

The history of all civilized nations has its transition periods as regards every department of life. The habits of to-day differ materially from those of one hundred years ago, and the next century will no doubt revolutionize much, which the present holds sacred and unalterable. Science, in its onward march, is making rapid strides, and society in every sphere is affected thereby. Agriculture as a distinct branch of science, crude though it always has been, and still is, to the masses, affords in the history of its development lessons worthy of close attention and of careful consideration. I shall not take up your space by narrating the revolutions in agricultural practice connected with the great nations of antiquity; either shall I stop to show the intimate connection of the nation's prosperity with the prosperity of the husband-man, but I pass on to the consideration of circumstances peculiarly our own, and coming within the scope of our own observation.

As an agricultural country, England, to-day, is far in advance of the system which obtained there one hundred years ago. Her scant acres demand a progressive tillage to meet, in part, the wants of her increasing population and wealthy landlords; but, with all her higher intellectual culture, England, as a food producing country, cannot compare with China or Japan. Her manufactured goods reach every part of the globe, and, in return, food is brought for her manufacturing people, and her farmers and landlords are not taught to produce for the nation. So long as the East and West offer fields rich in plant food from which to draw large crops, her demands will be supplied, but at the expense of the soil so ravaged. Should the time arrive when these countries shall succumb, as the consequence of the ravaging system, a revolution in the customs of her people must inevitably follow. In this province of Quebec the pioneer period is fast passing away, when muscular men, only, were required to fell the forests and reduce the wilderness to the necessities of civilized life. These men did a noble work, and a virgin soil rewarded their labours with abundant harvests. Time passes; the products of the soil year by year diminish; bad seasons, diseases, and pests, follow; and the farmer never ceases to lament over the crops he "used to grow," forgetting that the soil, like himself, is becoming exhausted and a fit subject for attacks from its natural enemies. This is the dark period. We are now in it, and although it has dealt kindly with us as a whole, there is many an aged man, whose sons have been enticed to the Elysian fields of the West wishing to sell the old homestead for little more than the buildings cost and can find no purchaser even at that price. This is by no means an overdrawn picture; neither is it as discouraging as it seems. The history of every agricultural country, England included, has a similar chapter: Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, and many of the Middle and Western States, are now passing through a like experience. The average wheat yield has gradually diminished from 30 to 12 bush. per acre, through the system of soil spoliation. Manitoba and the great North West offer, no doubt, peculiar advantages at the present time, which appear to shine with a brilliancy brighter than the Crimean war, and the great railroad systems being built at that time, shed on the prosperity of Ontario twenty-eight years ago. History will repeat itself, and thirty years hence the fertile fields of these new provinces will exhibit features similar to those of the older provinces to-day.

We, in Quebec, have every thing in our favor, if intelligence is brought to the assistance of willing hands. The world's great markets are nearer to us than to any of the agricultural provinces of the Dominion. The yield of our virgin soil is equally good; our climate in many respects superior, and if our soil were made to produce its normal quantity, agricultural capitalists from Europe would gladly

settle among us, and no man's farm would go a begging for a purchaser at its true value. To accomplish such a result our successful farmers, i. e., our money making farmers, must revolutionize their system of investments; and, instead of robbing their own land to put a mortgage on another's at a high rate of interest, they must invest their surplus capital on their own farms, and if this be done with an intelligent knowledge of cause and effect, the returns will be paid as regularly and as fully as the interest on any mortgage, besides the satisfaction and comfort which is acquired, and acquired in no other way, by the doing of every thing well. Why do young men go west? Simply because we have not enough of scientific men in our rural districts, to lend that charm and profit to farming which it deserves. They learn little more of the science than "hard work and rigid economy." Every year adds to the number of those who are striving to elevate the standard of our farming operations; but the masses move slowly. The first step is to convince them that superior cultivation always pays. Consider the one item of freight, which must be paid by the producer: (1) 30 bush. of wheat is a good western yield per acre, and by good cultivation that amount can be produced here. The carriage of these 30 bush. from Minnesota, or Manitoba to Montreal is \$6, which is a fair interest on \$100, and capitalizes that amount, so that land here producing the yield given above is worth \$100 per acre more than land producing the same return in the West, other circumstances being equal: but as I have already stated, the other circumstances are mostly in our favour. Schools, literature, and legislation, are taking up this great work and their combined influences are being felt. To raise our provincial wealth to its real value will require both time and energy. Our agricultural societies are composed of the average farmers, and no doubt they have been beneficial; but it seems to me that the time has arrived, when they should have more extended objects in view than giving premiums to the man exhibiting the largest cow or the fattest ox. Why should not each society become a mutual educational club, seeking information from time to time upon all subjects connected with the farm? This I am aware has in some places been tried, but after a short trial has fallen into disuse. The Council of Agriculture could, however, soon put the matter on a permanent footing, by granting public moneys only on the condition that regular meetings were held, and subjects discussed of interest to agriculturalists. I offer the suggestion for the consideration of the proper authorities and at a future time shall take up other matters tending to improve our system of farming, and, as a direct consequence, increase our national wealth. JOHN EWING,

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Richmond P. Q., March 16, 1882.

#### OUR ENGRAVINGS.

The Parade of Shire-stallions.—Spark, the property of Mr Gilbey, for which he gave £1000, is the principal feature in this well designed picture. As Dr MacEchran was just enough to say in the last number of the Journal, "the most noted breeders in Scotland import Shire-mares, and cross them with the best horses in the country, thus producing better horses than the pure Clydes.".....They are marvellous animals, and it is no wonder that the French said of them, at the great Paris exposition of 1878, "they are not horses but elephants."

Cleveland Bay Stallion.—The heavy London "coaches," "landaus," and "chariots," the three carriages *de luxe*, were all drawn by these powerful beasts, when I first recollect them. The Queen had some twenty-five pairs; fine, upstand-

(1) With due deference to the writer, I must say that the consumer invariably pays the freight. A. R. J. F.