THE BONANZA FARMS.

Things Seen in a Trip Through the Vast Wheat Fields of Minnesota and Dakota.

From the Atlantic Monthly.

Within the past year or two a new development in agriculture in the great Northwest has forced itself upon the public attention that would seem destined to exercise a most potent influence on the production of all food products and work a revolution in the great economies of the farm. But not enough was known of this new movement to enable one to form any just estimate of either its force or extent. For the purpose of obtaining the data necessary to a more correct understanding of the operations of what are known as the "bonanza farms" and their present and probable future effects, the writer went upon the ground to make them a study.

On reaching St. Paul I visited the land office of the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad to gather some facts in regard to southern Minnesota. The Land Commissioner, James H. Drake, Esq., learning the purpose of my tour in the Northwest, expressed a strong desire that I should go over their road, visit some of the great farms in its neighborhood, and see the country for myself. He spoke enthusiastically of the country, and particularly of the rare opportunities there presented for the investment of capital in agriculture as a first-class financial operation; also of the general and particular attention that great capitalists were giving to the matter, especially on the line of that road, and mentioned a large number who had already embarked in the business, and others who had purchased lands with that object. I desired him to give me a list of some of the names, to which he at once responded with the following memorandum:

Thompson and Kendall farm, about 7,000 acres; the Rock County farm, near Luverne, Thompson and Warner, 50,000 acres, of which about 6,000 acres are under cultivation; President Drake, of St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad, has numerous farms with tenants working on shares; Gen. Bishop, manager of railroad, has 3,200 acres under cultivation; George T. Sney, President Metropolitan Bank, New York, has 2,000 acres under cultivation, near Shelton, Iowa; A. E. Orr, of David Dows & Co., New York, has a large farm on the line, and Gold Smith, the great German banker, Frankfort-on-the-Main, has several large farms; President Drake's son and Horace Thompson's son are each managing large farms, and every director in the organization has his large farms, with tenants cultivating the soil.

The Commissioner also placed in my hands a circular, in which he endeavors to prove to the capitalist that investments made in the lands of that road at current prices, and cultivated in wheat and other crops, will pay 20 per cent. upon the whole investment the first year, and 55 per cent. the second.

I gladly accepted his invitation, and travelled upon that road to the points he designated, and some others. After running about seventy-five miles upon the borders of a well-wooded stream, we emerged upon an open, treeless, rolling prairie, not unlike the prairies of Kansas; hence to Windom, seventy-two miles further, was a succession of prairie billows, with an occasional lakelet and some dozen apparently flourishing towns.

The morning after my arrival I visited the farm of Richard Barden, Esq., about six miles to the eastward of Windom. Mr. Barden, whom I had the good fortune to meet on the place, is a well-known and prominent grain dealer, residing in St. Paul. He has 2,100 acres of land, 1,200 of which is in wheat, with a small amount in oats and barley. The work of the farm is done by monthly labor, under the direction of a superintendent. On the place is a small, neat one-story house, the residence of the superintendent, with two large barns and a long shed. The farm is stocked with a small herd of about twenty-five very fine short-horned cows and two bulls, and a select flock of very high-bred mares and horses. There is but a small amount of fencing on the place; the law in Minnesota, as in most of Kansas, allowing the fence question to be decided by the various districts.

About three miles to the south of Mr. Barden's place is the farm of Messrs. Thompson and Shaw, consisting of 1,300 acres, with 300 acres in wheat. On the place is a fine two-story double house of wood, occupied by the proprietors. They are young men without farm ties, and sons of well-known capitalists in St. Paul. The place is well stocked and has a small number of hired men in the employment of the firm who were discharged by other labor in the busier seasons.

We next visited the farm of Thompson and Kendall, about eight miles west of Windom, where we were received by Mr. Kendall, who is a practical farmer and directs the operations. The farm contains 4,480 acres, of which 1,600 are in wheat, 245 in oats, 265 in barley, 235 in flax, 150 in buckwheat, 40 in turnips, and 40 in sundries; total, 2,575 acres.

On the place is a neat one-story white cottage house, the residence of Mr. Kendall and family; also a large two-story wooden house, for boarding the farm hands, offices, &c.; two large barns; an ice house with 90 tons ice; four tenement houses of one story on portions of the farm that had been leased on shares; a corn crib, 20 by 100 feet, with piggery underneath; two vegetable houses, to contain 3,000 bushels; with other large barns, smaller buildings, sheds, and sheep pens in process of construction. The farm is stocked with 84 head of cattle, a part being good short horns; 62 horses, mostly mares; 140 hogs and 240 sheep, to be increased before winter to 1,000, and about 1,000 fowls.

At the time of our visit, July 9, fifteen men were employed; during harvest it was expected that the number would be increased to about eighty. The average number employed during the year is some thirty-four, at a cost of about $17 per month, their board costing $4.50 per month.

