

the South Atlantic States, while the inclosed area is larger, the farming area has decreased by more than 2,000,000 acres.

The test of values is still more indicative. Every farm properly cared for should be worth more money for each year of its life. The increase of population and demand, the growth of cities and markets, and the development of diversified farming with density of settlement should insure a large increment. Even where large quantities of new and fertile land are opened, these influences, together with the lowest cost of transportation in the world, should make the growth of values steady. Within the twenty years between 1880 and 1900 the aggregate value of farm lands and improvements, including buildings, declined in every one of the New England and Middle States except Massachusetts. The total decrease in values, for these ten states, of the first asset of a civilized people is more than \$300,000,000. Nor is the attempted explanation by the census bureau of this shrinkage either adequate or convincing. Even the great and fertile State of Ohio, in the Middle West, showed a decline of more than \$60,000,000. This change in the section of oldest cultivation under modern conditions is significant. It is not singular. The soil of the South is moving on the same decline, though the fact is less obvious in the total change of agricultural conditions since the Civil War. On the new lands of the West, where once the wheat yield was from twenty to thirty bushels per acre, it is now from twelve