



**A**GRICULTURE all over the world is in the agony of a new birth. Forty years ago, during the Crimean War, the price of wheat in Upper Canada was from two to two and a half dollars per bushel. The price in England has lately touched as low as twenty shillings per quarter of eight bushels. In England there has been a tremendous depreciation in the value of landed property. There are those who think that the upshot will be the extinction of the landed aristocracy through the liberation of the soil from primogeniture, entail and settlements and the adoption of reforms facilitating sub-division. Just now, however, the *petite culture* of France, under several million proprietors, is not much better off than the large tenant culture of England. A recent British Foreign Office report says the value of land in the richest of the French departiments is declining, the mortgage debt is growing, and the loan companies are becoming great owners through foreclosure. The municipal octroi, *i.e.*, taxation on produce entering the cities and towns, is a heavy load on the French consumer, and therefore on the French farmer. It is said that dead meat entering Paris has to pay an octroi higher than the duty on foreign meat at the frontier. The total octroi with which the farmers throughout the country are emburdened amounts to \$40,000,000 a year, while \$100,000,000 more is collected from them by the National Government. The answer to their complaints is that they are only paying their fair share of the cost of militarism. But in protectionist France, as in free-trade England and everywhere else, the *causa causans* of agricultural

depression is the fall in prices arising from the development of new farming regions by modern science with its railroads, telegraphs, triple expansion marine engines and machinery.

Britain, for instance, now draws much of her food from countries which a few years ago were not considered important factors in the export market. Last year she bought nearly as much wheat from the Argentine Republic as from her old Russian customers, and took large quantities from India, Australia, Manitoba, Chili and other places, which not long ago were scarcely heard of as cereal-producing countries. Of the 2,300,000 cwts. of fresh mutton imported, 2,000,000 came from New Zealand, New South Wales and the Argentine; Queensland sent an eighth of the foreign supply of fresh beef, all Australia over one-tenth of the butter; Tunis and Algeria are in evidence as barley-shippers, Canada sends more than half of all the foreign cheese and pease consumed, while States of the American Union, which within the memory of men in middle life were blanks on the map, are pouring in thousands of tons of bacon and hams, flour, corn and other breadstuffs. The rate on wheat from a point a thousand miles inland from Buenos Ayres to Liverpool is less than the packer rate used to be from Leith to London. The spread of land and marine telegraphs has turned the whole world into a single market of narrow compass, and modern transportation is so cheap and swift that it is only in rare spots the husbandman cannot get something for his crop. In North America, as everyone knows, the wheat region has been retreating to the north-west with the fall