

## Europe's Future Granary.

The adherents of Malthus' theory,—that with the population increasing at its present rate there must come a time when it will be impossible to produce the food necessary to the people,—need not be alarmed. From all over the world we are told about increasing crops; and the very low prices of grain do not bear witness of a starvation period near at hand. Even if Europe has been brought under cultivation to its utmost capacity there are immense lands in America and Australia only waiting for the plow for yielding excellent crops, and now the distinguished scientist and explorer, Baron Nordenskjöld, has uttered as his opinion that the granary of the coming century will not be in any of the said divisions of the world but in Siberia.

Perhaps, last of all, would such abundance of wheat be expected from this Asiatic country, whose name alone is sufficient to produce a chill; but Nordenskjöld gives important reasons for his opinions, which are the more entitled to respect because they are founded on observations he has made himself through his travellings in these vast regions.

The natural qualities of Siberia he says are essentially the same as those of America. In the North the country is covered by immense deserts, without forests, where it is so cold as to forever exclude cultivation. South of these deserts,—about on 60 deg. lat.,—there is an enormous belt of forests, the greatest in the world, reaching with few interruptions from the Ural Mountains to the coast of the Pacific Ocean, a length of 2,800 miles with a width of about 65 miles. South of this forest belt, up to about 50 deg. lat., are the great Siberian plains, in the summer covered with a splendor of flowers, a flora with some of the most magnificent varieties that can be imagined, many of them the pride of the hot-houses in the West. These flowers grow in a black soil of unsurpassed fertility. At comparatively small expense, this soil, one year after another, could produce immense crops of maize, rice and wheat, the export of which can be effected through the great waterways of the rivers Irtysh, Ob, Jennessy, Lena and Anuir, with their numerous branches, which through canals built by the Russian Government have brought in connection with each other.

Nordenskjöld calls attention to Port Dickson, a harbor at the mouth of Jennessy in the Siberian Sea, discovered by him. The way from this port to the Atlantic Ocean north of Norway has frequently been navigated without considerable difficulty, and would be still more available when Port Dickson has come in telegraphic connection with the coast stations, where the sailors could be informed about the frequently changing ice conditions in the Siberian Sea. The Russian Government is doing everything possible for this route, and has each year sent out vessels for measuring and investigating the depths, taking maps, &c

Besides these waterways, which will be useful for exports only in the summer time, the Russian Government is building a railroad across Siberia. When finished, that road will cover the distance from the Ural Mountains to Vladivostock at the Pacific Ocean, 3,940 miles, the costs of which are estimated to 480,000,000 rubles. The road will pass through the above named fertile plains, touching there all points of importance, as Omsk, Mariusk, Atchinsk, Krasnozarsk, Tomisk, Irkutsk, &c.; and, as coal is found in plenty and the road will be operated principally "for the good of the country," the freight rates will be fixed at a very low scale, thereby enabling the Siberian products to take up competition on the European markets. The road, in its full length, is expected to be finished in the beginning of next century,

and at the same time the canalization is expected to be sufficiently completed.

Nordenskjöld has the opinion that Siberia will already in the next century play the same role for Europe as has America held for nearly one century and a half.—N. Y. Journal of Commerce

## Montreal Grocery Market.

The sugar market, during the past week, has presented no new feature. The feeling on spot rules very firm, and prices are fully maintained, notwithstanding the fact that the market for raws abroad has been easier, and prices for beet show a decline of 3d to 4d since this day week. There has been no improvement in the demand for refined, and business on the whole was dull. Stocks are steadily increasing. We quote:—Granulated at 4½c in 250 barrel lots and over, 4 11-16c in 100 barrel lots, and 4½c in smaller quantities. Yellows range from 3½ to 4½c, as to quality, at the factory. A private cable received here to day reported the market for cane quiet, and beet dull at 12s 1½ March and April.

The stock of syrups in refiners' hands is very light at present, for which there is only a limited demand and prices are unchanged at 1½ to 2½c per lb., as to quality at the factory.

The feature in the molasses market this week has been the weaker cable advices from the Island, and prices show a decline of 1c per gallon, the price now being 14c. A private letter received here from Barbadoes, states that they expect to have a crop of 40,000 puncheons of molasses and 60,000 hhd's. of sugar this season, as against only 20,000 puncheons of molasses last year. The market on spot has been very quiet, sales being confined principally to small lots at 36 to 37c for Barbadoes, and 34 to 35c for Porto Rico.

There has been a considerable advance in the price of Japan rice in Japan, which is due to speculation among some of the natives. In this market there has been no material change, and business is quiet. The following quotations are what millers sell at:—Japan standard, \$4.25 to \$4.40; crystal Japan, \$1.75 to \$5; standard B., \$3.45; English style, \$3.30; Patna \$1.25 to \$5, and Carolina at \$5.50 to \$7.50.

The market for spices continues to rule moderately active and values are steady. The following quotations are what jobbers can buy at only:—Penang black pepper, 6 to 7½; white pepper, 10 to 12½c; cloves, 7½ to 9c; cassia, 8½ to 9½c; nutmegs, 60 to 90c, and Jamaica ginger 15½ to 18½c.

There has been no change in coffee, the demand continues slow and business is of a jobbing character. We quote:—Maracaibo 19 to 20c; Rio 18 to 18½c; Java 21 to 27c; Jamaica 17½ to 18½c, and Mocha 27½ to 30c.

In teas business has failed to show any decided improvement since our last report. There has been some inquiry for Japans, and several small lots have changed hands at 15½ to 16c, and some 200 to 300 packages of Young Hyson were also placed at 10c delivered here. In regard to the new crop, rumors of all sorts are rife as to the probable quality, their cost, etc., and predictions that prices quite as high as these prevailing last season will likely be in vogue this year are plenty, but nothing really reliable has yet been received. Mail advices from London state that during the week ended February 29th the market there continued firm for Indian tea, but Ceylons again went most irregularly, chiefly perhaps on account of the falling off in quality of so many of the offerings. China Congous remained weak for all but teas for price, and the same was noticeable for greens. In New York the situation is unchanged, the demand being moderate and the sales movement rather sluggish. The orders placed are for the most part for small lots, the specula-

tive demand being in abeyance, as heretofore noted. Prices are unchanged.—Gazette, March 14.

Michel Lefebvre & Co., the well known vinegar manufacturers of Montreal and proprietors of a beet sugar refinery in the Quebec province, have been obliged to assign, owing to difficulties created by the suspension of the Banque Du Peuple. Their liabilities reach something over half a million, the Banque Du Peuple being down for \$423,000, and the Bank of British North America for 50,000, and the Bank of Commerce, \$25,000, but the last two institutions were pretty well secured.

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