The Wheat Crop of 1880.

Where It is Grown—Its Extent—Its Amount.

What Shall We do With It?—How Much Will it Bring?

(From the Milwaukee U. S. Miller.)

Within the memory of man now in active business the wheat crop of the United States was no element in the food supply of the world, outside its own borders.

Thirty years ago, American grain or provisions was not a known quantity of Europe, as there were no surplus for export. At that time, Europe, however hungry she might be, fed herself, or starved. The demand from England, which, owing to her small area of land, as compared with her population, has been for a century the great food-consuming country of the world, drew her supplies from the wheat fields of Russia, through the Baltic ports, and from the Mediterranean ports of North Africa.

Each geographical division of the globe: Europe, Asia, Africa, and America fed themselves, or starved. The great wheat fields of to-day were unknown and unexistent.

Now, through the medium of steam transportation, and the settling up of newer regions, the source of supply has been changed and most marvellously increased, while the point of consumption remains nearly the same.

England is still the point to which the surplus food of the world flows for a final market. Europe is the only division of the habitable globe that does not produce enough to eat. Russia, until the past fifteen years, furnished the surplus of wheat required to supply any European deficit. Since then marked changes have occurred in the sources of supply, and America, to-day, is furnishing so much of the wheat as to have become prime factor in the trade, furnishing, during the past year, 175,000,000 to 180,000,000 bushels in wheat and flour, of a deficit of 250,000,000 bushels. The balance of the deficit was not furnished, as formerly, by Russia entirely, but from sources even newer than America: India and Australia.

Russia is now the only European country that is counted on for any surplus, and as it is reported that, on failing crops, she can no longer be depended on for any definite supply, it is as well in all calculations to ignore her as a source of supply, although for years to come she will probably furnish a large but quite variable and indefinite quantity of the deficit.

The countries now looked upon as the wheat purveyors of Europe are North America (the United States and Canadas), India and Australia, of which America is of paramount importance, as she is able to supply any probable deficit alone.

In the United States only a small section comprises a wheat belt now under cultivation that produces an excess of the requirements of the population. Only nine States, according to the returns of last year, produced an excess for export, viz.: Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin and Nebraska, on the Atlantic slope, and California and Oregon on the Pacific. The adjoining Territories are, however, being rapidly developed, and will this year go to swell largely the increased productions of the States above named.

It will be noticed that the wheat territory is confined to the section north of the Ohio, and west of the Mississippi river, and to the great Pacific slope. The great unsurveyed, and as yet unsettled, areas, in the tract thus imperfectly described, adapted to the raising of wheat, is practically illimitable. Not one-tenth of the land is yet occupied, and if it were all under cultivation, as are the older parts of Minnesota, would produce in one year sufficient to supply twice the quantity the whole world requires. The world's present consumption of wheat is estimated at 2,000,000,000 bu. The present production of the American wheat belt is about 500,000,000 bu. With the undeveloped lands constantly being utilized, the increase in wheat production is likely to far outstrip that in other portions of the globe, and only the interposition of obstacles to the free movement of the wheat to points of consumption can thwart the apparent destiny of this country as the granary of the world for years, if not centuries, to come.

To that lying within the boundaries of the United States is to be added a vast area in the Dominion of Canada, stretching along the lakes, through the Red River country, and ending in a vast unsettled region, believed to be admirably adapted to the raising of small grains.

The wheat crop of the United States is designated by two generic terms—"spring" and "winter." The spring wheat is grown on the lands north of the parallel of 40 degrees, and mostly in the States and Territories north and west of the foot of Lake Michigan. The spring wheat section comprises the States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and the adjoining Territories.

The winter wheat States comprise, on the eastern slope, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and all the States south of the Ohio river, as well as the entire Pacific slope, comprising California and Oregon.

The production, owing to the immense increase in California, Oregon, Missouri, and the States along the Ohio valley, has for the past year made winter wheat the prime factor in the trade. It is harvested earlier than spring wheat, and goes into the channels of trade before the spring wheat is garnered.

The rapid opening up and settlement on the Dakota and other northwestern lands, is again increasing the supply of spring wheat, and may ultimately give it the preponderance, as to quantity, which it formerly held.

The Crop of 1880.

The reports throughout the harvest season were, as usual, conflicting, but at the close of this week the wheat of the whole country is garnered, and the reports are nearly unanimous that the crop is bounteous and the quality excellent,

Winter Wheat.

