

a soil of surpassing fertility, yielding enormous returns, without much labour or expense in cultivation; they have drawn from this generous soil all that it could render, without care, and without manuring. The generations following have treated it as recklessly, and have left it to us, if not sterile, at least greatly impoverished; invaded by parasitical plants, undrained, exhausted, and without shelter of any kind, the soil is now reduced to a most deplorable state. Now, let us compare our heritage with that of our contemporaries of Europe;—there, all is done; all that remains is but to perfect the work; here, all is yet to be done, everything is to be begun.

There capital is abundant; and the Governments, to encourage thorough improvements, hesitate not to lend considerable sums to the agriculturists; here, capital is wanting; the Government itself is in want of resources, it is new as the country, and has done all within its power.

In Europe, land is classed according to quality; each quality has its intrinsic value determined, which rarely varies. This assigned value to the land has been, for many years past, calculated on the net proceeds of the rental. In consequence, when a proprietor undertakes an improvement, it is because he knows that by so doing his land will be raised from an inferior class to a superior, and thus increase his revenue, that is to say, the rent of his farm. It is merely an investment of his funds.

And besides, in well cultivated countries, all the available land is cultivated; and often, as in England and Belgium, it is far from sufficing for the wants of the immense population which covers it. The holders of land finding from thence an assured outlet for their productions they strive to produce the greatest amount possible, and as they cannot extend the limits of the arable land, they seek in improvement what they cannot obtain by extension. From this arises those harvests, almost pheno-

menal, which we see every day registered in the records of European agriculture.

Now, let us turn our eyes towards Canada, what is the price of your land? who is able to assign them an intrinsic value, positive and fixed? does it not often happen that the *accessories*, that is to say, the buildings and dependencies, constitute three fourths of the whole value? and how often have I heard it said, that the harvests of newly cleared land were of more value than the land itself.

Whilst, at scarcely 30 miles from Montreal, even in the heart of the country, there is to be found virgin soil of incredible fertility, ready to be given to the first settler for a trifling consideration, could those improvements be considered reasonable which would cost enormous sums, and which would not raise to an equal state of fertility the miserable soil upon which they would be executed.

I have just remarked, that England contains more inhabitants than her soil is able to sustain; on the contrary, it is well known that the Canadian farmer possesses twice as much land as he is able to cultivate, that the population of the whole province of Lower Canada is inferior to that of London, although her territory surpasses in extent that of Great Britain.

I shall not terminate these parallels without observing that, in several European States, and in England particularly, by a course of legislation, and the excessive price of land, the great bulk of the property is to be found almost exclusively in the hands of a privileged class, who do not themselves cultivate, but in whom the innate taste for agriculture, and their immense capital second powerfully the efforts of the farmers who act for them. The farmers themselves, though not rich enough to become proprietors, possess, nevertheless, sufficient capital for working their farms, and guaranteeing their rents to the proprietors. The landowners have, therefore, every interest in improvements, whilst they are certain of finding able far-