

HOME NOTES.

(London "L.V. Gazette," August 11, 1905).

"Splendid" is the adjective that most fittingly applies to the Board of Trade returns for July. Our exports to all parts of the world, amounting as they do to £27,821,051—an increase of £3,037,469 over those of the corresponding month last year—constitute another record; while the imports, which are valued at £44,741,838—an increase of £3,785,237—indicate decreased spending power on the part of the community. Has the Trade shared in this improvement? To a slight degree, yes, but there are signs of brighter times ahead. The exports of beer and ale last month amounted to 38,505 barrels, of the value of £125,979, against 35,699 barrels, valued at £119,610 in July, 1904. India continues our best customer, having taken 10,096 barrels, of the value of £22,764, the great demand, of course, being for pale ale. Australia comes next with 4473 barrels, valued at £19,339, and the United States third with 3339 barrels, valued at £16,716. The shipments to New Zealand have increased from 15 barrels to 660. On the other hand Egypt, with 1515 barrels, British South Africa, with 977 barrels, and the British West Indies, with 1352 barrels, have all taken less. "Other countries" are credited with 15,045 barrels, valued at £45,216.

The distillers of the United Kingdom have done far better, the exports of British and Irish spirits last month having amounted to 639,737 gallons, of the value of £252,960, against 534,335 gallons, valued at £234,478 in July, 1904—an increase of 19.7 in quantity and 7.8 in value. With the exception of the United States, which has taken less—only 67,537 gallons against 75,471 gallons—there has been a better demand from all quarters. For months past the returns have shown increased exports, and last month the shipments amounted to no less than 162,081 gallons, valued at £56,487, against 137,269 gallons, of the value of £48,047 in July, 1904. New Zealand, notwithstanding all the talk about prohibition in that country, is also taking more, and is credited last month with 47,518 gallons, against 37,564. Quite a brisk demand has been experienced from Foreign West Africa, which has taken 19,719 gallons,

against 8591, and the shipments to British West Africa have increased from 11,336 gallons to 15,990. British South Africa, India, and Canada have also been good customers, and "other countries" have taken more by 40,000 gallons.

Coming to the imports, the demand for foreign spirits is evidently improving, the total quantity received last month amounting to 787,406 gallons, valued at £149,331—an increase of 21.8 in quantity and 17.3 in value. Brandy was imported to the tune of 154,048 gallons, valued at £78,842. Although the increase in quantity is only 1.9, better prices have evidently been paid, the increase in value amounting to 11.4. The reshipments of brandy, however, have been considerable, and show a rise of 33.3 in quantity and 2.5 in value. While there has been an increased demand for rum in this country, the reshipments show a considerable falling off—amounting, in fact, to as much as 42.6 in quantity and 28.5 in value. The total reshipments of foreign spirits also show a decline alike in quantity and value.

The wine trade has still cause for great complaint. Early in the year stocks here were considerably added to, but the consumption has not increased, and the imports, which last month fell to 941,323 gallons, valued at £307,263, have still further declined to 802,241 gallons, of the value of £265,692. In July last year the imports were 812,032 gallons, valued at £246,596, showing that the demand last month was for wines of the more expensive quality. France, Italy, and Madeira have each sent more—the imports from France, in fact, having increased from 233,213 gallons to 273,958—but Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain have all shipped less. That Australian wine is becoming more and more popular is shown by the ever-increasing imports. Last month they amounted to 68,993 gallons, of the value of £12,823, against 55,138 gallons, valued at £8652 in July, 1904. There has evidently also been an increased demand for Cape wines, the imports having increased from 65 gallons to 4170.

That a publican nowadays has need to have all his wits about him in the con-

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duct of his business, in order to keep out of the meshes of the law, has once more been illustrated by a case reported from Aberdeen. Sunday closing in Scotland is not liked and never will be, and there are always to be found men who take a delight in circumventing the law, often, it must be confessed, at the cost of the innkeeper. A Sunday or two ago a farmer, a quarry worker and a cattle dealer wanted a bottle of whisky. Having put their heads together, they decided that a very good way to obtain it would be to make out a false certificate purporting to come from a veterinary surgeon, stating that the whisky was needed for a horse that was unwell. A capital idea! The innkeeper, it was felt, would be bound to supply in such a case of emergency. Accordingly the certificate was drawn up, and duly presented at Broadstrait Inn. But the innkeeper had evidently awoke that Sunday morning with his eyes wide open.

Without in the least doubting the genuineness of the certificate, he considered it to be his duty to send the certificate to the police constable in the district for the purpose of getting it countersigned. The constable duly attested his signature, and the whisky was supplied according to order. A little later, however, the officer in blue, having his suspicions aroused, made inquiries of the veterinary surgeon in question, only to find that he had been the victim of a forgery. The three men enjoyed their drink, but they had to pay dearly for it in the end. The farmer, who was the prime mover in the matter, was fine £5 or thirty days' imprisonment, and the others £2 each or twenty-one days' imprisonment. It will readily be seen what a difficult position a less inexperienced innkeeper might have been placed in by this ingenious fraud.

That a license-holder of twenty-two years' standing should be summoned for refusing to allow a police constable to enter her licensed premises seems almost incomprehensible, especially when the police are ready to testify that the house has all along been well conducted. An innkeeper in the Midlands, it appears, after closing her house at ten o'clock, refused to allow a constable to enter for the purpose of ascertaining whether the music and singing he heard outside emanated from customers or from guests. According to the police evidence she

said that she should defy the officers to come into her house without a warrant, and persisted in her refusal to admit him. It was pointed out to her in Court that the constable had reasonable grounds for admittance, but the Bench were asked not to sully defendant's long record with a conviction, but simply order payment of costs. This they decided to do, at the same time pointing out that the defendant had done wrong in not admitting the policeman. It should be distinctly understood by license-holders that the police have the right to enter all licensed premises, and there is no limit to the hour of demanding entry.

What is known as the International Supreme Lodge of Good Templars has just been holding its biennial sessional meeting at Belfast, and the published account of the proceedings affords amusing reading for the Trade. Exactly why the report should have been presented by a Swedish professor is not quite clear. Possibly it was considered to be of too drastic a character to be submitted by an English temperance reformer. The Good Templars now frankly admit that "prohibition of the traffic is the only measure effectual in meeting their end." Good Templars who run newspapers or periodicals "are not Good Templars at all unless they absolutely refuse to insert advertisements relating in any way to intoxicating liquor," and as for municipal management of public-houses, that would "simply make temperance reformers compulsory partners in the traffic." "To sell whisky in the name of temperance and philanthropy is to present the devil as an angel of light." These are a few extracts from the report, which seems to have been adopted without discussion. Members of the Trade will be quite willing to join hands with the Good Templars in their assertion that it is simply a delusion for anyone to suppose that Trust or municipally controlled public-houses would be less harmful than the ordinary public-house.

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