The harvest commenced earlier than usual in the Southern States, and was unexceptionally good both as to quality and quantity, —so good as to force an unusual amount into market during the past month. Michigan reports a crop of 34,000,000 bus. of white winter wheat against 31,000,000 bus. last year. Illinois and Indiana show a much larger acreage and a better yield. On the Pacific coast the increase both in acreage and yield is large. The San Francisco *Journal of Commerce* estimates the crop at 56,000,000 bushels, which is in excess of the crop of last year 20,000,000 bushels, or nearly 40 per cent. Oregon reports a gain of 30 per cent, both in acreage and quantity. It is believed that there is a surplus from export from California and Oregon of not less than 45,000,000 bushels, the San Francisco *Journal of Commerce* estimating the surplus of the State of California alone at 25,650,000 centals—42,750,000 bushels.

Spring Wheat.

The spring wheat sections have doubtless produced an amount of wheat largely in excess of the bounteous harvest of last year.

In Wisconsin, floods on the rivers and unpropitious weather have, in some parts of the State, nearly destroyed the crop, but the damages have not been in the best wheat-growing sections, and the crop of the whole State it is believed will aggregate as large as last year, although owing to the fact that the southeastern portion of the State has turned largely to winter wheat, the supply of spring wheat may show a slight decrease.

In Minnesota, which leads all others in the production of spring wheat, the crop is all harvested, is of excellent quality, and simply enormous in quantity,—the lowest estimate being 10,000,000 bus. in excess of last year, and the aggregate quantity being estimated at from 38,000,000 to 45,000,000 bus; 40,000,000 bus. is certainly not an extravagant estimate of the yield of that State this year.

Iowa gives only a moderate report, although the acreage has been considerably increased. If she furnishes as many bushels as last year, it will be better than we expect.

Beyond these States, away out as far as railroads go, there is nothing but uninterrupted reports of great harvests of spring wheat, waiting purchasers and transportation. The area of wheat acreage along the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad is estimated at 10,000,000 acres against a known acreage of 6,000,000 acres last year. At the very moderate estimate of 10 bushels to the acre, this would give 100,000,000 bushels of wheat in that region, one-half of which has never entered into any statistical statement before.

Thus having in a general way reviewed the situation we come, in the absence of figures, which will be accessible to nobody till the wheat is sold and passes into the channels of trade, to the attempt to estimate the volume of the enormous crop that is now gathered.

The Amount in Bushels.

The crop of last year, according to the reports based on what has already gone into channels of trade, was 450,000,000 bushels. There is certainly no State in the Union that records a less yield than last year. There is to be added to the product of last year the acknowledged increase in Minnesota of 10,000,000 bushels, in California of 20,000,000 bushels, in Dakota of, say 1,000,000 bushels, in Michigan of 3,000,000 bushels, and that of all the outlying territory along the lines of Western railways which cannot yet be ascertained, except in a general way not reducible to figures.

Assuming the crop of 1879 to be correctly stated at 450,000,000 bushels, there can be no reasonable doubt that that of the present year will exceed 480,000,000 bushels, and is quite likely to reach 500,000,000 bushels. The increased acreage reported by the Agricultural Bureau as sown this year, corroborates our estimate if the yield does not fall below the average for the past ten years.

The question now paramount is, *What shall we do with it?* We may, although no country ever did, use for seed and home consumption 5.5 bushels per capita, which for 50,000,000 of population would dispose of 275,000,000 bushels. This leaves, estimating the crop at 480,000,000 bushels, 205,000,000 bushels surplus. Add to this the visible supply reported last week, of 13,000,000 bushels, and it shows a surplus of 218,000,000 bushels.

Last year, under a most extraordinary demand from Europe, we exported 180,000,000. This is hardly likely to occur during this year. The general harvests in Europe are, instead of being unexceptionally poor, as last year, fairly good, and consequently no demand above ordinary years can be reasonably expected.

The following table shows the exports of wheat and flour, and the price of wheat for the past ten years, also the acreage, yield and products in the United States:

Years.	Acreage.	Yield per Acre.	Total Product Bus.	Price per Bushel.	Total Value of Product.	Wheat & Flour Exported Bus.
1870	18,992,591	12.4	235,884,700	$1 04.2	$245,865,045	52,574,111
1871	19,943,893	11.5	230,722,400	1 25.8	290,411,820	38,995,755
1872	20,858,359	11.9	249,997,100	1 24	310,180,375	52,014,715
1873	22,171,676	12.7	281,254,700	1 16	323,594,805	91,510,398
1874	24,967,027	12.3	309,102,700	0 94.1	291,107,895	72,912,817
1875	26,381,512	11.0	292,136,000	1 00	294,580,990	74,750,682
1876	27,627,021	10.4	289,356,500	1 03.7	300,259,300	57,140,940
1877	26,277,546	13.9	364,194,146	1 08.2	394,695,779	92,141,628
1878	32,108,560	13.1	420,122,400	0 77.7	326,346,424	150,502,506
1879	32,545,950	13.1	448,755,118	1 11	469,008,803	180,000,000