The yield of wheat in good seasons is generally not less than 20 bushels to the acre; this year 12 bushels only are expected. Last year the No. 1 wheat was worth on the farm 70 cents; No. 2, 40 cents. Owing to heavy and unseasonable rains, alternating with hot days, much of the wheat was blasted in September, and was graded as number four. The oats and barley promised well. Some of the fields of oats were estimated as high as seventy bushels, and barley fifty bushels, to the acre. All but the wheat looked remarkably well. The large amount of flax here growing, as well as in other places, was being pulled, as the best seed, from a field which appeared to be long and excellent, was put to no use.

In harvesting the grain fourteen self-binders are used, cutting each a swath of six and a quarter feet, and fifteen acres per day.

Mr. Kendall gave me the following copy of a carefully made up detail statement of the cost per acre of wheat growing:

ESTIMATE FOR RAISING WHEAT, FURNISHING EVERYTHING.

	$ cts.
Ploughing 2½ acres per day, $20 per month wages, 77 cents per day. Per acre	31 0
Harrowing, 3 men, $70; harrows, $3; plough, $20—$93. Per acre	02 2
Seed and seeding, 20 per cent. in addition	11 2
Board, man per day, 20 cents; team, 45 cents. Per acre	26 0
Salesmen's labor and board. Per acre	20 0
Stable man, wear and tear, and interest on team and implements, one-quarter of an acre	
Sewing 30 acres per day; wages $20 per month, 77 cents per day. Per day	02 2
Board, man, 20 cents; team, 45 cents per day. Per acre	01 9
Wear and tear on sealer $65.25 per cent. Per acre	03 9
Interest at 10 per cent. Per acre	2
Harvesting (wire or cord binder) for wire or cord. Per acre	50 0
15 men per day, wages $20 per month, 77 cents per day. Per acre	05 1
Board of man 20 cents, team 50 cents, per day. Per acre	05 0
Interest on reaper $250, at 10 per cent., 150 acres per season. Per acre	16 0
Wear and tear on reaper, $250, at 25 per cent., $62.50; 150 acres per season. Per acre	41 6
Stacking, 15 men at $2 per day, 40 acres per day, and board at 25 cents. Per acre	10 2
Threshing, 25 men at $2 per day, 40 acres. Per acre	1 25 0
Boss, 25 men at 25 cents per day, 40 acres. Per acre	15 6
Interest and wear and tear on thresher and engine	10 0
Marketing team, 77 cents; board, 20 cents; board of team, 45 cents; 4 acres. Per acre	32 5
Freight, 18 cents per 60 bush. Per acre	2 60 0
Incidentals, including interest and wear and tear on permanent investment. Per acre	2 00 0
Total cost per acre	$8 69 6

This estimate makes the cost of an acre of wheat, yielding twenty bushels, placed in Chicago, with an allowance of 10 per cent. interest on the whole investment for land, improvements, machinery, tools and stock, and also of 25 per cent. for wear and tear of tools, machinery, and stock to be $8.69.6, not including seed. Allowing $1 for the seed will make the cost of one acre of wheat, yielding twenty bushels, laid down in Chicago, and paying on ordinary interest or profit of 10 per cent. on the entire investment $9.70, or 48 cents a bushel. With wheat at 85 cents a bushel in Chicago, this would give an additional profit of 37 cents a bushel, or $7.40 for each acre over and above the 10 per cent. of ordinary profit, which, in this $9.70 outlay, at this rate, the extraordinary profit of $7.40 per acre on the 1,600 acres of wheat on that farm, on the entire investment, would be $11,840.

Having given the entire outfit of farm, stock, and tools, and putting the cost for wages and board of the men at work, except threshing, at $20 a month, with threshing at $2 per day, the cost of ploughing per acre was 31 cents; of sowing, 8 cents; harvesting, 65 cents; and threshing, $1.25; total, $2.24 per acre. Adding about 61 cents per acre would give the total cost of wheat growing at $3.24 per acre, or a little less than 21 cents per bushel on sixteen bushels to the acre, which is the general average for the State. Valuing the wheat at seventy cents per bushel on the farm would give a profit of 49 cents per bushel, or $7.84 per acre, or $12,544 for the 1,600 acres of wheat. By either calculation it is clearly shown that Commissioner Drake's estimate of 55 per cent. profit upon capital invested is largely within the figure, as the appreciation in the value of the land would much more than repay the expenditures for improvement upon it. With twenty bushels to the acre the profit would be $17,216, and with twelve bushels to the acre, the amount expected this year, the profit would be $8,256. The total value of 1,600 acres of wheat, at seventy cents per bushel and sixteen bushels to the acre, is $17,920.

These being the results of actual operations, Commissioner Drake's enthusiasm appears to be fully justified.

