

night's holiday in the year, while thousands of women with families were glad enough if they could get three days holiday in the year. It is noticeable that a comparison is not instituted with the holidays of men, for the simple reason that few men would not rebel if they were worked all the year round. The British workman demands an eight hours day with half a day on Saturday, and the whole of Sunday off, and thinks himself illused at that. When it is taken into consideration that nurses work, as a rule, not only very long hours, but in an atmosphere of disease, which is necessarily most prejudicial to health, and that many months are passed on night duty, it will be realized that a thorough rest and change once a year is a necessity if they are to perform their work efficiently. In our opinion, founded upon considerable experience, three weeks is the very least amount of holiday which should be given to nurses in the year. We are glad to notice that the Bristol Guardians were not unanimous in their refusal to allow their nurses this amount of leave. Twenty-three voted for it and twenty-seven against it. We hope that the more liberal-minded ones will convert their colleagues to their views.

DRINK STATISTICS.

THE drink statistics of the United Kingdom, as compared with those of other countries, are of considerable interest. The total abstainer has some ground for congratulation, especially in this country, for, the consumer of alcohol contributes no less than 36 per cent. of the total national revenue, while in the United States, France, and Germany he also contributes a substantial proportion.

The annual consumption of beer in this country is 31.9 gallons per head. In Germany, which we are wont to regard as a great beer drinking country, it is 27.1 gallons per head, in America it is 13.0 gallons per head. In France it is only 5.5 gallons per head. France, however, makes up for its abstemiousness in the matter of beer drinking by heading the list in spirit drinking, its consumption being about double that of the United Kingdom, and in the consumption of wine, France is also far ahead, its allowance, being 24.64 gallons per head, while in the United Kingdom, Germany, and America, the percentage is 0.41, 0.77, and 0.23 respectively.

Australasia, which produces 94.0 per cent. of the wine of the colonies, only consumes 1.05

gallons per head, per annum, but in Canada the drink bill is lowest, for the annual consumption in wine, beer, and spirits is but 0.08, 3.6, and 0.65 gallons respectively.

In relation to the drink question it is interesting to learn that there is not nearly so much drinking in the Army as there used to be. Lord Wolseley and Lord Roberts have done much to encourage temperance, and in the opinion of an Army Chaplain the short service system helps matters, as men have not time to become confirmed toppers—a point in favour of the much disparaged short service system! There is, however, still room for improvement in the Army, and well-intentioned, but unwise friends of Tommy Atkins would do well, especially at the present time, to show their appreciation of his services to his country by other methods than placing endless temptations to drink in his way.

PLAGUE, PESTILENCE, AND FAMINE.

PLAGUE, pestilence, and famine. Such is the position of affairs in Bengal to-day. The situation, indeed, is terrible, and it is well to draw attention to it, because now that our attention is so keenly concentrated on the South African crisis there is some danger of our losing sight of the distress which prevails in our Indian Empire, and of the need which exists for substantial relief.

Lord Curzon, when inaugurating the Famine Fund in Calcutta, spoke as follows: "If any rich man in this city is in any doubt as to whether he should subscribe, I would gladly give him a railway ticket to a famine district, and take what he chose to give me on his return. He might go with a hard heart; but he would come back with a broken one." Many parts of India are now suffering from the worst famine of modern times. In the city of Bombay the plague is worse than it has ever been before, and, as if this were not enough, there is a severe epidemic of small-pox, so that the death-rate in one week recently was 2,763. This is a heartrending record, and though native chiefs and officials, headed by the Maharaja of Darbhanga, who gave £10,000 to the Famine Fund, have subscribed handsomely, and large sums have been given by European merchants, there is need for many more donations if the distress is to be adequately dealt with. We hope, therefore, that while liberal support is rightly given to movements for the benefit of the sick soldier, that the need of India will not be forgotten.

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