

II.

EFFECT OF THE BEET-SUGAR INDUSTRY ON AGRICULTURE.

Let us now examine briefly the wonderful effects of this industry on the agriculture of all the countries where it has been implanted. This would apply to Canada in the highest degree if sugar beets were produced. I say in the highest degree, since the production of beet roots necessary for this industry, by cleansing our land and exacting a more careful cultivation, would not fail to increase three and four-fold the agricultural produce of those portions of the country which would supply the factories.

In 1850, in France, fears were entertained at what was then considered the wonderful increase of beet culture for the production of sugar. It was believed by many that this increased production of beets would cause a proportionate decrease in that of cereals. A legislative enquiry was consequently ordered, and the following facts clearly proved:—The district of Valenciennes, in 1813, (one of the best cultivated in France) produced about twenty bushels of wheat to the acre; in 1833 it produced thirty-two bushels. Before beet culture was established, the whole production of wheat was 40,000 bushels; it rose (in 1833) to 1,192,000 bushels, an increase of over 30 per cent. In 1822 the whole district fed 400 oxen; nine years later (in 1831) it fattened 10,784, or an increase of over 25 to 1.

The following is equally extracted from an official document published by the French Government in 1873:

"There exists in the north of France a certain number of districts which have attained the maximum of agricultural production. Thus, in favorable seasons, these localities produce an average to the acre of 38 bushels of wheat; of 22½ tons of beets; of 330 to 380 bushels of potatoes. c. What causes this prodigious prosperity? In some parts it is due to the use of Flemish manure, which agriculturists from the north have utilized for centuries; in others where human feces is not collected, it is entirely due to the production of beets. It has been repeated on all sides, and yet it cannot be too much said: the cultivation of beets is that which has contributed most to agricultural progress."

I might give page after page of similar statements, not only from French authorities, but also from all the countries where this wonderful industry exists. However, the tables given above speak higher in favor of beet sugar than all I could say. It is everywhere shown that the several crops have tripled on an average, wherever the soil has been cleaned by the beet crop, and manured by the enormous quantity of cattle necessary to utilize the remains of the beet, after the sugar has been extracted from it. It has been conclusively shown that the increase in cattle in these regions has been at the rate of over 25 to 1.

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