time fourteen of the principal gin-shops of London and its suburbs, of which there are two in Whitechapel; three at Mile End; one in East Smithfield; two in Holborn; one in Bloomsbury, and three in Westminster. (The particulars of each house, which I omit, are here given.)

“The grand total for one week only in the fourteen houses selected, the names of which I have seen, and the localities of which I have myself inspected, amounts to no less a number than 269,437, divided in the following proportions, namely, 142,453 men, 108,593 women, and 18,391 children, the women and children united nearly equaling the men, and often surpassing them in the grossness and depravity of their demeanour. Alas! Sir, is it England of which we are speaking; the land of the lovely and the brave—the seat of the sciences and the arts—the school of morality and religion; or are these attributes of excellence ascribed to us in mockery, in order to heighten our sense of sorrow and of shame?”

The foregoing statistics were taken in the year 1834. The following, of a similar character, were compiled in Edinburgh in the present year, and they equally claim the attention of the political economist.

A careful examination of the numbers who entered the public houses and taverns in that city, on Sunday the 6th March last, gives the following results:—

| | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| 22,202 | Men. |
| 11,931 | Women, |
| 4,631 | Children under 14 years. |
| 3,032 | do. 8 ,, |

| | |
|--------|---------------------|
| 41,796 | into Public Houses. |
| 6,609 | into Taverns. |

48,405 Total, being nearly one-third the entire population of the city.

“Women frequently acquire the vice by drinking porter and ale while nursing. These stimulants are usually recommended to them from well-meant but mistaken motives, by their female attendants. Many fine young women are ruined by this pernicious practice. *Their persons become gross, their milk unhealthy, and a foundation is too often laid for future indulgence in liquor.*”—Ibid.

Levison on the “*Hereditary Tendency of Drunkenness*” (a small pamphlet) also contains much evidence of this tendency; and it is a well-known truth that very many persons have such an overpowering thirst for alcoholic liquors, that they, over and over again, after long periods of entire abstinence from their use, fall into a habit of drunkenness; as if their misery were unavoidable; just as men are often attacked with gout and other diseases which it is acknowledged they inherit from their parents.

Furthermore, and in order to give you an account of all the statistics obtained up to the present time in relation to this part of our question, I subjoin a statement of the numbers who entered the public houses in Manchester recently on a given Sunday. It is taken from the *Manchester Examiner* of 26th July, 1854, and was submitted to a public meeting, convened specially, and before which the details were laid:—

| |
|------------------|
| 120,122 Men. |
| 71,111 Women. |
| 23,585 Children. |
| 214,818 Total. |

The committee, who carefully collected these facts, accompany their statement with a report which gives painful evidence of the degradation and immorality of that large portion of the population of this great city who thus spend their Sabbath day. I make a few extracts. Speaking of the several districts, they say—

“In fact this district can only be described as a very hell upon earth.”

“With the exception of the warehouse and shoe proportion, this district is as bad as the last.”

“A fearful state of demoralization exists about this house.”

“One little fellow, covered with rags and filth, got a pint of whiskey, and went into a filthy cellar, not fit for a pigsty, where several persons were drinking.”

Man-fighting, dog-fighting, gambling, and other similar wretched modes of spending idle time, characterise this entire population; so that the Rev. Canon Stowell, who moved the first resolution at the meeting, said—

“That dark and damnable traffic turned the day of God almost into a day of Satan, and made it questionable whether, for the mass of the people, it would not be better to have no Sunday at all.”

Gentlemen, I have, I hope, now given you some faint idea of the length, breadth, and depth of the evils I have endeavoured, as forcibly as I might, to bring under your notice, and the greater part of which I submitted to the select committee of the House of Commons.

They certainly present a dark and gloomy picture to the imagination; but it is not by shutting out the light that we can hope to free our country from the stigma which rests upon it because of our love of strong drink; owing to which the proper distribution and application of the wealth of the people is prevented, and great misery is necessarily the result.*

* Mr. Herepath, the distinguished chemist, says that out of nineteen specimens of ale he had examined, seven were adulterated with *coccus indicus*.

The Report of the Parliamentary Committee on public-houses states that the adulteration of beer and ale is enormous, probably one-fourth of the entire consumption; and that salt, vitriol, and *coccus indicus* are used for this purpose.