

Profits of Farming in the Western States.

Many are led to suppose, that agricultural pursuits are much more profitably carried on in the Western States, than in Canada; but from the best data we have at our command, we are inclined to the opinion that the farmers in this Province, have no good reason to envy the position of the agriculturists of the Western States, or indeed of any other part of the Union. One thing appears to us certain, that in point of natural advantages, Western Canada especially, will favourably compare, with any other section of America of equal extent of territory; and if evidence be required to prove that capital can be more profitably employed here than in the West, the best and most conclusive that can be given, is the testimony of the hundreds, who have migrated from this country to Illinois and Wisconsin, during the past few years. The great majority who left this country for the West, during the past eight or ten years, are not worth as much property at this period, as they were when they first settled in the West, while those who remained upon their farms, and quietly attended to their business, have more than doubled the value of their property in Canada, within that period. We are quite aware that the profits from farming in Canada is not very great, where a farmer is obliged to employ much hired assistance, but we know of no part of America where in proportion to the amount of capital, labour, and skill expended in the cultivation of the soil, a larger proportion of the products will be profits, or a larger net dividend may be realised from investments in land, than in this Province. It is difficult indeed to conjecture what the profits on farming may be under the operations of free trade, but it is pretty clear, that the Canadian farmers cannot possibly be in a worse condition than the farmers of the United States. We shall at an early period, go more fully into the details of this matter, with a view of proving the position assumed in the foregoing remarks, but in the mean time shall lay before our readers, an extract from a letter written by Mr. Hiram, Kennebecott, dated December 1846, for the *Prairie Farmer*, in which he has pointed out in a very concise manner the profits, that can be realised from farming in Illinois, as well as what the soil of that country is capable of producing:—

"And here I would be understood as placing the whole of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin in the same category, as regards soil, climate and

the facility of producing wheat generally. I am aware that it is the general impression, that the country west of Fox River, is better adapted to raising wheat than my own neighbourhood; and such, to some extent, is my own opinion. But taking into consideration their distance from market, and the fact that although their crop is not so liable to be injured by the rust, it is still more liable than with me, to be injured by winter killing. I therefore hold that we are all on the same footing. I further hold, that an average yield of wheat throughout all this region, in favorable seasons, is about 25 bushels to the acre. I have grown as high as 45 bushels per acre, on a small piece of three or four acres, and under favorable circumstances; but have more frequently not got over 18 or 20. In fixing this average, I take into consideration the different modes of preparing the ground for the crop, from sod wheat to wheat after summer-fallowing. Further, that as a general rule not more than 100 acres out of 160, is susceptible of producing good wheat; that the balance throughout all this region, is for the present to a great extent waste land, and pays but little if anything. That its average minimum value is, what it is fixed at by law in regulating our taxes, \$3 per acre. The interest, then, for the use of 100 acres must be computed upon the assessed value of 10 acres, at \$3 per acre; and including wear and tear of fences, at a rate of not less than 12 per centum per annum.

"We have next to add to the cost, or deduction from the profits 33½ per cent, to cover losses from blight, winter-killing, insects, &c. For it is a fact well known to all in this region, that we cannot count upon more than two crops out of the three put into the ground. For although there may be and are exceptions to this rule, still as a general thing the loss from an entire or partial failure, will come up to our estimate.

"Now I shall probably differ from many farmers as much in my estimate of the value of the crop upon the farm, as in my estimate of the risk attending the business: Which I place—taking a year with another and our chances of obtaining the best price the market affords—at 50 cents per bushel. I certainly have never seen the time that my crop would not command this price some one season of the year, and that too at my own door.

"Next, the cost of preparing ground for seeding, where the farmer does his own breaking and plowing—allowing him a reasonable compensation for the use of his team and for his own labor—will vary from 75 cent to \$1 50c. (You will see by referring to my article upon prairie breaking in your May No., that I estimate the cost of breaking at a less figure than is usual—say less than \$1.12½c.) Further, that the cost of harvesting will vary from \$1 to \$1.25c. In the West of Fox River the price is usually \$1 25c. It is true that by the use of machinery large fields can be harvested at a less figure; but such cases will long remain exceptions. None of all these things premised, which appeared to me