

arises, in my opinion, out of their occupation of too much land. In the early settlement of the country, this could have no injurious effect; but after a few years, instead of bringing under a proper state of cultivation the fields which had been already cleared, the strife between neighbours consisted in the quantity of *new* land which they would sow, and from that to the quantity which they were able to own; and this led to imprudent speculations in purchasing wild lands, to be held over for their families: thus setting a bad example to these around them—saddling themselves with heavy debts, the effects of which are at this moment pressing many a man to the ground. The origin, however, of this mischief lies in the mistaken though paternal intentions of good old George the Third, in causing the allotments to the U. E. Loyalists to be two hundred acres each. If only one hundred or even fifty acres had been the quota, I am fully persuaded that we should this day have seen a very different face upon the country.

We have now the most indubitable proof, that the aggregate production of any agricultural country or district is increased with the subdivision of the land. That the accumulation of large tracts of land in the hands of a few persons, is injurious to every agricultural country where it is permitted, we have not only our own experience to convince us at this day, but also the experience of the old world. It is recorded in the old testament, that the landed estates both of the kings and some of their subjects were large; for we read that Uzziah, king of Judah “had much both in the plains and in the low country; husbandmen also, and vine-dressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved husbandry”; that Elijah found Elisha with twelve yoke of oxen at the plough, himself being with the twelfth yoke; and that Job, the greatest man of the east, had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand she-asses. And such, it appears, had been the accumulation of landed property in the hands of a few proprietors, in the time of Isaiah, that that prophet was inspired to utter a curse against its engrossment: “Wo unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.”

The third suggestion is, that we vary and increase the number of our products.

The principal article of produce for exportation upon which we have hitherto depended, is wheat. We are yet, it is true, making lumber to some extent up the Ottawa, the river Trent, and a few other places in the Upper Province, yet it is evidently dwindling into insignificance, and what is made yields now little profit. It is also true, that within the last few years a considerable traffic in sawed lumber has been carried on with the United States; but it strikes me that, although this affords a present relief, it will result in an actual impoverishment of the country. We are, so far as this article goes, living, in fact, upon the proceeds of a post-obit upon posterity. At any rate, we are paying the United States for their privilege of exporting timber and wheat, in the shape of

duties, about half a million of dollars a-year! But, gentlemen, there is nothing like free trade!—we certainly have the option to pay this or let it alone.

Wheat, then, having always been—and being now, indeed—the staple and principal article of export, upon which we can in future rely, its cultivation, undoubtedly, is of the very first importance to Canada. I hope, therefore, that I shall be excused, in so far departing from my original design, as to take a hasty glance at a few prominent points in the process of its cultivation.

The origin of wheat cannot be traced out. The general opinion seems to be, that it has been produced from the cultivation of a mere grass. It is quite certain that its cultivation was very general one thousand years before the Christian era; for it is stated in the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, that “Judah traded in wheat of *Minnith*.” But it is stated, that from the passage, “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” it may be inferred that it was coeval with creation. However this may be, we know that it is the most valuable plant known to man; and that from the beginning of its known cultivation, this cereal has been the principal object of the husbandman’s solicitude. The Romans enumerate thirty varieties, and at this day there are hundreds. May it not be that, inasmuch as we know that the number of varieties has increased, and that so far as we are enabled to trace it up, the quality has improved; that by the aid of science, such a revolution in its production may ere long take place, as will, either in quantity or quality, or both, increase its value to an extent which at present it is impossible to estimate; and so also with other cereals.

One of three things—so far as human judgment can divine—must take place: either the earth must yield more food for man, or war, pestilence and famine must thin the human race; or else the Malthusian plan of preventing the propagation of the species must be carried out. We need not place much dependence upon the last of these, but war, pestilence and famine have for some time been, and are now, rapidly sweeping off the human race. That the culture of wheat, in the United Kingdom especially, has within a very few years been much improved, we have sufficient evidence in the fact, that even with the annual increase of the population, the importation of foreign grain has decreased, and is continually decreasing; so that by the aid of science, and consequent improved systems of husbandry, it is consolatory to know that under a fast-increasing population, the dependence on a foreign supply for bread is continually growing less. A very erroneous impression is abroad with respect to the dependence of Great Britain upon the United States for bread. The fact is, that whilst Great Britain imports ordinarily twenty millions of bushels of foreign corn, only two millions come from the United States. I do not take into this account the last two or three years of unusual scarcity, arising chiefly from the potatoe failure.

The cause to which the increase of production is mainly attributable, is the small farm and allotment system, which has been lately making its way rapidly in public favour. The small farmers