From Windom to Sioux Falls, ninety-two miles, was through a country of remarkable beauty, with the land rolling in long and gentle swells, covered with fine grasses, and dotted in wide distances with the improvements and shanties of the small farmers. Occasionally were seen the broad fields and large improvements of the great agricultural adventurers, with numbers of small towns upon the line of the road. On my return I stopped at Luverne, 215 miles from St. Paul, and made my way to the bluff to the north, which proved to be about three miles distant. From the edge of the bluff was presented a magnificent stretch of beautiful country, which, from my point of view, appeared to be without swell or billow of any kind, except upon the opposite side of the valley, where there was a gentle rise to an apparently interminable plain. In this vast stretch the sparsity of the population was very noticeable. About five miles to the southeast were distinctly seen the farm buildings of the Rock County farm, one of my objective points.

The next morning I drove to the farm of the Rock County Farming Company. The company is incorporated, the owners being Messrs. Thompson, Blakely, and Warner, well-known capitalists of St. Paul. I was received by the superintendent, who drove me over the place, and gave such information as was desired. The farm contains 21,000 acres, of which 4,625 are now under cultivation, with a large amount of land newly broken, that will be seeded for next year's crop. Of this amount, 3,251 acres are in wheat; 312 acres in barley; 550 acres in oats; 312 acres in flax, and 200 in corn. There are ninety-six horses and mules, twenty-six harvesters, three straw-burning steam threshers, and other farming implements, of the total value of $15,000. On the place are two stations, about two miles apart, each having one house and two large barns, with other necessary buildings for the care of tools, stock, &c. The house at station one is of wood, two stories high, double, painted white, lathed and plastered, containing the office of the superintendent and boarding accommodation for a large number of men. At station two the house is smaller, of one and a half stories, painted brown, without lath or plaster, and fitted up specially for a boarding house for the farm hands. The farm is immediately on the line of the railroad, and has two railroad station houses. The number of men employed is, for the month of March, 20; April and May, 56; June to July 20, 40; July 20 to Aug. 20, 115; Aug. 20 to Nov. 15, 70; Nov. 15 to the end of February, 12. The average wages are $18 per month.

In going over the farm I had an excellent opportunity to observe the difference between good and bad cultivation. In some of the fields a portion of the wheat looked well, and would in all probability yield eighteen to twenty-two bushels to the acre; while the other portion was short, thin, choked with weeds, and would not yield more than two bushels. One part had been well ploughed, harrowed, and seeded, showing wheat without weeds, of better growth and good stand. There can be no doubt that much of the partial as well as total failure that I observed might have been very much lessened, if not altogether averted by better cultivation. Here, as in other places, the corn, oats, and barley gave better promise than the wheat, though some of the fields of wheat had a very good appearance. In a number of places there were gangs of a dozen or more ploughs engaged in breaking new ground for next year. Each plough was of the sulky pattern, with disk coulter, drawn by three mules or horses, the driver occupying a seat between the wheels. One of Deere's ploughs, of a new pattern, being without a land side, and cutting a 16-inch wide furrow four and a half inches deep, which it turned beautifully.

On this farm, and at other points on this road, grasshoppers were doing some damage. Earlier in the season the superintendent had made a print upon them, and he showed me some black heaps which he said contained fifty-six bushels of that insect plague, and which he had caught in a tar machine from the side of one quarter section.

Everywhere fruit growing appeared to be altogether neglected, and vegetable gardens and poultry were scarce.

I was informed that the large farmers on the road obtained "special rates" for their transportation, and that these rates were 50 per cent. below the rates charged to the small farmers; and that their farming implements and machinery were shipped at 33⅓ per cent. discount from published prices.

The buildings of some of the small farmers who have located here for four or five years or more had a comfortable appearance; but the new settlers were generally without a sign of comfort. So far as I could learn, in conversation with them and upon inquiry, there was the same distress that I had found in Kansas and other places. In speaking of this matter with the superintendent of the Rock County farm, he told me of an incident in his farm business that illustrated their poverty. Having occasion to find board for some of his men who were at work at a distance too far from either station to be boarded there, he made application to one of the small farmers in the neighborhood. Yes, he would be glad to do it; but before he took them he must get some wood, as the family had run out and had not more than enough flour for one day, and he had no groceries, and the storekeeper would not give him credit. The superintendent applied to another farmer, who had wood and flour enough to last for a few days, but neither coffee, tea, sugar, lard, or other groceries, and the storekeeper would not credit him. The superintendent supplied the farmer with what he needed, and sent the men to him. In town I was told that generally the small farmers were hopelessly in debt, and so I was informed by some of the farmers themselves.

Flour was selling in the town at $7 a barrel. I did not anywhere notice any flouring mills.

