

the consumption. The lowering of the price has enabled consumers to add greatly to their purchases. This was seen in England first when the duty was lowered and afterwards when it was abolished. In 1870, when the duties were lowered, the consumption in Great Britain was 48 lbs. per head of the population; after Mr. Gladstone abolished the duty, in 1872, the consumption increased till it is now 70 lbs. per head of the population. This is by far the highest consumption of any country; the United States, which comes next, is far behind, and beside this 70 lbs. per head the consumption of other countries looks small indeed:

	Lb. per head.
Great Britain.....	70
United States.....	54
France.....	28
Holland.....	20
Denmark.....	19
Germany.....	15
Russia.....	14
Belgium.....	10

Continental Europe only averages a consumption of about 18 lbs. per head. If the price could continue to go down still further, the increase of consumption might be relied on to continue progressive. But this is not probable, the lowest paying price has almost certainly been reached and in some cases surpassed. A decrease of consumption must take place, whenever prices are generally below the remunerative point. The beet crop was not as large last year as it would have been if the production of beet sugar had been more profitable.

The beet sugar trade has been subjected to abnormal influences in the shape of bounties. The British consumer gets foreign sugar at a lower rate than it can be produced for. The average imports of sugar, into Great Britain, during the last five years, have been 1,507,008 tons, contributed by Holland, France, Belgium, America; while the British exports of refined sugar have not exceeded 65,000 tons. The British refineries have suffered severely and some of them been almost ruined by the sacrifice which other countries have made to place sugar in foreign markets. This abnormal cheapness caused by a sharp trade competition, has made the honest trade more precarious and put a premium upon increased consumption. More sugar is being consumed than ever before, while the returns from the larger trade are anything but satisfactory.

Popular prejudice might do something to decide the contest if it were permanently to array itself on the side of beet or cane sugar. In Great Britain, during the past year, cane sugar at one time threatened to come into favor at the expense of its rival. In May, the difference in the price was that between 21s. 6d. and 25s. But though under improved methods of manipulation a nearer approximation in the price of the two kinds is taking place, there is as yet no certainty that the price of beet will ever equal that of cane sugar. But the point is one which it is impossible to determine. The increasing use of beet sugar in the United States is probably not based upon any preference for one kind over the other. However that may be, the importation of beet sugar there was, last year, nearly double what it was the year before and twelve times as great as it

was in 1882. Whatever may be the cause, this preference seems to imply that this is the natural course of the sugar trade; and it would suffer the greatest disturbance if the commercial treaties with countries producing cane sugar were to be ratified, of which however there is little possibility.

The attempt to produce beet sugar in the United States has not been successful, and the experiments with sorghum give no ray of promise. There is at present no probability that the United States will be added to the countries that produce beet sugar in large quantities, and as little is it probable of Canada, though it must be confessed the experiments are incomplete. Louisiana cane sugar production has long been falling behind, not relatively but absolutely, and it seems from present appearances to be a doomed industry.

Sugar refiners, in most places, have suffered heavily from the decline in prices. This is true of Canada as well as of other countries; the losses in one or two cases are understood to have been serious; one if not two Canadian refineries have shut down, and their future course can scarcely fail to be a matter of serious consideration. The beet sugar competition moreover goes far to explain the depressed condition of the West India trade of Halifax. Beet sugar, owing to its relative cheapness, has a natural tendency to supplant its rival in all the markets of the world, and the dealers in cane sugar find a great obstacle put in their way. In Great Britain the richer and more agreeable flavor of cane sugar counts for something; on this side of the water, it is doubtful whether this difference in quality goes for much. Few consumers have had their attention directed to the difference; with the vast majority of them crystallized sugar is crystallized sugar. In the United States a bastard or domestic molasses sugar is made by reboiling foreign molasses; and this business is increasing. The product is the poorest kind of sugar.

When the sugar business reaches its worst, if it has not already reached its worst, it may be expected to mend. When the competition sweeps away all profit, the temptation to continue the business can only be kept alive by hopes of the future. An amendment can only come from a curtailing of production; and the number of people unwilling to work without a profit must be considerable enough to cause a sensible reduction in the supply. Still the condition of the business makes it certain that many, who have their capital embarked in it, will be willing to continue to produce at a minimum of profit, and below the average rate of profit in the particular country where they are located. Withdrawal would mean serious loss; and when men find themselves in the position in which a change of occupation and in the employment of their capital means loss they often continue in the business in which their means are locked up and with which they are most familiar, rather than take the risk of changing. No great improvement in the production of sugar can therefore be looked for in the near future.

—"General" Booth, of the Salvation Army, recently advertised for a clerk who "must write shorthand and be fully saved."

## COMMERCE OF DETROIT.

Twenty years have all but elapsed since the Commercial Convention of 1865 at Detroit. That was a memorable occasion. Business men from the Eastern States and the Western States; delegates from Atlantic cities and Lake cities; from Canada and from "the provinces" by the sea—for there was no Dominion then—came together that year at Detroit to consider "commerce, finance, communications of transit from the west to the sea-board, reciprocal trade between the United States and British Provinces." Notable men were there; prominent among them were Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, Lorenzo Sabine, of Boston, Genl. Walbridge of New York, James F. Joy and E. B. Ward of Detroit, J. Y. Scammon and J. V. Farwell of Chicago, J. W. Taylor of Minnesota; and none who were there—it was just after the war—will forget the thrilling speech made by Joseph Howe from Nova Scotia.

Detroit has grown since then. Her population has all but doubled. She has become a manufacturing city, without having given a dollar in bonuses, a railroad centre, in addition to being what she already was, a shipping port. We note, in passing, that her registered shipping to-day amounts to 81,875 tons, represented by 145 steam craft, 157 sail vessels, and 11 barges, an increase over 1883 of more than 5,000 tons. Nor is it a slight matter that Detroit, as a municipality, is out of debt. The outstanding indebtedness at the close of the fiscal year, (June 30, 1884) was but \$947,500; against which were held, cash \$479,874 and bonds \$427,000.

It is time to consider some of the other figures of Mr. McIver's report upon the commerce of Detroit, for 1884, compiled by him as secretary of the Board of Trade. The bank capital of the city in 1883 was \$4,000,000 in 13 institutions, whose deposits reached \$20,900,000 and their loans and discounts \$17,000,000. Last year, with loans practically the same, deposits were somewhat larger, and the capital \$4,160,000. Writing about farmers, and the loaning business, the writer says "for farmers, the year past has been a very close one, and considerable money has gone out to help them. Probably more mortgages have been put on farms and real estate in country and city within that period than during any former like one for many years, if indeed the amount thus loaned has ever before been equalled. Labor and materials have been cheap and savings banks have extended a good line for permanent improvements."

Real estate operations began to decrease upon the opening of the presidential campaign. The uncertainty as to legislation is given as one reason for dulness. While the work of speculators has caused a much larger supply than demand. The second and more important cause is that large numbers of mechanics are out of work. For builders, however, the year was an active one, 1,947 buildings, mostly dwellings, were put up, costing \$3,150,000 against 1,691, costing \$3,033,000 in 1883.

The quantity of breadstuffs brought into Detroit by rail last year was 381,000 tons, out of which aggregate 237,000 was wheat,