

CHICAGO DRAINAGE CANAL.

A year ago we described this gigantic piece of sanitation and announced its completion. The Chicago river had been made to flow back—to reverse its sluggish course—and the sewage of Chicago with a goodly admixture of Lake Michigan had been sent off towards the Gulf of Mexico, instead of slowly, very slowly, oozing in our direction.

We then pointed out that there were many conflicting interests—commercial and political as well as sanitary.

Some of these are looming up portentously, as witness the following press despatches :

“ Washington, Jan. 28.—The United States Supreme Court to-day rendered an opinion in the case of the Chicago drainage canal. The proceedings was brought by the State of Missouri against the State of Illinois and the drainage board, the end sought being to prevent the use of the canal because of its supposed pollution of the drinking water of St. Louis. The effect of the decision is to sustain the contention of the State of Missouri.”

“ Chicago, Jan. 28.—President Alexander J. Jones, of the sanitary district, said : ‘The decision is somewhat of a surprise to us, but, after all, it simply means that the case must now be tried on its merits. The sanitary district of Chicago has expended \$34,000,000 in the abiding faith that flowing water purifies by the principle of oxidization, and to prove this is to dispute what we contend is an acknowledged scientific fact, at least acknowledged by all scientists the world over, except those of St. Louis. The district will stand or fall by this principle, and we are prepared to face the issues in the United States courts of equity, which are now opened to the complaints of the citizens of St. Louis and the State of Missouri.’ ”

We may expect a pretty prolonged contest, and the collection of many experiments and analysis and theories ; and we trust that the cause of science will be thereby advanced. With this hope in view we indulge the further one that experts will endeavor really to deal with the subject “on its merits,” as expressed above, and not be biased by “belonging” to one side or the other. Of course we know, and should in justice say, that men are apt to be chosen by one side or the other because their views are favorable to that side, but we ought to be careful, all the more careful, to see that the converse does not warp us.

W. O.