The valley of the Red River of the north, in the northern part of Dakota and the southern portion of Manitoba, is about three hundred and fifty miles in length, north and south, and sixty miles wide, east and west, of unsurpassed fertility and beauty. The fertility lies not being confined to the immediate margins of the streams. The surface is nearly level, with hardly sufficient dip to afford to all parts a thorough drainage; but much the larger part is well drained by the smaller watercourses that empty into the Red River, giving large belts of rich vegetable and alluvial loam, well adapted to the growth of wheat, rye, barley, oats, and the vegetables grown in the Northern States. It is too far north for corn. The wetter portions of the valley afford abundant grass, which is used for feeding and cutting for hay. It is claimed that the capabilities of this valley are equal to the present wheat production of the whole United States. The Northern Pacific road crosses the valley at Fargo, which lies on the west side of the river, about fifty miles above its southern end, and holds a land grant of forty miles on each side of its track. The Sioux City and Manitoba road traverses the valley from south to north, about ten miles to the east of the river.

The failure of Jay Cooke & Co., in 1873, had the effect of throwing large bodies of the lands belonging to the Northern Pacific road into the hands of the holders of its securities. Among them were the owners of some of the farms hereafter described.

Oliver Dalrymple of St. Paul, the pioneer in the great farm operations in this country in the Northwest, began fourteen years ago, in Minnesota, near St. Paul, where for a number of years he successfully cultivated a farm of 2,500 acres. At the time he commenced his operations near St. Paul, in 1866, he paid $2 a bushel for his seed wheat, and sold his crop for $1.83 per bushel; from his first crop paying for the whole investment, and leaving a large surplus.

After the Northern Pacific lands had passed into individual hands, as above referred to, Mr. Dalrymple entered into an arrangement with some of the holders by which he was to undertake the management of their lands in the growing of wheat and other products—the proprietors of the lands to furnish land, stock, and tools, and the capital required for seed, labor, and improvements—upon a condition that when the products of the farms had repaid all the expenditures, with an agreed interest, he was to receive a clear title of one-half of each farm, with its stock and improvements.

In the spring of 1876 he commenced his operations near Castleton, upon what are known as the Cass farm, of 6,355 acres, and the Cheney farm, of 5,200 acres. The following year work was begun on the Grandin farm, at Grandin, of 40,000 acres. Subsequently Mr. Dalrymple obtained in his own right the Alton farm, of 4,000 acres, adjoining the Cass farm.

On arriving at Fargo, July 12, I attempted to find Mr. Dalrymple at his office in that town, but did not succeed, he being at Castleton. Most fortunately, I encountered Mr. J. L. Grandin, who at once cordially invited me to his farm at Grandin, thirty-six miles to the north of Fargo.

That portion of the farm known as the Grandin, in which Mr. Dalrymple has an interest and which he manages, lies on the west side of the Red River, about six miles to the north of Elm River, a tributary. It has a frontage on Red River of four miles, and contains 28,000 acres. A portion only is in a solid body; on the western side the alternate Government sections being held by other parties. Some six miles north of Grandin is Goose River, another tributary of the Red, is another body of 12,000 acres, which make up the 40,000 acres of the Grandin farm. Twenty-four miles to the west the Grandin brothers, J. L., W. J., and E. B. Grandin, bankers of Tidioute, Pennsylvania, have a farm of nearly 30,000 acres, known as the Mayville farm, in which Mr. Dalrymple has no interest. This last farm is designed for stock raising, being well supplied with water from the heads of the Elm and Goose rivers, and has at present 250 head of cattle. About 200 acres are in oats and barley, with some wheat, and 600 to 800 tons of hay are cut.

J. L. Grandin is the principal owner of the 40,000-acre or Grandin farm. At present there are on the farm three stations, or points where are located the farm buildings necessary for the operation of their sections. Station one is in the northeastern part of the 28,000-acre track, about 250 yards distant from the river. At this station are two dwellings, both of two stories and good size, one being the residence of the local superintendent and the foreman at that station, and the other is fitted up specially as a boardinghouse for the farm hands. There are also two large barns, the general farm office, a large building for the storage and care of the farm tools, known as machinery hall, a steam feed mill, blacksmith shop, granary, vegetable storehouses, piggery, sheds, &c.,—in all thirteen good, substantial, well-painted buildings, having the appearance, at a short distance, of a considerable village. At this station are two large windmills, one near the superintendent's residence; the other on the bank of the river, about 300 yards distant, that forces water into a tank at the station. On the bank of the river is a storehouse for the shipment of grain, with two cars to run on a double wooden tramway, so arranged that the loaded car in descending to the boat will draw up the empty one. Station two is two and one half miles to the south of station one, containing the dwelling of the foreman at that station and a boarding house, both smaller than at station one, a machinery hall, a large barn, and a blacksmith shop, with other buildings, eight in all, substantially and well painted. At this station is a large water tank, filled by a windmill on the bank of the river, one half mile to the east. On the river bank at that point is another storehouse like that at station one, and for the same purpose. Station three, one-half mile south and one mile west of station two, has one dwelling of one and a half stories for the foreman there located, and cooking arrangements for the men there employed, who find sleeping room in the loft over the machinery hall, besides which is a large barn and other smaller buildings. At this station there was being erected a granary of the capacity of 50,000 bushels. The building of this and the other stations of the same substantial character as the others upon the farm. The three stations are connected by telegraph and telephone, and with the general office at station one.

