

accordingly withdrawn from their large rest the sum of \$500,000, of which \$350,000 has been appropriated to meet bad and doubtful debts, while \$150,000 has been added to the contingent fund. All right-thinking business men will be of opinion that the course taken reflects credit on the directors of the bank. The very object of a rest is to enable bankers to meet losses such as those anticipated by the Bank of Commerce without trenching on the bank capital. The rest still remaining is very considerable, amounting to \$1,400,000, or 23½ per cent. on the capital of the bank, and there can be little doubt that when we have a revival of business the rest will soon be restored to the 33½ per cent. at which it has for some time stood.

### THE SUGAR BOUNTIES.

This vexed question, which has been discussed a good deal amongst us of late, has assumed a considerable degree of importance in England, and especially since the announcement that Mr. Gladstone, whose free-trade proclivities are undoubted, has pronounced a strong opinion against the interference by foreign refiners with British trade by means of the bounties granted to the exporters of sugar. We copy Mr. Gladstone's letter.

"Sir,—I write a line under great pressure, to acknowledge your communication. If, as I understand, the circumstances of the case continue unaltered, I think that both the trader and the workman engaged in the business of refining sugar have great reason to complain. My desire is that the British consumer should have sugar and every other commodity at the lowest price at which it can be produced, without arbitrary favour to any of those engaged in the competition. But I do not regard with favour any cheapness which is produced by means of the concealed subsidies of a foreign State to a particular industry, and with the effect of crippling and distressing capitalists and workmen engaged in a lawful branch of British trade.—Your faithful servant, W. E. Gladstone."

We have not failed to notice that professed free-traders, like our very able contemporary the *New York Bulletin*, do not hesitate to sneer at the complaints both of British and Canadian refiners that they are subjected to competition with sugar enjoying the advantage of Government bounties. The *Bulletin* is under the impression that "the Canadians are managing to get on tolerably well," that "they have a little more self-reliance," and that, while American competition enables the consumer to get cheap sugar, "it is still possible for the refiner to keep out of the almshouse." We were not aware that there is a single sugar refiner in Canada. The *Bulletin* should be made aware that all our refineries have been shut up, as it seems probable will ulti-

mately be the case in England. No trade can stand competition assisted by bounties paid by foreign Governments at the cost of a nation. This sugar question is of a different character from ordinary questions as to duties or imports, and that it is so is manifest from the letter of Mr. Gladstone, to which we have called attention.

### CITY DRAINAGE AND LAND FERTILIZATION.

Ancient Rome was celebrated for the completeness of its systems of drainage and water supply. Its immense drains were kept regularly flushed by the surplus water from the aqueducts, which gave a daily supply of 300 gallons to each of Rome's million inhabitants. Rio Janeiro approaches more nearly to the system of ancient Rome than any other city we know of. The water is brought for many miles by a magnificent aqueduct which spans hill and dale, and distributes the cool, clear water through innumerable fountains. London has made great strides in respect of public works, and her system of drainage is probably as perfect as it can be when we consider how low the city lies; and the Thames is now no longer the foul, sluggish sink it was, for the filth is pumped up and delivered many miles below at the top of high water, and is thus rapidly hurried off to sea, to return no more. Enough money has been expended in Montreal to have given us much better drainage than we now possess. We look for a vast improvement now that the Craig street tunnel has been carried to a successful finish, but we are of the opinion that all surplus water should be used to flush the drains, and not sold to outside municipalities, who should either come in under our *regime*, or supply water for themselves. When one comes to reckon up the immense value of the vast quantity of sewage which is wasted by being thrown into our rivers, it can only be characterized as a piece of folly to thus deliberately sacrifice so much valuable plant food. The Chinese at home would no more think of pouring filth into a river than they would of bringing manure from the ends of the earth, and the rivers there are as pure as the streams from which they take their rise. The most minute particle of plant food is saved, and necessarily so, as her immense population has to be fed, and it is only by high culture that this can be effected.

Much of our land has been run out by overcropping, or, to speak more correctly, by taking everything from the land and returning nothing to it. The valley of the

Chambly used to be considered the Garden of Lower Canada, and many ships were loaded yearly at Sorel with wheat for the United Kingdom. But her glory has departed, and she now hardly raises enough to supply local wants. Yet, if the sewage thrown into the St. Lawrence at Montreal were utilized, thousands of acres could be again brought into good bearing, and, with plenty of manure and good steam ploughs, the Chambly Basin would soon regain its former character, and blossom as the rose. North of the city of Quebec, in the vicinity of Lake Beauport, farmers during the last two seasons have raised as many as forty bushels to the acre in new land, whereas in the old farms in the Province of Quebec it is almost impossible to cultivate wheat successfully. This goes to prove that our climate is well suited to the production of cereals, and, where the returns are small, the farmer is to blame, not the soil nor the climate.

The question of drainage and sewage affects the poor even more than the rich, for the latter can live in more expensively built houses, and in better localities than the former, who are often forced to occupy badly-constructed tenements, in which the plumber's work is defective, and in many cases only a cunningly devised plan for the effectual spread of disease from the death-laden sewer, to the badly-ventilated, and, in most cases, overcrowded houses. Sewer gas known to be poisonous will, however, often enter the houses of the rich, and it is well known that a badly constructed drain in Windsor Castle was said by the medical men to have laid the foundation for the disease which carried off Prince Albert, while his son, the Prince of Wales, was affected almost to death by a similarly bad drain at Sandringham, a few years later. If there is a city anywhere which should pay most particular attention to her drainage it is Montreal, as we are blessed with a class of people many of whom take a pride in seeing that their children are not vaccinated, and even go so far as to expose them to infection, when a light case is discovered, forgetting, or, more likely, ignoring the fact, that some of the most serious cases of confluent small-pox are taken from those which are apparently light in their character.

At this season particularly when we are in the midst of a protracted spell of dry hot weather, attention should be paid to the daily flushing of the drains. In nearly 200 houses in Boston where cases of diphtheria occurred, it was found that in every case there had been a derangement of the water pipes before they entered the sewer. By far the greater