

Britain, and the great progress made in the past five years gives no promise that it will be continued. It has stimulated the commercial activities of Great Britain to such a point that the solid progress which has marked her financial position so long will be assuredly more speedy and more solid still in the immediate future. The United States is, as regards foreign trade, an agricultural country first and a manufacturing country second. Its agricultural exports form two-thirds of its outward trade; and, with increasing foreign competition, these, like its manufactures, must decline. American exports of manufactured articles last year were \$441,400,000 while those of Great Britain, excluding coal, were \$1,175,000,000.

Official statistics respecting the growth of Great Britain's financial position are very satisfactory. Take, for instance, her foreign and colonial investments. The income from these in 1880-1 was \$149,740,000. In 1898-9 the income from these sources had risen to \$248,335,000. The gross assessments to income, which a quarter of a century ago was £514,000,000, grew to £794,000,000 in 1898-9—an average increment of £10,000,000 per annum. The estates passing to heirs at death amounted in value to £129,000,000 in 1873; in 1890 they had risen to £292,000,000. The total amount passing through the bankers' clearing houses in 1873 was £6,182,000,000; in 1890 it was £9,182,000,000—an increase of £15,000,000,000. The amount of paid-up capital in companies generally was, in 1884, £475,500,000; in 1890 it was £1,622,500,000. The paid-up capital in British railways was, in 1873, £588,000,000; in 1900 it was £1,176,000,000. Other increases could be enumerated, such as that in shipping. Another satisfactory feature is that in the past twenty-five years pauperism in Great Britain has decreased from 1 in 29 of the population to 1 in 40.

**McGILL STREET FIRE.**

Early on Sunday morning last a fire was discovered in the upper part of the warehouse of Messrs. W. & F. P. Currie, McGill street, in this city, which extends some distance along St. Paul street. A valuable stock of paper and other goods was destroyed or damaged by fire, smoke and water. The fire companies interested are as follows:

In the case of Redmond, Greenlease & Co. the loss will be about 10 per cent., and Harrower & Currie will probably be total, with total loss on building as well. Redmond, Greenlease & Co. :—

Alliance.....	\$10,000	Phenix, Brooklyn.....	\$3,000
British America.....	5,000	Phoenix, London.....	10,000
Guardian.....	5,000	Royal.....	8,000
North American.....	8,000	Sun.....	5,336
National, Ireland.....	7,000	Western.....	3,000
Total.....			\$61,336

George Harrower, shirt manufacturer, is insured for \$60,500 in the following companies :

Alliance.....	\$2,000	Northern.....	\$6,000
British America.....	3,500	Norwich Union.....	5,000
Commercial Union.....	3,000	Queen.....	2,000
North America.....	3,000	Scottish U. & N.....	4,000
Liv. & Lon. & G.....	4,000	Union.....	13,800
London & Lanc.....	4,200	Western.....	5,000
Manchester.....	5,000		
Total.....			\$60,500

W. & F. P. Currie & Co., importers, are insured in the Imperial for \$7,000, the insurance on the building, 132-134 McGill, owned by A. S. McFarlane estate, being as follows :

Liv. & Lon. & G.....	\$10,000	Northern.....	\$10,000
Total.....			\$20,000

On building Nos. 136-138 McGill, owned by Mr. Stevens (loss about 5 per cent.) :

London Assurance.....	\$15,000
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**IS ALCOHOL A FOOD ?**

The question, "Is alcohol a food?" to a large number of persons appears absurd on the face of it. But, inasmuch as there are eminent chemical authorities who give this query an affirmative answer, it must be regarded as, at least, an open question. Some confusion has arisen from those who have discussed this matter failing to give what they consider to be a scientific definition of the word "food," and nothing but confusion can arise when two or more disputants argue over a proposition respecting the meaning of the terms of which they differ. It is an old and true saying, "What is one man's food is another man's poison," which is a fact of common experience. When, therefore, one disputant, as to the nature of alcohol, declares it to be a "poison" he may be quite justified; so also may be his opponent who pronounces it a "food." The truth seems to be that this drug is both a poison and a food, the former quality being very pronounced when the latter is unduly relied upon. The "Baltimore Underwriter" has a long extract from the "Therapeutic Gazette" on "The physiological actions of alcohol," in which its action is classified under twenty-two heads. From these the general conclusion can be fairly deduced that large doses are highly detrimental to the human body by depressing the natural functions of the nerves, the brain, the heart, the lungs and other organs. It has the peculiar quality of producing in small doses the exact opposite of large ones, an example of which is that "in small amounts alcohol increases the bodily temperature, in large doses it diminishes the same," and "small doses of alcohol produce increased rapidity of the heart-beat; in large amounts a depression of the same." Other variations of its effect are given, all tending to show that large doses of alcohol are exceedingly and invariably injurious, while the action of small doses is usually the reverse of large ones, as they stimulate and conserve these organs that are depressed, paralyzed, destroyed by large doses. These views are in accord