

part of our neighbours, we ought to try to discover what openings are presenting themselves to our farmers.

In his address at the Truro Exhibition, the President of the Agricultural Board showed clearly the importance of selecting for production those products that are best suited to our soil and climate, or those that can, for this and other reasons, be most profitably raised in the Province. In order to determine in detail what these are we require a large amount of information, which, however, our readers in every district of the Province can assist in supplying. Special branches of cultural industry are specially suited to particular localities, and for information respecting such we must wait for local reports. But, in regard to our leading Farm Crops, enough is known to all intelligent farmers to enable their merits to be effectively discussed. We can only hope to undertake one or two of the leading Field Crops on this occasion.

The first to which our attention has recently been called by some remarkable statistics is INDIAN CORN.

The growth of Indian corn continues to increase in the United States, in spite of low prices and other discouraging circumstances, as if it were a favorite crop with American farmers. The returns to Washington show the crop of 1876 only 2 per cent. below the excessive yield of 1875, and fully 50 per cent. above that of 1874. The aggregate is 1,295,000,000 bushels, of which 44 per cent. is raised in the Ohio basin, and 29 per cent. west of the Mississippi, less than one per cent. being raised in New England. In the face of the obvious teaching of these facts it would be folly for Canadian, and especially Nova Scotian, farmers to look to Corn growing as a source of riches. The farther we are from the hot summer climate of the Ohio basin and the Missouri valley, the less chance have we of competing successfully in the corn market with these two head centres. And we are told that the extension of this crop westward is very rapid. Our best advice under these circumstances is to let it die out in this Province. If any of our readers see their way to a different conclusion we shall be glad to hear of the facts that lead to it.

Let us test, by similar comparison, the suitability, or otherwise, of our Province for the POTATO CROP.

In the United States the potato crop is chiefly grown north of the thirty-sixth parallel, east of the Rocky Mountains. On the west of the Mississippi it is attacked by grasshoppers, and on the east by that terrible scourge the potato beetle, whose ravages extend throughout the States into Western Canada. Two years ago we pointed out in this JOURNAL, and in a communication

to the London Times, that Nova Scotia was beyond the range of the Colorado beetle, that our cool maritime climate was inimical to it, that the total absence of native solanaceous weeds offered no temptation for it to stay in the country, even if it did visit us, and that there was no fear of its becoming a scourge, either in the British Islands or Nova Scotia. Our predictions, as they were called, were simply the result of placing together a few obvious facts. So far they have proved correct. Now, the facts that are known in respect to the Potato Crop point it out as one especially deserving the attention of Nova Scotian farmers. The market for potatoes increases year by year; the production in the States continued to increase up to within the last few years, when it was suddenly checked by the Colorado beetle. In 1875, however, the season was so remarkably favorable throughout the Union as to give an extraordinary, we may say, an unprecedented yield. The result of this was that in the spring of 1876, (planting time) potatoes were selling all over America at the slaughter-price of 30 cents a bushel, and, as a natural result, most farmers—not perceiving the true cause of the lowness of price, and not expecting a reaction in the market—did not trouble themselves to plant more than was likely to be required for farm consumption. This of itself would have caused a recuperation in the potato market. But excessive drought during the formation and swelling of the tubers prevailed over nearly the whole of the potato country of the United States as well as of Canada, and this brought a diminished yield. The two causes referred to,—the sparing planting, and the still more sparing watering—resulted in a crop wholly inadequate to meet the wants of consumers. The present high prices are simply the result of the supply being insufficient to meet the demand. What is the prospect for another year? It is that a good many potatoes will be planted all over America, and unusual attention paid to their cultivation. Should the season be favorable, prices next fall will have returned to a low average. We think, however, that there is great reason for encouraging our farmers to increase their potato culture.

Prices may not be, and are not likely to be, as high next fall and winter, as they are now and will probably continue to be till after planting. But there have been favorable circumstances this season for opening up a temporary export trade in potatoes, which it is the interest of our farmers and merchants, in every view, to encourage and develop into a permanent one. We have no grasshoppers like the Western farmers, we have no Colorado

bugs like the New Englanders and the Western Canadians, experience has shown that we can control the potato rot better than the inhabitants of any other country under the sun, we know how to grow potatoes as well even as the Prince Edward Islanders, and we know that our more careful system of marketing insures a readier market and better prices. We have harbours all around our coasts, and plenty of small craft to carry such produce to market. In these circumstances there is no reason why our farmers should not set themselves to work to achieve the very first place as potato producers on this continent.

Two important discoveries have been made that will tend to increase immensely the consumption of potatoes, and this circumstance removes the last trace of hesitation we have in recommending such a course. It is now well established that potatoes, raw or (better) boiled, are the true remedy for scurvy, that a daily use of potatoes on board ship is much better than a daily allowance of lime juice, inasmuch as the one is nourishing as well as antiscorbutic, whilst the other is only medicinal, and tends in its use to promote intemperate habits. The other discovery that we allude to is one that has been developing itself gradually, and is only now beginning to be realized in its fullness in Europe, viz., that potatoes are the most profitable of all root crops for the feeding of stock. Even in Scotland, where turnips were formerly the mainstay, the sheet anchor of high farming, potatoes are rapidly taking their place. The dietum of the last generation was that good farming meant plenty of turnips, but the present generation has changed it into potatoes. The time is rapidly approaching when turnips will be as little known in Scotland for fattening cattle as they are this winter in Nova Scotia. Here, then, is an unbounded field for profitable enterprise on the part of our farmers. Potatoes, like hay, will always find a market, will always bring a fair price, because they are capable of being used not only directly, but as the means of producing other marketable commodities,—beef, butter and cheese. The only hope we see, moreover, of Nova Scotia ever acquiring its true position as one of the leading Cattle Grazing and Dairy Provinces of the Dominion, is through the determined extension of potato culture. No one, in or out of the Province, has more faith than we have in turnips, carrots, parsnips, mangels, or any other roots, but potatoes are so peculiarly suited to the circumstances of this Province, of such easy cultivation in even comparatively unimproved and rough soils, so easily stored, and so useful in so many different ways, that we look upon the Potato as the true Bread-fruit Tree of our country.