The numbers employed on the place are, from April 1 to May 1, 150 men; from May 1 to July 15, 20 men, but if breaking new ground, 50 men; from July 15 to July 30, 100 men; from Aug. 1 to Sept. 15, 250 men; from Sept. 15 to Nov. 1, 75 men; from Nov. 1 to April 1, 10 men.

The wages are, from Nov. 1 to April 1, $15 per month; from April 1 to May 1, $18; from May 1 to Aug. 1, $16; from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, $2 per day; from Aug. 15 to Sept. 15, $1.50 per day; from Sept. 15 to Nov. 1, $18 per month.

The tools, machinery, and animals employed are 67 ploughs, of which 11 are gangs of 2 ploughs each, 64 harrows, 32 seeders of 8 feet, 6 mowers, 34 self-binding harvesters, 7 steam engines and threshers, adapted to burning straw and fuel, 50 wagons, and 125 head of horses and mules. For 30 days 30 teams of 2 horses are hired. There are on the place 100 hogs and pigs and 30 head of cattle, but no poultry. This year there are 5,300 acres in cultivation, of which 4,855 acres are in wheat, 304 acres in oats, 127 acres in barley, and 9 acres in potatoes. Amount of hay cut, about 1,000 tons.

The men are called up at 4 o'clock in the morning, breakfast, and get to work a little after 5, and continue till 7 P. M., with one hour at noon for dinner, making nearly thirteen hours work per day.

Every facility was afforded for the fullest observation, and it would be difficult to find a finer sight than was presented by those magnificent fields of grain, standing breast high, and taking on the golden yellow that precedes the harvest, the top, as far as the eye could reach, being smooth as a great table, and when fanned by the wind moving in ripples like a great sea.

It was believed that the yield of wheat would be at least twenty bushels to the acre. Some portions, it was said, would give more than thirty bushels. It certainly was very fine.

The grain grown upon that farm and others near the river was shipped to Fargo by way of the Grandin line of steamers, the river, although narrow and tortuous, affording plenty of water for boats of light draught, the current appearing to run about two and a half or three miles an hour.

On my return to Fargo, by stage, I had for companions two gentlemen from Iowa, who had been examining the lands upon the line of the British line. They told me that further to the north the wheat appeared to be even better that at Grandin or nearer Fargo. My attention was again particularly attracted by the numerous and large fields of wheat and oats, some of them a mile square, all along the road, and away from it, which we could be seen from the top of the stage. Inquiry of the driver gave me the information that much the larger portion belonged to men doing business in Fargo or its neighborhood. It was Dr. A, or Lawyer B, or some merchant, or trader or speculator, who owned this or that field. There, as elsewhere, everybody seemed turned wheat grower or farmer of some kind.

Two miles east of Castleton, and eighteen west of Fargo, is the station of Dalrymple and the site of the Cass, Cheney, and Alton farms, forming one compact body of land upon the two sides of the road, six miles in length north and south, and four miles in width east and west; this being one wheat field for the six miles north and south, and three miles upon the road, except a few small fields of oats and barley.

The Cass farm, owned by Charles W. Cass of New York city, has 6,355 acres, of which 4,327 acres are in wheat, and 350 acres in oats and barley; newly broken ground for next year's seeding, 320 acres. The Cheney farm, of 5,200 acres, owned by Benjamin P. Cheney, Boston, Mass., has 3,480 acres in wheat and 320 acres in oats and barley. No new land broken. The Alton farm, of 4,000 acres, the exclusive property of Mr. Dalrymple, has about 2,000 acres in grain (I have not the exact figures), and 1,200 acres of newly broken land.

The Cass and Cheney farms will employ, during harvest and threshing, 235 men; the Alton farm has the same number of men; and the winter season each farm will require two or three men to take care of the stock and look after the machinery and buildings—say seven men. Where no new land is broken, not more than ten men are needed on either farm during the time when the men may be at work, say from April 15 to November 15. During seed time the three farms employ about 125 men.

The four farms, being under one management and conducted on the same principle, require the same number of men, animals, and tools for every one hundred acres under cultivation, and are conducted substantially the same rate of expense; so that the report for the Grandin farm will closely indicate the working force and methods of the others. The accounts of each farm are kept altogether separate and distinct. Everywhere was observed the same evidence of good husbandry, substantial and well-kept buildings and improvements, tools and stock, as on the Grandin farm. In none of the fields were weeds to be seen. There are no field fencings. The face of the country is one broad, unbroken field, except for an occasional station of the large farmers or small farms.

