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OBTAINABLE AT ALL HOTELS.

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the culpable negligence of the inn-keeper. The company alleged that the proprietors of the hotel were in both respects at fault and in support of their contention, it was shown in evidence that the traveller was well known at the hotel, as was also the nature of his business that it was a custom of some years' standing for the servants of the hotel, without special instructions, to carry his business bag—the bag containing the jewellery—to a safe place (a place of very doubtful safety it turned out to be), which was "in the corner of the office behind the ice-chest." That the depositor acquiesced in the arrangements made for the protection of his property and regarded them as adequate there is no reason to doubt, and 99 times out of 100 they would probably work satisfactorily. But the pitcher goes once too often to the well. Some smart thieves shadowed the commercial traveller, and learned his ways; and one evening when he requested his bag of jewellery he was handed a "colorable imitation," containing nothing more valuable than bricks and dirty rags. The Scotch Court had given a verdict against the hotel proprietor for £1790, but the Scotch Court of Appeal reversed this decision, and the House of Lords confirmed the reversal. The Lords held that the handing over of the bag for custody without declaration of

value—without the warning which he hotelkeeper had a right to expect—was not the "special deposit" required by law to entitle the victim of robbery to recover, and that, though the system of keeping the property of guests in safe custody might be objectionable and neglectful, it was necessary to trace the loss to some definite act of neglect on the part of the hotelkeeper—such as could not be established in this case—before he could be made responsible.

AN EARLY TEMPERANCE TRACT.

It is open to the social historian to speculate how far the so-called "crying evils" of the day are an affair of journalistic and literary tradition rather than of actual induction from statistics. It is assumed by many excellent people that England is rapidly degenerating owing to habits of intemperance, to the growth of gambling and immorality, to the love of pleasure, and to the pursuit of gain, but these censors of their time are not students of history and the evolution of manners. Rather they are highly suggestionised readers of cheap newspapers and followers of particular prophets whose tradition in both cases may be said to date back to the palmy days of Puritanism. As long ago as 1628 William Prynne published the first rabid temperance tract under the title, "Healthes Sicknesse, or a Compendious and briefe Discourse, proving the Drinking, and Pledging of Healthes, to be Sinfull and utterly Unlawfull unto Christians; by Arguments, Scriptures, Fathers, Moderne Divines, Christian Authors, Historians, Councers; Imperiall Lawes and Constitutions and by the voice and verdict of the prophane and Heathen Writers." It is a question whether Prynne did not set going for all time the bogey of national intemperance. He seems to have been among the first to discover that drunkenness was par excellence the national vice, but

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The Success of No-License.

JUDGED BY ACTUAL RESULTS.

The "No-License Handbook" is responsible for the statement that the returns of the Ashburton Police Court furnish an unanswerable argument in favour of No-License. In the same work it is further stated that the growth of the town since 1902 has been steady and uninterrupted, and that Ashburton is in as sound a position commercially to-day as at any period in its history. How far from the real truth these statements are will be apparent from a comparison of 1902—the last complete year of license—with last year.

CRIME IN ASHBURTON.

In 1902 the total charges laid in the Police Court numbered 309; last year they had increased to 316. In 1902 the offences relating to liquor were 88; in 1907 they numbered 103, made up as follows:—

Drunkenness	44
Selling liquor without a license	22
Prohibited persons procuring liquor	6
Disorderly conduct while drunk	1
Keeping liquor for sale	4
Failing to notify vendor under Licensing Act	2
Failing to notify clerk of Court	6
Failure to label package of liquor	4
Failing to give name and address when ordering liquor	3
Procuring liquor for prohibited person	2
Found in premises when sly-grog search-warrant executed	9
Total	103

Thus the only unanswerable argument that Ashburton can furnish in favour of No-License is an increase in crime and in offences relating to drink

THE PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN.

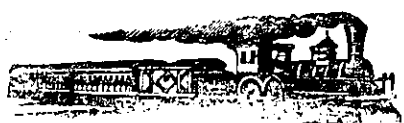
In the five years since No-license the population of Ashburton has increased from 2500 to 2563, which of itself is eloquent testimony to the utter stagnation of the town. Business is very bad, over 40 establishments having changed hands since 1903, and fully a dozen businesses are now in the market. At least six prominent Prohibitionist tradesmen have shown themselves so satisfied with business under the regime they advocated that they have removed themselves and their businesses to places where licenses exist. No less than eleven shops have been burnt out in the last eighteen months, and the town is so prosperous that in many cases no effort has been made to rebuild. The debts sued for in the Magistrate's Court have increased in amount from £3115 in 1902 to £4633 in 1907, an increase of 49 per cent., which disposes of the frequently expressed opinion that people pay their debts better under No-license. It is said that a large proportion of business people are satisfied, but actions speak louder than words, and at the Court-house polling-booth, in the centre of the business population, the votes cast in 1905 were:

For restoration	613
Against restoration	335
Majority for restoration	283

A QUESTION FOR TEMPERANCE REFORMERS.

It is evident that, judged by the very test proposed by the Prohibitionists themselves, No-license is a failure in Ashburton. There is no decrease in crime, as shown by the Police Court records; on the contrary, there is a slight increase. Instead of increasing prosperity, so lavishly promised, we find complete stagnation. Instead of business people enlarging their premises, we find them falling over each other in their hurry to escape from the town. Instead of the workers having a plentiful supply of cash, we find small debts harder than ever to collect. On the top of all these failures, we have the horrors of sly-grog, with its train of ruined homes.

In the face of these facts, is it not time for those temperance reformers who believe in coercion as a remedy to ask themselves whether these results are in spite of, or because of, the law they defend?



NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS. DOMINION DAY.

Holiday Excursion Tickets will be issued from any station to any station on the Auckland Section on 25th and 26th September, available for return up to and including Wednesday, 30th September.

BY ORDER.