

line, is now loaded upon trucks specially prepared to receive it, right in the forest itself, and run down direct to Quebec in three days time, as against three weeks formerly required to float it down in rafts. British Honduras exists as a colony only for its woods; Burmah was annexed to the British rule for its valuable forests of teak; and sandal-wood has been the means of opening up many of the islands of the south seas. Cotton, the importance of which can never be overestimated, has had much to do with the social condition of this continent. Its growth developed the southern States, whose climate suited it well; but requiring harder labour than the planters cared to give, African labour was imported, and the climate suited that race.

Wheat, however, is the great factor of the vegetable world in developing civilization. Climate has much to do with the well-being of this cereal. A hot, dry summer gives it perfection, a changeable and damp summer is detrimental to it. Confined formerly to only certain districts, it is now by adaptation of circumstances grown where a few years ago its cultivation would have been laughed at, and the great wheat fields of India now furnish large supplies, through the extension of railways and by means of irrigation, combined with very low wages. In Australia, the Argentine Republic, Chili and California, wheat is now grown to an enormous extent by means of improved systems of agriculture, and the development of these countries is remarkably increasing.

Look at our great Northwest and the rapid strides of its development. The Canadian Pacific Railway depends largely on wheat as an article of freight traffic, and the lines to the southern frontier from Winnipeg were mainly built for wheat, and as new branches are extended over the prairie, pioneer settlers break up the matted sod that has for centuries turned the rain aside from the soil below, which, soaking into the newly exposed surface, calls forth at once its power of raising grain. What the future of this granary of the world, now throbbing with the strongest and newest life of the west will be, none dare predict. From the height of land south-west of Lake Superior, the whole valley of the Red River northwards to Lake Winnipeg, the undulating prairies rolling westward to the Rocky Mountains, and the Upper Mississippi valley, constitute this granary, and this centre of production is the centre of the river systems of North America. The old