From the above table it will be seen that the average export demand for Europe, adding the extraordinary demand for the past two years, is less than 86,000,000 bushels per annum. It is therefore hardly to be expected that the apparent surplus will find an ultimate market at present prices.

The crop will start from the granaries of the farmers, and after going through the eddies of speculation, and resting in the ponds of local trade, find its level at much lower prices than have ever before been known in this country.

There are, however, counteracting influences which it may be well to consider.

The sparse supply of the European countries for the past two years has entirely depleted the ordinary reserve. With a revival of business, and a reinforcement of their purchasing power, which has been so weak for the past two years, they would not only buy what was demanded for immediate consumption, but refill their exhausted granaries. So, at fair prices, the immense surplus of the American wheat crop of 1880 may be disposed of.

It will, however, find its path to a legitimate market through devious ways. Speculation will stand in its way, although ultimately it will force its own channel.

As to the price of the article, that is "a thing no man will find out"—that it ought to be lower than ever before, under the law of supply and demand is certain. Excepting corn, there is no product of the earth in such superabundance as wheat, and, relative to other necessities of life, it must take a much lower range in price than now obtains before it can be consumed.

MINES AND MINERALS.

OUR MINERAL RESOURCES.

In the next issue of the LUMBERMAN, we propose to follow up the important subject of the mineral resources of Canada, and will refer at some length, to a sketch by Mr. Garret, a well-known Geologist at Ottawa, of the economic minerals, which are to be found in the Ottawa Valley.

Phosphate Mining in Quebec.

MONTREAL, Oct. 2.—There is a good deal of misstatement going abroad in regard to the transaction between Messrs. Dion Bros., phosphate manufacturers, of Granville, France, and the Local Government. It is asserted in a local journal this evening, that the firm in question has obtained a large amount of phosphate land in this province from the Government. Your correspondent was informed by the Premier this evening that there has not been granted a single acre of the public lands, and what is more, it is not contemplated to grant any. Some time since the head of the firm, who is here, made an offer to the Government to establish extensive works for the manufacture of sulphuric acid, which is used in the reduction of phosphates, to be used as a fertilizer. They stated that seaweed, which was one of the substances necessary, could be easily procured at the Saguenay, and other places in Canada. The Dion firm is largely engaged in the same business in France, and the Government, looking upon the proposal as one of infinite importance to this province, agreed, if Messrs. Dion would carry their proposal into effect within one year, to grant them a bonus of $4,000 per annum for ten years, on condition of their supplying to the order of the Government up to 2,000 tons per annum for the same period, at $26 per ton. This is considered a cheap price, as the same kind of fertilizer imported here costs at present $40 per ton. Mr. Dion agreed to the Government terms, whereupon an order-in-Council was passed granting the bonus, and here the matter rests. No agreement or anything else has been signed, but there is no doubt so advantageous an enterprise as the one in question will be entered upon without delay. It is the Messrs. Dion's intention to purchase mines immediately, and they expect to convert about 50,000 tons annually into manure. Nothing definite yet has been determined upon as to the sight of the factory, further than that Montreal is considered the most central point for it. The outlay of money which this enterprise will cost the Messrs Dion will be enormous, but they expect to meet with a large return. The advantage of the arrangement which the Government has made for the province can be estimated, when it is stated that Mr. Joly offered Mr. Goldring if he would erect such a factory, $10,000 per annum. The quantity of phosphates to which the Government will be entitled will be distributed to the farmers through the local agricultural societies.

Phosphate mining in Ottawa county is quite brisk. Mr. William McIntosh, agent for the Pickford Fertilizing Company of London, England, is working the High Rock Mine formerly owned by Richie & Co. The mine has been worked for the last two months, and some 900 tons of phosphate have been taken out, and twelve men are constantly employed. Mr. J. McFarlane & Bros. are working the Preston property. They have taken out about 600 tons this season. Messrs Humphrey and Adams at the Gore of Templeton, have extracted about 600 tons with a small force of men.

A MAN being tormented by corns, kicked his foot through a window, and the pane was instantly gone.