

considerable increase in the acreage under wheat of late years, and though the demand for home consumption must naturally increase with the increase in numbers and improvement in condition of the inhabitants, yet they are not naturally a large wheat-eating people, and the home demand is not increasing sufficiently fast to become at present a very important factor in the question, and it seems probable that, provided the yield is maintained, Russia will for some years have a considerable surplus of wheat available for export. In the United States, on the other hand, the time is thought by many to be well within sight when that country will cease to export wheat, the home demand becoming large enough to exhaust the whole supply: for it is a fact that is often overlooked and not always admitted, that while the population is increasing at a rapid rate, the production of wheat is not only stationary, but there is little if any new land available for its cultivation, except under a very much higher system of farming, which would not at present be remunerative, and instead of continuing to be the great wheat-exporting country of the world, it will not be many years before, without some change in its economic conditions, it may have difficulty in raising enough wheat for its own supply. Mr. C. Wood Davis, an American of the United States, calculates that after 1895 his country must either import breadstuffs, cease to export cotton, or lower the standard of living. This date, however, is generally considered premature.

379. The following figures of the production and area under cultivation of wheat in the United States for the last eleven years would indicate that, under present conditions, the limit of supply has about been reached.

Production of
wheat in
the United
States,
1880-1890.