

mon wines is being considerably restricted. Several other countries, which formerly took her wines, are now producing wines themselves. This is especially true of Italy, which, in 1864, imported French wines to the value of 19,000,000 francs, but which, in 1878, took only 1,000,000 francs worth. Partly through the production of wines in California, and partly through the high tariff, the United States market is practically closed to the common wines of France. The Gironde wine trade suffered a diminution of 12,590,000 francs in 1878, as compared with the previous year; England, Belgium, Germany, Holland, the English colonies in Africa, Hungary and La Plata all taking less. The increased importation of India about equalled the English deficiency. Of wines, other than those of the Gironde, the exportations to Great Britain and Egypt are stationary; while Belgium, Germany, Italy, Algeria, the United States and several other countries have diminished their importations. There was, last year, a general diminution in the shipment of Bordeaux wines, which, up to that date, had gone on increasing since the conclusion of the treaties of 1860. The total decrease in the shipment of wines in cask last year exceeded 28,000,000 francs in value. This deficiency in the common and Bordeaux wines was largely compensated by shipments of superior wines, in which champagne held a prominent place; reducing the total deficiency to 9,000,000 francs. The total value of the French wines, in francs, exported, was in 1877, 220,760,487, and in 1878, 211,495,260.

It is evident, then, that France has greater need of a market for her common and Bordeaux than for her better classes of wines. On this account, it is reasonable to suppose there will be a disposition on the part of the French government to make some arrangement that will ensure the Canadian market.

Much uneasiness is felt in French business circles on account of the uncertainty that hangs over the fate of treaties subsisting between France and other countries; an uncertainty which is producing the most mischievous effects. In concluding a new treaty, a possible change in taste is not to be lost sight of. To some extent, the decrease in the exportation of common French wines may be due to a change of taste, a growing preference for the wines of other countries; and this change may take place in Canada as well as elsewhere. The diminished production of French wine has almost necessarily had an effect on the quantity exported. The crop of 1878 was 48,700,000 hectolitres; which is a de-

crease of 7,684,000 as compared with the previous year, and is 8,093,000 hectolitres below the average production of the last ten years. Still France maintains her position as the chief wine producing country of Europe; the average annual production of each in hectolitres being:

France	55,634,772
Italy	31,500,000
Spain	20,000,000
Portugal	5,000,000
Austro-Hungary	22,640,000
German Empire	6,501,000
Switzerland	900,000
Russia and Turkey in Europe	2,134,000
Greece and Cyprus	1,150,000
Roumania	661,874

Total crop of Europe.....146,121,646

It is obvious therefore, that France is the most important country in Europe with which a commercial arrangement shall include the wine trade can be made.

The duties on cheap French wines are excessive and ought not to be regarded as permanent; being on the lower grades not less than one hundred and twenty per cent. These high duties put a great restriction on commerce, and discourage the use of a beverage which is gently stimulating, with the certain result of causing bad spirits to be substituted in their place. Their imposition had not even the excuse that they might tend to bring about a mutual relaxation of the tariffs of the two countries, for it had no such object. If their existence can now be used for that purpose, the opportunity will not be lost; though such an incident was not anticipated when the duties were put on. The production of native wines deserves encouragement; but no one proposes to encourage native industry by means of duties equal to the entire value of the goods on which they are put. These wine duties will bear reduction, without interfering with the infant wine manufacture of the country.

There is no reason resting on commercial grounds why French brandies should not be included in the commercial arrangement under negotiation. The manufacture of Canadian whiskey, such as is in vogue, cannot properly be an object of national regard. If it were a pure spirit, there would be no reason for preferring foreign spirits; but that it is impregnated with deadly fusil oil, which causes a vast amount of actual mortality which French brandy would not cause, is, we fear, only too uncontested. The distillation of spirits from grain is a discovery which has inflicted untold misery on the human race. And of all grains Indian corn is the worst. At the same time, its cheapness causes it to be substituted for other kinds to an extent that almost supersedes their use in distillation.

It is probable that a large number of heavy whiskey drinkers are literally poisoned by the fusil oil which this liquor contains, and from which it is next to impossible to free it; and that a large number of the deaths which have heart disease for their reputed cause are in truth traceable to the effects of poison. If it were clearly established that these are the necessary results of distillation as now carried on in Canada, the intervention of the Legislature would, on sanitary grounds, become a duty. The subject is one that deserves more attention than it has received. The first step is to take proper means to establish the facts; and in doing so, it would be necessary to employ a machinery of investigation to which no objection could fairly be taken.

FIRE DEPARTMENTS.

An advertisement in one of the insurance journals announces the preparation of a series of tables, shewing the fire equipment of the various cities, towns and villages of the United States, together with their facilities for extinguishing fires.

The publishers depend, for the sale of the book, upon the very proper presumption that the manner in which cities and towns are equipped for fire protection is a matter of personal interest to every business man, to every capitalist, to every mechanic and laborer. To see that every community is properly provided with the means of protecting the property of its citizens from destruction by fire is of interest to all—and why? Because of the serious interruptions to business, the loss of employment, the increase of taxation, the depreciation of values, and the many other contingencies which most probably will affect property owners, merchants and mechanics in the event of a sweeping fire. Were we to examine the registry offices, the mercantile lists and the directories of the many fire-scourged villages, towns and cities of this continent, we should see an ever-recurring series of personal extinguishments, produced by the ruin of the property owners, the migration of the business men and the change of residence of the mechanics. We should see the owners of property struggling for years under the burden of mortgages given for money borrowed for the purpose of rebuilding; merchants trying in vain to collect outstanding accounts; builders receiving for a while enhanced prices for their erections. But that brief prosperity was quickly followed by a cessation of operations.

The squares of British soldiers at Waterloo were invincible to the fiery charges of the French cavalry because they were of