

There are three classes directly interested in this question—the capitalist manufacturer, the farmer, and, through him, the landowner, and the labourer. He would briefly consider the matter as it affects them. First, the manufacturer of the sugar, Mr. Duncan, at Lavenham, realized last year, on a capital of £12,000, a clear return of 15 per cent., besides writing off an equal sum for interest and depreciation. His factory was capable of converting a much larger quantity of roots, and the net return would have been greater if the supply of roots had been adequate to his power. The yield of sugar last season was, however, probably above an average. He feels entire confidence, after three years' experience, in the quality of the roots produced in that part of the country being quite equal to the average of the Continent, and that the conversion of such roots into sugar will prove a successful operation if conducted with the requisite economy and skill. As to the farmer who grows the roots: The average produce of clean roots in 1870, at Lavenham, was from twelve to fourteen tons an acre, which at 20s. a ton did not leave a great profit. The crop was a light one. The sugar-beet is somewhat more difficult to grow than mangel, and more costly to harvest. While the Lavenham farmers are, therefore, not enthusiastic about their net returns from it, they have all agreed to contract at the same price to furnish future supplies to the factory. They receive back the squeezed pulp for feeding their live stock at 12s. a ton; and if Professor Voelcker's estimate of the value of that substance for feeding is fairly accurate—viz., that one ton of pulp is equal to one and a half of beet, they bring back upon the farmer, at a cost of 12s., an article equal in feeding and manure-making to the roots which they sell to the factory for 30s. The question that interests both farmer and landowner is whether the land can bear, for any lengthened period, the removal of this root crop. Potato-farming, without some extraneous supply of manure, is a very exhausting system, for the whole crop is carried away. But sugar-beet makes no such demand on the soil. A quantity of pulp, equal to nearly one-third in feeding value of the whole crop, is returned for consumption on the farm, and there is no difficulty now in making good the two-thirds by purchased corn, cake, and manures. The fact of the rapid progress of beet-sugar farming on the Continent, the increasing quantity of wheat and fat cattle produced in the districts where it has been introduced, the rise in the value of land and the wages of labour, all attest the prosperity of the system. The time may come when the price of meat may be so enhanced as to render sugar-farming in this country less remunerative than using directly the same roots for the fattening of cattle, but the probability is that the double produce of sugar and fat cattle will best serve the purposes of all concerned.

Finally, let them consider the labourer. A great variety of employment is brought into requisition by the sugar factory which would have no existence if the same quantity of roots were consumed on the farm by cattle. A factory of 6,000 tons will give employment for 100 days, and distribute during that time in wages about £1,900 chiefly to labourers, but partly also to foremen and clerks, engineers, and firemen. £1,000 will go in coal and coke, and the labour attending them; £400 in oil, tallow, gas, charcoal, bags, &c.; about £500 in railway transport, a considerable sum in repairs and maintenance, a contribution to local rates, and a large item to the public revenue. The advantage of providing a new market for the labour of agricultural parishes in the south of England during the slack time between autumn and spring needs no comment to those who know the circumstances of such country parishes. An expenditure at that time of £1,900 in additional labour among the population of each village where a factory is established must commend itself to all who are interested in the welfare of their poorer neighbours, whether landowner, clergyman, or farmer. He saw no reason to doubt that, with great advantage to all parties concerned, we may hope by a gradual introduction of sugar-beet growing into the eastern, the south-eastern, and south midland counties to become profitable growers of a large portion of our consumption of sugar, without any injurious displacement, possibly even with an addition, to our other agricultural produce.

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## No. 21.

EXTRACT from Memorandum enclosed with Instructions for the AGENT-GENERAL.

“THE services of a special Agent in England are required for carrying out the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Colonial Industries, and it is very important that the person to be so appointed should have scientific position, intimate local knowledge of this country and its wants, and a lively interest in the success of the inquiry.

“The following are a few of the subjects that should be referred to such an Agent for personal investigation:—

“1. *Silk Industry*.—The information available in this Colony as to the exact wants of the Silk trade is very imperfect. Accurate, practical directions are required for the guidance of those who propose to attempt sericulture in this Colony; and it will be necessary to interest persons in the trade at home who will be able to give precise information as to the modes of rearing, packing, shipping, and other matters of detail. Thus, it is not even determined whether it will be more profitable to rear eggs or cocoons, or even whether there is any method of packing the cocoons so that they will carry without deterioration. Information on these points can only be obtained by a person on the spot—actively engaged in seeking it.

“2. *Manufactures*.—The Committee in their twelfth resolution, direct attention to the encouragement of such manufactures as can be established on a small scale, as a sphere of labour for colonists of small means. The information necessary for giving practical effect to the recommendation of the Committee can only be gathered in the more remote parts of Great Britain, where the condition of society is somewhat analogous to that of the outlying districts of this Colony. Information is required as to the cost of starting the following manufactures, viz.:—Tweeds, cloths, coarse woollen goods, especially blankets, rope and cordage, soap, starch, leather, malt, beetroot-sugar, and other similar commodities, especially with regard to the peculiar requirements of this Colony.

“3. *Technical Education*.—This subject has occupied a great deal of attention of late years in England, and several distinct systems of scientific instruction have now been in operation for a number of years. It is highly desirable that a report should be obtained on the practical working of each of these