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*The Field and Farm Yard.*

TIMES ARE HARD FOR FLOUR IS HIGH.

Strangers are much puzzled with a remark which we have frequently heard in Nova Scotia of late years, that "the times are hard for the farmers, for flour is high." Now, the farmer is regarded in England as a constitutional grumbler.—there is always something or somebody at fault, too much drought for the turnips, too much rain for the grain, blighting cold winds for the hops, or else nasty muggy weather that brings potato disease. Is the Nova Scotian farmer a constitutional grumbler likewise, it has been asked, that he even complains because the produce markets are good? The true answer is one that strangers receive almost with incredibility: *Our farmers are buyers, not sellers, of bread-stuffs.* Now this is one of the most lamentable facts connected with our agriculture, and it cannot be too prominently kept before our people, and before the people likewise of the Atlantic States, who are in a like position with ourselves in this, that the grain produce of their fields is not more than sufficient to give them bread for two or three months in the year. It is a fact which

derives increased importance, if we reflect upon the mode in which American agriculture has been, and is likely for some time to be, pursued. The great wave of European civilization has swept away the primeval forests from the Atlantic sea board westward, and has left behind a broad expanse of unproductive land. Crop after crop has been taken, and the pioneer farmer moves westward. Western fields become barren also through a similar process. The fertile wheat lands of the prairies are already here and there receding from the farmer like the mirage hills and dales on the great pampas, for it is only the very richest lands that can continue year after year to yield their annual crop of wheat like the everlasting hay fields of the Minas marshes. In Western Canada more careful cultivation is lessening the evil to some extent, but even there it is widely felt. "Our farms do not yield wheat as they used to." The yearly increase in the prices of grain may be, and has been, referred to a dozen causes less general in their operation, but is unmistakably due in the main to the increased wants of an increasing population, and the diminished power of a rapidly deteriorating soil. We have often enough brought before us the subsidiary questions of regulating by fiscal

arrangements the movements of grain and the *lines of transit*, whether it is better for grain to come to us this way or that way, and so on; but it would be well for themselves and for the country, if our farmers would take up seriously the more general question, whether we cannot in this country do more than has yet been done in contributing to meet the grain-wants of the people. Agricola, in his famous letters, pressed this subject home to our farmers, and with excellent results. Let those of our readers who possess his work turn to the 9th letter, and read it carefully in the light of the present state of things.

In a recent article in the Edinburgh *Journal of Agriculture*, it is observed that, "considering the precariousness of the foreign supply, and the danger of its being interrupted either by war or a deficient harvest, it is to the interest of the British farmer to grow as much wheat as possible." The rapid increase by emigration of the population of the United States, has been more than met by the production of cereal food, but the increase has taken place only in the new Western States, the produce of the older States having largely decreased. According to Mr. Wells, "the same law of deterioration is observable in the richer regions of