

## The Outlook.

**I**F it were possible for the agriculturist of Ontario to peep into the future, and to see with any degree of certainty what particular branch of his chosen calling was likely to give the greatest returns for the time and money expended, it would be quite an easy matter for him to have a handsome amount on the right side of his accounts when balanced in years to come; yet this can be done to a greater extent than we generally realize, by the exercise of foresight, one of these brilliant characteristics with which nature has so generously endowed mankind.

Intelligent calculations of the prospects of agriculture cannot be made without a consideration of past events, and also of conditions as they at present exist. For this purpose the history of this Province may conveniently be divided into three distinct periods, *i. e.*, The Pioneer. The Golden, and that of Financial Depression.

In this age of steam and electricity it is difficult for us to realize the hardships with which the pioneer settlers of this country had to compete. Their social and educational disadvantages cannot be conceived by those who have enjoyed the privileges of our modern system of education. True, the necessities of the early settlers may have been few, but then the majority were filled with an untiring ambition to own some spot of earth where they could be independent, and find food and comfortable shelter for those whom they loved.

At that time there were no markets, and consequently the clearing of land went on slowly. But soon a brighter era dawned. The Government began building colonization roads, opening the country to commerce. This was followed by the building of such railways as the Northern, the Great Western, and the Grand Trunk; all of which resulted in the establishment of markets, and the products of the soil began to bring encouraging returns to the toiler. Wheat, which was then the chief article of production, began gradually to rise in price, and ere it had reached the dollar and a half mark, the Golden period began. Then it was that the farmer began to have rosy visions of wealth. All the available acreage was so repeatedly sown with the chosen cereal that the soil became impoverished, and as a result much smaller yields were obtained. This condition