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GRANARIES OF EMPIRE. **A** LREADY the air is a-throb "with argosies of magic sails." To-morrow may see the "heavens fill with commerce"—though, thus far, there comes no authentic word of any "pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales." Themselves, they are as yet the only cargoes dropped.

But the ears of the race are everywhere agog to hear
"—the heavens fill with shouting
From the nations' airy navies grappling
in the central blue."

Still, however high our race may carry its head in the clouds, its feet must remain on terra firma—if for no other than stomachic reasons. Aerial wheat-fields are not yet considered likely. Navies, whether "of circumambient air or circling sea," are but means to an end—that "possession of liberty and the land" in which the British Empire consists.

Little by little the Empire has come to include one-fifth of all the land there is. To preserve this intact is the purpose alike of motherland and overseas dominions. But preparedness for defence is not everything. Matters of commissariat are also important; the independence of the Empire as to food-supplies is an end not to be lightly considered.

"Canada alone could feed her," says Mr. Price Collier—an American whose frank observations of "England and the English" have given us one of the most interesting of the season's books.

"To be sure, the daughter will soon supply the mother's house," the average Canadian will assent. Yet, if asked to quote chapter and verse for the faith that is in him, his notion of Britain's requirements may be found vague indeed.

Even with prices ranging as high as during the past year, the United Kingdom consumes some 265,000,000 bushels of wheat yearly—an increase of over 15,000,000 since the beginning of the present century. But the Empire's wheat acreage in 1908 showed less than half a million increase over that of 1901—India's cultivation having fallen off after seasons of severe drought.

LOOKING TO CANADA. **I**N Canada alone, within the Empire, has any steady expansion of wheat acreage recently taken place. Last year, well on to 7,000,000 acres were put to wheat-growing throughout the Dominion—more than double the 1901 area. This

year would have shown a marked increase had it not been that many stretches of winter-killed fall wheat in Alberta were re-sown with coarse grains.

In 1901 Canada grew scarcely more than one-fifth as much wheat as India. Taking together the past three years, Canadian production has been well on to one-half that of the great Asiatic possession. In 1901 the United Kingdom, Canada and Australasia were practically on a par as to quantities of wheat grown. Taking the average annual production for the past three years, Canada scores an advance of 61,000,000 bushels over the 1901 showing, as against increases of less than 18,000,000 by Australia and only 3,000,000 by the United Kingdom.

FUTURE NEEDS AND SUPPLIES. **C**ANADA'S present wheat yield is more than double what it was at the beginning of the twentieth century. But this

affords no adequate index to developments of the near future. Taking the West alone, its wheat yield of 23,500,000 bushels in 1901 should certainly be more than quadrupled this year. Of late years the East's declension in wheat raising (owing to wise activity in dairying and mixed farming) has served to check the rate of growth for the Dominion as a whole. From now on, however, the West's contributions of wheat will so outweigh those of the East, that the country's rate of increase during the next few years is likely to correspond closely to that of the West. And a crop of 400,000,000 million bushels ten or twelve years hence seems by no means impossible of achievement. As yet the Empire falls by one-half from supplying the United Kingdom with her wheat. Still, assuming that annual consumption by the United Kingdom will have reached 300,000,000 bushels by 1920, Canada alone might possibly make up the necessary supply—allowing for increased requirements here. Of course, "off" years have always to be reckoned with, but if irrigation and more intensive agricultural methods can be made to increase gradually the output of Australasia and India, the Empire as a whole should certainly be able, in the not distant future, to feed the British Isles. In Canada, too, it may be hoped that improved methods of cultivation will tend not only to increase the yield per acre, but to check the "robbing of the soil" which is too prevalent a characteristic of wheat farming in any newly settled territory.