Most persons in reading of fields described by hundreds and thousands of acres can form but little idea of their actual or comparative extent. To assist to a better understanding of the size of these fields and farms, I will state that Manhattan Island, the site of the City of New York, has an area of about twenty-two square miles, or 14,000 acres. The fields of grain of the three farms lying together near Castleton contain an area of 10,477 acres, or about three-fourths of the area of the city of New York. The Grandin farm of 40,000 acres has space enough for three such cities as that of New York. The whole farm property of the Grandin brothers in Tidioute, Pennsylvania, would furnish sites for five such cities. Whatever else may be said of the operations, they certainly are not wanting in grandeur.

It was claimed that the yield of wheat on these three farms would not be less than twenty-two bushels to the acre. Some portions of the fields on the Alton farm were the finest that I had ever seen.

A careful estimate of the cost of wheat growing on the four farms under Mr. Dalrymple's management would show a cost materially less than that given by Mr. Kendall on the Thompson and Kendall farm, which was $3.24 per acre, the land, stock, and tools being furnished. But on the Thompson and Kendall basis of $3.24 per acre of cost, with twenty bushels per acre of yield, at 70 cents per bushel, there would be a cost of a little more than 16 cents a bushel, and a profit of $13.76 per acre. This would give a profit on the crop of wheat on the four farms of $157,763, or for the Grandin farm alone of $52,239. The total value of the whole amount of wheat at 70 cents would be $205,268, or for the Grandin farm, $67,970. But the proprietors confidently expect to realize not less than 90 cents a bushel for their wheat on account of the superiority and the facilities they can command for transportation and storage. They, also, have "special railroad rates."

Between Fargo and Bismarck, a distance of 194 miles, are many farms of the size of thousands of acres that are already under partial cultivation, or are being prepared for immediate cultivation under similar conditions. Among those farthest West may be mentioned one at the eighth siding, eighty-three miles from Fargo, the farm of Adams & Russell, with 700 acres in grain; at the thirteenth siding, 143 miles west, the Troy farm, owned by Van Deusen of Troy, N. Y., with 1,400 acres now broken for next year; at the fourteenth siding, 151 miles west, the farm owned by Steele of Milwaukee of 5,120 acres, with 750 acres in grain and 1,200 acres of new land broken; and at the seventeenth siding, 181 miles west, the Clark farm, owned by capitalists in Philadelphia, who are said to hold vast tracts on both sides of the road, with 500 acres in grain, and 1,000 of new land broken. These farms I saw from the cars, and I learned that for miles upon either side of the road similar farms and work were to be seen.

The small farmers and their shanties in that region were not numerous, but so far as I could learn, their condition was not relatively better nor worse than in other sections.

In Minnesota, as in Dakota and Kansas, a large portion of the residents of the towns, especially on the lines of the railroads, with the officers, conductors, engineers, and other employees of the roads, were generally adventurers in agriculture, holding and cultivating by contract, shares, or otherwise, such lands as they could obtain and work.

I found that in most places, from Brainard, Minnesota, to Bismarck, Dakota, in all the great region where wheat is grown so abundantly and cheaply, first-class flour, such as was made from the quality of grain there grown, was selling at about $7 a barrel. I did not observe any flouring mills upon the lines of the roads.

I particularly noticed the consequence absence of women and children on the large farms. In no case was the permanent residence of a family to be found upon them, nor anything that could be called a home, with a possible exception in the case of Mr. Kendall, on the Thompson and Kendall farm. The idea of home does not pertain to them; they are simply business ventures.

Naturally, this will save all expense of schools or churches in their neighborhood, and the schoolmaster and clergyman will there have a perpetual holiday. But I was pleased to see that a Sunday service was held on the Grandin farm, conducted by the bookkeeper.

Throughout my tour it was noticed that there was a great abundance of unemployed labor. The morning I left the Grandin farm there were at one time thirteen men at the office door soliciting work, a portion only obtaining it, the others tramping onward in further search. On one of the farms I inquired of one man what pay he was receiving. He said, $8; but he was promised more during harvest. I then asked him where he expected to get work after the harvest was over. He said he did not expect to be able to find any before the next spring's work commenced.

To weigh well the economic effects of the developments here considered, it must be remembered that they are yet in their infancy; that they are mainly the growth of the last half of the present decade; and we must make some effort to estimate the probable future development of the same forces and effects under the present rate of acceleration. All parties engaged in these operations concurred in the statement that great numbers of capitalists who are already large holders of agricultural lands, as well as others who have not yet obtained any, are only waiting the favorable result of the present harvest before they also enter into the business. The amount of new land broken, in all directions, for future seeding is very great.

The two great facts shown by these observations are that those who have gone into wheat growing upon a large scale, making use of the most improved machinery and cheap labor, are making colossal fortunes at 70 cents per bushel for wheat, limited only by the number of acres cultivated and the skill with which the work is done, and that wheat may be grown at large profit for less than forty cents per bushel; but that, on the other hand, the small farmers, depending mainly on their own labor, with limited capital and less machinery, are not making a comfortable subsistence, but are running behind hand, and must go under, and that a further reduction in the market price for food products must hasten their end.

