

D. J. Miller

# THE CANADA FARMER



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#### CANADA AND ITS AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.

WHEN the mother country, after enduring for half a century the effects of her eccentric legislation on agricultural products, was forced by the unpretending instrumentality of a rotten potato to adopt a more enlarged and natural policy by repealing all duties on the importation of grain, Canada may be said to have attained her majority, and to have taken her national rank, not as heretofore, in infantine dependence on the parent state, but as a willing, though free contributor to her requirements and necessities. Ever since this period Canada has been gradually improving in her internal condition until the present moment; and impelled by the fortuitous, but much to be deplored, events of the day, she stands in the somewhat singular, but encouraging position, of chief purveyor both to Great Britain and the neighboring republic.

It may be remembered that the great apprehension of the opponents of free trade in produce, was an overwhelming influx every year from the United States; overlooking, or more probably, not knowing, that the enormous increase of population in America, coupled with the not less rapid growth of her manufacturing industry, was calculated to diminish her surplus produce in a corresponding ratio; for statistical

facts show that the increase of population during the past moiety of our century, has ever been in advance of the production of the necessaries of life. In Great Britain this has been the case in a very noticeable degree, notwithstanding that agricultural improvement has always been making some advance there, however slow. Within the last forty years the population has doubled; and yet it is very questionable whether the increased production of the soil at this day, over the first quarter of the century, will exceed fifty per cent. No doubt the extraordinary efforts which have been made within the last few years, by drainage and other operations of a permanent character, have raised the average produce very considerably; but even yet there is a vast void to be filled up. A very competent authority has recently estimated the wheat crop of Great Britain for last year at 16,500,000 quarters, against a consumption of 18,000,000 quarters, thus leaving a deficiency of 1,500,000 quarters of wheat to be imported from some other country. In the United States the population has in the same period quadrupled; whilst, from the absence of many facilities enjoyed by older countries, the scarcity and dearness of labor, and other causes, the amount of agricultural production has fallen from a surplus to below that of the consumption; and wheat is consequently imported to a very considerable extent from Canada. In Canada itself, the census returns exhibit an increase in the inhabitants at the rate of 104 per cent. in ten years, which, irrespective of any other influence, is quite sufficient to account for that gradual advance in prices which has been realized. European events have, of course, tended materially to extend this natural rise in prices; but if peace were to be proclaimed to-morrow, there is every reason to believe that, with the demand for home consumption gradually increasing, with a no less certain and extensive demand on the other side