

year the seasons having been most favorable to Illinois, as to most other portions of the Northern States and Canadas, nature wears her most smiling aspect. For miles along the railway hundreds of acres are to be seen covered with a most luxuriant growth of corn, some as high as sixteen feet. The variety commonly grown is the *Dent*, or Horse-tooth corn, which I believe throws up but one shoot, while the labor of removing the suckers, as with other varieties, is done away with, and the general produce is but two ears to each stalk. The careless system of cultivation may be imagined from the fact that 40 acres is considered a proper amount for one man to cultivate in a season. Under ordinary good cultivation the average yield is stated to be 40 bushels per acre, and this year it is set at 50, though some pretend to export 80 and others even 100 bushels per acre of shelled corn. This year the price will probably be from 15 to 20 cents per bushel. The grain is always bought in the ear, and 72 lbs. of corn in the ear is reckoned equal to 56 lbs. of shelled grain. It is to the production of corn alone that the whole of central Illinois seems particularly adapted, the absolute deficiency of lime in the soil rendering it unfit for the production of wheat; and in Northern Illinois the want of snow as a protection from the frost, and the prevalence of keen biting winds which sweep unchecked across the country, render the cultivation of any but spring wheat very precarious. In Northern Illinois lime is most abundant, but further south the price of \$1 per barrel will for a long time be a bar to its general use for agricultural purposes. This deficiency in the soil itself, and the general want of drainage are the great impediments in the way of farmers to a certain adequate return for his labor and will afford an easy explanation of the comparative failure of the crops in Illinois for the past three years. A machine similar to the English mole plough has been worked in some places, and will probably come into use in many more as a cheap means of temporary drainage; but in a country where the general level of the land is so complete a more careful system will be necessary to ensure thorough drainage, as it seems impossible to regulate the depth of the drain in passing over any inequalities or undulations of surface.

Without attention to drainage, farming—especially in Illinois—must be unreliable as a profitable pursuit. The general difficulty of getting the water away must prevent an early seed time, and the succession of a season of drought will entail a failure.

Very good water can be reached in many places by digging from 30 to 60 feet, but frequently boring has been resorted to for a depth of 150 feet. Great inconvenience must be felt for want of water for the large herds of cattle pasturing on the prairies, as there are few rivers or creeks crossing the country, and the sloughs or water courses draw their supplies only from surface water, and therefore fail as the season advances.

The price of land in the unbroken prairie varies from \$5 to \$20 per annum. The average value of a farm in at all an eligible situation would be fifteen dollars per acre. The contract price of the rather poor fence, usually built of posts and four six inch strips of boards is a dollar a rod, which will come to four dollars per acre for an outside fence, 160 acres in a square. To this will have to be added the expense of a house and any other buildings the settler will consider necessary, which will all have to be paid for in money, as no materials of any kind will be found on the land.

The value of improved land varies from 30 to 50 dollars per acre. It is said that the ordinary expense of cultivating and harvesting the corn is from 8 to 10 cents per bushel; the average yield 40 bushels per acre and price 20 cents per bushel. There are three methods of harvesting. The most slovenly is perhaps not very much practised at present—namely, when the corn is ripe to turn the cattle into it, and a certain number of hogs with them to feed off the corn in the field during the autumn and winter. Another process, and the most common, is to drive directly through the corn and gather the ears from the stalk and load them at once into a waggon, leaving the stalks to be fed off by the cattle, and the corn is thus sold. The third method is that used in the Eastern States, namely, to cut and shock the crop, and then during the winter corn, stalk and all, are thrown out to cattle to be fattened, two hogs being turned into the yard with each one. In this manner is computed that one ox and two hogs will consume and fatten upon half a bushel of corn a day. In this centres the business of Illinois—namely the production of corn, beef and pork and its capacity for this seems unlimited, boundless is the territory capable of being cultivated for this purpose. The actual production being of course ruled by the seasons each year, though we doubt not as population increases and capital flows in, more careful cultivation and the all indispensable drainage eventually ensure a greater certainty of productivity. As to the salubrity of the climate there was little opportunity of forming an opinion in so short a period as that occupied by excursion. Those however whom the travel met seemed to enjoy the best of health. It is said that as the country gradually became cultivated the malaria disappeared in the prairie, but that there was more sickness in the neighborhood of the few rivers of the east and the wooded parts adjoining.

These observations are made by a Canadian who fully appreciates the richness of the soil of Illinois; but it will not be surprising that he should compare the two countries in a manner favourable to his own. One of the most important points is that there are immense quantities of excellent well-cleared land in Canada to the best wheat producing lands of Northern Illinois, which can be purchased for less