The development of the large farm interest is by no means confined to Kansas, Minnesota, and Dakota. The sections covered in my tour are but three points where these developments have been the most recent as well as of great extent. In Texas there has been a movement in the same direction of perhaps unparalleled magnitude.

California is noted for its great farms of tens of thousands of acres, and the great extent of its area cultivated by tenantry. Throughout the whole region of that portion of our Western country which was not cursed by the existence of slavery, there has, within the present decade, been an alarming increase in the number of great landholders, who, with all the power of capital and cheap labor, have entered into deadly competition with the small farmer. Before the census of 1870 had been taken, the movement had already begun throughout all the free States, as shown by the following table, in which are presented first, the number of farms of 1,000 acres and upward in the non-slaveholding States west of Ohio, in the years 1860 and 1870; and, second, the number of farms of the same character in the non-slaveholding States east of Ohio, and including that State, as shown by the census reports for 1870:

	1860	1870		1860	1870
California	262	718	Connecticut	4	1
Illinois	104	302	Maine	2	0
Indiana	71	76	Massachusetts	0	3
Iowa	10	98	New Hampshire	4	6
Kansas	1	13	New Jersey	6	8
Michigan	3	5	New York	21	39
Minnesota	0	12	Ohio	112	99
Nebraska	1	0	Pennsylvania	15	76
Nevada	2	3	Rhode Island	0	2
Oregon	47	68	Vermont	11	15
Utah	0	2			
Washington	1	12	Total	175	216
Wisconsin	11	22			
Total	606	1288			

In the Northwestern States, between 1860 and 1870, the number had more than doubled, and in the northeastern section, the very oldest portion of the agricultural region of our country, the increase had been 19 per cent.

Of the results of the present decade enough has been shown to demonstrate that within the last twenty years we have taken immense strides in placing our country in the position in which Europe is found after a thousand years of feudal robbery and tyranny of wealth—with this difference, that it is large farms in the hands of the few, and cultivated by a people who are dependent upon the rich.

Under the operations of what capitalistic economists declare to be a "beneficent competition," and the present great division of labor, the small farmer cannot successfully compete with his gigantic competitor, who commands unlimited resources of capital and cheap labor. Before the present great division of labor the farmer and his family, when not employed in planting and reaping, were engaged in spinning and weaving and the other manufacturing operations of the farm household, which provided the family with clothing, and whatever necessary for a comfortable and often luxurious subsistence. But now, through the changes that have been wrought by machinery and new forces, the domestic manufacturing industries have been irretrievably destroyed or developed under other forms and conditions in the towns and leaving to the farm only the work of producing the raw products of bread and meat. Even these raw products must go into the market for manufacture under the conditions described in the milling operations in Kansas, before the farmer can use any portion of them for his own use, and he must pay profit on cotton and wool before the growers can use them for clothing. But bread and meat do not form more than one-fourth part of the subsistence of society, nor of any of the members of society—not even of the farmers. Therefore the farmer must have such a market for his raw food products as will supply him with all the necessaries of life, or he will starve as surely as the manufacturers of cloth or the makers of boots and shoes. But the imperative laws of the seasons have limited the time for the effective industry of the farmer to about one-fourth part of the year, during which time the small farmer must make provision for all his force for the full year, and from the fruit of the labor of himself and his own family solely, during seed time and harvest, must provide for all their wants and comforts until the return of those seasons.

But with the capitalistic farmer it is very different. The facts given in this chapter show that upon the Grandin farm, for example, during the four weeks of seed time, from April 1 to May 1, there were 150 men employed; and for the six weeks of harvest, from Aug. 1 to Sept. 15, there were 250 men, at wages that would barely support the workers during the time they worked; for the five months from Nov. 1 to April 1, there would be only ten men, as estimated, but in fact only five were employed during that period of the past season, with neither woman nor child at any time. While the small farmer is compelled to feed, clothe, shelter, and support his family upon the labor of the same number of persons for the whole year, the capitalist feeds, clothes, and shelters only about one-fourth of the number, in proportion to the amount of work done, and that for less than one-fourth of the year. In doing this the capitalist brings to his assistance the most improved and totally unprofitable machinery, such as the small farmer can utilize to but a comparatively slight degree.

Against the unlimited use of this combination of capital, machinery, and cheap labor the individual farmer, either singly or in communities, cannot successfully contend, and must go under. It is a combination of the most powerful social and economic forces known to man, and all efforts for competition must and will fail so long as the three remain united.

The development of the large farm interest has the direct and immediate effect of impoverishing the sections in which the farms exist, and skinning the lands without any compensating benefits. Not one dollar of the gross amount or net profit received from the products of the soil is returned and placed upon the land from which it is taken, except in the construction of the fewest buildings necessary to shelter and protect the laborers in the working season, and for housing of the work stock and the tools. On the whole 5,300 cultivated acres of the Grandin farm there was not one family finding a permanent home by virtue of title in the soil, where there should have been at least one to every fifty acres of ploughed land, or 106 families. This would give 106 homes in place of the three there at present, and 106 barns in place of three, with other buildings in like proportion; and a population of at least 500, where there is not now one fixed inhabitant, with all the accessories of household comforts and home improvements that do not exist in the smallest degree.

