

unreclaimed country. Where is there any thing in Canada like the exuberant mirth of an English "harvest home," when every adult and urchin in the village ran to swell the universal shout, and scramble for the expected "largess," and even palsied age crept out on its staff or crutch to look with pleasure on the scene, and gratulate in childish treble the rich consummation of labours it could no longer share? The rustic merriment of "sheep-shearing," and the resounding hilarity of "hay-making" and the harvest field have no counterparts in Canada, or only such as are shadows to the substance. "Merrie Englands" received its title from the rural merriment which filled its fair and smiling fields. Canada has yet to merit such a title. If our farmers are able in the decline of life to live with tolerable ease, it is not an entire exemption from care and pains. A mechanic or trader will generally retire from business in the course of years, more or less according to the nature of his business, and his advantages therein; but a farmer cannot retire from business, unless he has sons to take it, because he cannot let his farm for a rent sufficient to support him in his old age. He has therefore to continue his efforts, at least in some degree, until he falls like ripened fruit into the grave, or is cut down like corn ripe for the harvest. The inferior circumstances in which farmers are generally found, compared with other classes of the population, the much longer time it takes them to become easy in their circumstances, and the almost total inability to retire from business altogether, all conspire to prove that farming is a much less profitable occupation than most others in Canada, and therefore it seems but reasonable that measures should be adopted to equalize these differences, and place the agricultural interest on at least as good a footing as any other occupation, so far as public regulations can assist individual efforts, or counteract weighty disadvantages.

In considering the subject, it is obvious at the outset that there is one circumstance which is highly favourable to this design, in that there is no other interest that can be brought into competition with the agricultural. In Great Britain, that interest is met by a large manufacturing and a large commercial interest, both of which require cheap food, which the farmer cannot afford. There is therefore an opposition between these interests, and one cannot

be favoured except at the expense of another. But in Canada we have no manufacturing or commercial interest of any moment. The chief occupation of the country is, and must for a long time be, agricultural. That part of the population not engaged in agriculture is probably about one-tenth of the whole. It has, however, been reckoned as high as one-eighth, and taking it at that, it still leaves the immense majority of seven-eighths engaged in agriculture. The interest of this vast portion of the people is of course paramount to every other, and the prosperity of the Province is identical with theirs. If they are permanently injured or depressed, the whole community must suffer. Fluctuations of course there will be, and depressions from temporary causes will occur in spite of all care and all legislation, domestic or foreign. Such cases every man must be prepared for, and he must endure them when they arrive as best he can. No legislation can prevent the operation of natural laws. No scheme can ward off the evils that are but the incidents of our situation and circumstances. No wisdom can supply deficiencies that are inherent in the nature of things, any more than it can turn oats into wheat, or sheep into bullocks.

It is supposed, however, that Canadian agriculturists are suffering at present from evils which may be removed, or greatly mitigated, by merely affording our agriculture a protection similar to that which other countries give to theirs. In the United States, farmers are protected by a duty on foreign produce; and in Great Britain they are also protected by heavy duties, in both cases against large manufacturing and commercial interests. In both cases the State protects the farmer at the expense of the other classes of its people; but in Canada the farmer is left to take care of himself, without being in any way guarded from the competition of foreigners, who, while they readily avail themselves of his open markets, take good care not to allow him similar advantages in return. Thus the Canadian farmer is not placed on an equal footing with his brethren in England, nor does he enjoy the protection of his government in this respect, although it has almost no other class to protect. Foreigners are allowed to use our markets as if they were their own, for in them the State makes no difference between its own children and strangers, —no difference between those who are taxed for its support, and those who never pay a pen-