

PRESENT STATE OF AGRICULTURE
IN CANADA.

"Many a man has laid out his capital of five, ten and twenty thousand, in improvements in Canada, and had he any fair play, might have been in comfortable circumstances; whereas, most are ruined, sold out, or mortgaged to the country storekeeper, to whom they had to apply for the bare necessities of life; and so far from being in a condition to use the manufactures of England, are glad to cover their nakedness with the rough homespun of the country."—From a late Correspondent of the Montreal Herald.

We quote the above paragraph from a late communication in the Montreal Herald, signed *A Practical Man*. The writer appears to be a strenuous advocate for agricultural protection, and with most of the views that he advanced we perfectly agree, especially the deductions which he made relative to the late duty of 3d. per lb., to be levied on the article of foreign hops; but we humbly conceive that the assertions made above are incorrect, and calculated to do much injury to the country. Although we highly recommend protection and reasonable encouragement to every branch of native industry, still we are not prepared to say that the Canadians are not capable of successfully competing with their neighbours, who have climate, soil, markets, and other circumstances similar to their own.

The enterprising farmers of Vermont may safely challenge the agricultural class of any State of the Union, for a comparison of circumstances. The climate and soil of this little mountainous State, will bear no comparison to the climate and soil of the Montreal District and the Eastern Townships. To contrast the genius of the people of those places, we would merely cite the reader to the fact that the Vermonters have been large exporters of maple sugar and cheese, whilst the Canadians have been extensive importers of these articles. The latter have destroyed the large thrifty maple which abound in their forests, whilst the former have carefully reared most of their trees, by forming plantations or groves on the most rocky and barren portions of their country. It is not a remarkable circumstance for a Vermont farmer to have from 150 to 200 well bred cows; and although cheese is worth only three dollars and a half per cwt., and the taxes 300 per cent. greater than in this country, yet we hear far greater complaints from the Canadians with climate, soil, taxes, and the advantages of the British markets in their favour, and, at the same time, the price of the article of cheese is more than an hundred and fifty per cent. greater than in the former country.

The question is easily solved.—The green-mountain farmers are a frugal, industrious, and comparatively well educated and enterprising race of people. They make it a point to produce and manufacture all the necessaries of life they require, and instead of considering it a humiliating circumstance to "cover their nakedness" with the rough homespun of the country, they have, a half a century ago, so far improved their sheep husbandry, that their

woollen and cloth manufacturers have turned out an article of cloth, quite suitable for the first gentleman of the land.

If the farmers in Vermont do afford to undersell the Canadian farmer in his own market,—although the advantages both naturally and artificially are understood to be in favour of the latter,—we certainly think that the cause which produces this effect ought to be a matter for the serious consideration of all classes. If we were at liberty to express ourselves clearly and freely on this point, we might, without much difficulty, show conclusive reasons for the present very depressed state of Canadian agriculture and trade in general; but as a conductor of an agricultural paper—an occupier of neutral ground—we have no right to trespass, by introducing subjects in the columns of our magazine that more directly come under the province of the Canadian press in general. Notwithstanding the nature of a portion of the causes which have produced a general depression in all business transactions, do not range within the line of latitude which we have marked out as a future guide-post for our exertions in advancing our country's welfare, still we feel a perfect freedom in pointing out the errors—the deeds of omission and commission—which the producing classes have committed. The progress of improvements in agriculture and manufactures, have been slow indeed in this colony, when compared with the gigantic strides of improvement in Europe and the United States of America.

The population of this colony consists of persons from all nations, each possessing his own national or party prejudices, consequently a combination of effort, for the general good, has never been thought a matter worthy of an attempt, as the material is so very discordant that the intelligent and enterprising portion of the community have been discouraged to make an effort to introduce a general improved system of managing the naturally fertile lands of this colony.

The valley of the St. Lawrence contains thousands of acres of fertile lands that cannot be excelled for the growth of flax and hemp—for the production of dairy produce, and for sheep husbandry on an extensive scale; and although the farmers in that section of the country have not been able to grow their breadstuffs for the past eight years, owing to the ravages of the fly, yet no steps have been taken by the gentry, nor by the farmers themselves, to produce the above description of produce. Nothing in fact has been done to place agriculture in that portion of the Province in a healthy position, and it has been a matter of surprise with us that the farmers in Canada East have not literally starved, owing to the calamity above mentioned, and the remarkable apathy which exists in the breast of a large portion of the population, on all matters relating to their true interests.

The moment that the fact was ascertained that it was useless to sow wheat, public meetings should have been called in each parish,

by the most active and intelligent farmers in that section of the country. Possibly the very individual whose communication has influenced us to pen these remarks would have been a suitable person for the task. The cultivation of hemp and flax, in connection with the dairy business, on a large scale, should have been recommended; and the business should have been put in immediate and active operation at once by the leading or most able farmers, and others would unquestionably have followed the example.

If movements like those had been put in vigorous operation, Eastern Canada might have profitably supplied the Western country with every description of cordage, canvass, bagging, and linseed oil, and have been a large exporter of dairy produce and Canadian cloth; all of which might have been profitably produced, and afforded at remunerating prices, if skill and economy were expended in their production. A large tract of country, bordering on the Ottawa River, lying a considerable distance from Montreal, is capable of producing large crops of hemp and flax, of the strongest texture, which is now thought comparatively worthless, and which will not be brought into market for half a century to come, unless more efficient steps be taken to introduce improvements in the management of the land now under cultivation.

We would recommend "*A Practical Man*" to take steps to induce other practical men in his circle of acquaintance to organize hemp and flax associations in each township or parish, and circulate information through every nook and corner of the same, of a most suitable character, to instruct the most ignorant cultivator in all the minutia of the management of these plants.

When strong-handed measures like the foregoing be taken, and after all the professional Canadian agriculturists prove a sinking business, then may a "*Practical Man*," with some propriety, advance the doctrine which we have quoted from his very ill digested, and we may add, dangerous letter. If the doctrine be true, we would consider the individual who would recommend the capitalist to invest his money in the colony, or who would endeavour to induce newly arrived emigrants to embark their capital in the cultivation of the soil, to be highly culpable; but we feel no scruples in pronouncing the principle involved in the quotation to be founded in error.

In Western Canada, ninety-nine have become independent by cultivating the soil where one has been beggared. We could point out hundreds of cases in which parties have become wealthy in the course of 12 or 15 years, without having a single sixpence to commence with, merely by cultivating the soil. We certainly know of scores of farmers who are worth \$10,000 each of property, who had not sixpence to call their own 25 years ago. In another department of our journal we shall, in future numbers, mention the names and places of residence of certain parties who have suc-