The large development of the tenant system of farming is an evil of the greatest magnitude. The effects of the system have been too apparent in Europe to require any discussion in these pages. But with us it has features worse than ever known in Europe. The tenants in England hold leases and occupations that practically run for life, and are kept in families for generations, which give encouragement for great improvements, and the farms are practically homesteads. But with us the leases are uniformly for short terms, with no encouragement for improvements, and the farms are never homes. In England the rent has rarely reached, and never exceeded, one-quarter the gross product; but in the United States it is commonly one-half. Under the English tenant system the land is thoroughly cultivated and improved; with us it is impoverished. There is not one redeeming feature in the whole system in America; and it is in every way worse than in Europe.

An Eagle Attempts to Carry Off a Child.

From the Duluth Tribune.

C. Wieland, Auditor of Lake County, Minn., writes, on the 24 instant:

Yesterday afternoon while little August Burr, aged 7 years, was playing with his sister—one 5 years old and the other 3½—near his father's house, an enormous eagle pounced down upon them, throwing the two girls to the ground. It was scared off by the screams of the girls, grasping one of the child's arms with the claws of one foot, while the claws of the other foot were deeply buried in the child's back; and it attempted to carry the child off, but was prevented by her struggles. Little August, seeing that he could do nothing with his own hands to help his sister, ran quickly into the house, got the butcher knife, and came out and wounded one of the eagle's legs, cutting one of them severely near the foot, whereupon the savage bird let go the little girl and attacked the boy, knocking him over, beating his pants, and giving him some very severe scratches. In the meantime the screams of the children brought out their mother, whereupon the eagle flew off to the barn, on which he sat and looked as though he would like to renew the contest, should a favorable opportunity offer itself. Joe Betzer, a neighbor, was called, who took his gun and shot the bird. The eagle was found to measure seven feet from wing tip to wing tip. The little girl is very badly scratched, but not seriously hurt."

ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER.

From the Atlantic Monthly.

1879

Though flowers have perished at the touch
Of Frost, the early comer,
I hail the season loved so much,
The good St. Martin's summer.

O gracious morn, with rose-red dawn,
And thin moon curving o'er it!
The old year's darling, latest born,
More loved than all before it!

How flamed the sunrise through the sinews
Blue stretched the birches windows,
Braiding to long, wind-wavered lines
The westward sloping meadows!

The sweet day, opening as a flower
Unfolds its crisp leaves tender,
Renews for us at noon-tide's hour
The summer's tempered splendor.

The birds are hushed; alone the wind,
That through the woodland searches,
The red oak's lingering leaves can find,
And yellow plumes of larches.

But still the balsam breathing pine
Invites no thought of sorrow,
No hint of loss from air or wine
The earth's content can borrow.

The summer and the winter here
Midway a truce are holding,
A soft, consenting atmosphere
Their tents of peace enfolding.

The silent woods, the lonely hills,
Rise solemn in their stillness;
The quiet that set the valley thrills
Is scarcely joy or sadness.

How strange! the autumn yesterday
In winter's grasp seemed dying;
On whirling winds from skies of gray
The early snow was flying.

And now, while over Nature's mood
The Indian spell is lying,
I will not mar the present good,
Forecasting or lamenting.

My autumn time and Nature's hold
A dreamy tryst together,
And, both grown old, sit out as old
The golden-tissued weather.

I lean my heart against the day
To feel its bland caressing;
I will not let it pass away
Before it leaves its blessing.

God's angels come not as of old
The Syrian shepherds knew them;
In reddening dawns, in sunset gold,
And warm noon lights I view them.

Nor need there is, in times like this
When heaven to earth draws nearer,
Of wing or song as witnesses
To make their presence clearer.

O stream of life, whose swifter flow
Is on the end forewarning,
Blending with music of the spheres
Seems less of night than morning!

Old cares grow light; aside I lay
The doubts and fears that troubled;
The quiet of the happy day
Within my soul is doubled.

That clouds must veil this fair sunshine
Unless a joy I doubt is;
Nor less you warm horizon line
That winter lurks behind it.

The mystery of the untried days
I close my eyes from reading;
His will be done whose darkest ways
To light and life are leading!

Less drear the winter night shall be,
If memory cheer and hearten
Its heavy hours with thoughts of thee,
Sweet summer of St. Martin!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

The Golden Isles.

The poet sits and smiles,
He knows the golden isles,
He never hopes to win their gifts, their marble mines,
Reefs where their green sea raves,
The coldness or their caves,
Their telapars full of light, their rosy coralines.

All these he off has sought,
Led by his trusting thought,
Their glorious distance