

Annotations.

MUCH-NEEDED LEGISLATION.

The new Act of Parliament for dealing with the conditions under which intoxicants can be sold in England and Wales, and which came into force on New Year's Day, should have the effect, if thoroughly carried out, of preventing drunkards from obtaining intoxicating liquors. The Act prohibits the sale of liquor to an habitual drunkard for the space of three years after a conviction. In order that there may be no doubt as to the identity of such persons, particulars are to be sent to the police authorities concerned in each case. The drunkard himself is notified of the fact, and information is also to be given to all holders of licences, and to the secretaries of clubs. If such a person attempts within three years to obtain intoxicants anywhere he becomes liable to a fine of twenty shillings for the first offence and forty shillings subsequently.

It is satisfactory that the Act applies to grocers as well as to proprietors of public-houses, as it is well known that much secret drinking, especially by women, is carried on by this agency, as many women will order spirits and other intoxicants through their grocer, while they would hesitate to enter the bar of a public-house. In small places the recognition of habitual drunkards will be an easy matter, but we imagine that in London, for instance, it will be a matter of some difficulty. It is noteworthy that any person who supplies a drunken man with more liquor, or aids him to get it, may receive a month's hard labour. The Act further provides that any person found drunk, except in a private house, may, whether disorderly or not, be taken in charge and dealt with by law. Further, should the person be in charge of a child under seven years of age, the offender becomes liable on conviction to a forty-shilling fine, or a month's imprisonment, with or without hard labour.

Each day since the Act came into force the morning papers have recorded convictions in connection with it, and there is no doubt that it deals with a widespread evil in relation to which legislation has for many years been needed.

MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED.

The recent discovery, by what appears to be almost an accident, of a terrible murder, revealed by the disinterment of three bodies at Leyton, comes with an unpleasant shock, for it

proves conclusively that even in London, which prides itself on being the best-watched city in the world, it is possible for persons to be done to death and the crime concealed for months without any suspicion being aroused. In connection with this the last report of the Chief Commissioner at Scotland Yard is unpleasant reading, as it shows that in London alone thousands of people reported missing to the police vanish annually, the numbers being in 1900, 18,785, and, in 1901, 17,575. We do not wish it to be understood that these figures imply foul play in every case. Probably many of the missing vanish for reasons of their own, and others have committed suicide and their bodies have never been discovered. Still, even when this is taken into consideration, the number of the missing is so great that it affords ground for much reflection, more especially when it is proved by the official figures given that more than one half of the "mysteriously disappeared" have not been found, for those reported missing in 1900 were 37,214, against those restored 18,429, while, the reported missing in 1901 were 35,033, against 17,458 restored.

STATISTICS OF LIFE.

The yearly mortality of the globe is 33,333,333 persons. This is at the rate of 91,554 per day, 3,730 per hour, 62 per minute. Each pulsation of the heart marks the decease of some human creature.

The average of human life is thirty-three years. One-fourth of the population die at or before the age of seven years. One-half at or before seventeen years. Among ten thousand persons, one arrives at the age of one hundred years, one in five hundred attains the age of ninety, and one in one hundred lives to the age of sixty.

Married men live longer than single men. More marriages occur in June and December than in any other month of the year. One-eighth of the whole population is military.

Professions exercise a great influence on longevity. In one thousand individuals who arrive at the age of seventy years, forty-three are clergymen, orators, or public speakers; forty are agriculturists; thirty-three are workmen; thirty-two are soldiers or military employees; twenty-nine advocates or engineers; twenty-seven professors, and twenty-four doctors.

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