

March of the Sugar Beet.

The sugar beet industry of the Mountain States and the Pacific Coast is having not only a healthy, but a rapid growth. Most of the states west of the Mississippi river are planting for factories, and just as soon as they discover that the pulp is valuable for the dairy cow the growth will be more rapid. The possibility that sugar from Porto Rico will be admitted duty free is causing some apprehension among sugar beet growers. While there is strong pressure being brought upon the President to open our ports to the product it can be authoritatively stated that the President and the members of his cabinet believe that the administration under the constitution and existing laws has not the authority to change our tariff regulations. Just what will be done for Porto Rico and her exports can only be developed by congressional action. Sugar and tobacco, two of the principal products of Porto Rico, are being produced in nearly every state in the Union, and the representatives of the people of those states in Congress are not likely to modify the laws to the detriment of their constituents.

At present there is no duty on coffee, the most important export from Porto Rico, and the recent order for the purchase of the article for the use of our army will relieve the Porto Ricans now suffering from the visitation of the hurricane. The policy of the administration toward the new possessions is to give each island its own tariff to raise money for local government, while the United States maintains its tariff, which can only be modified by Congress.

Porto Rico has never raised more than 30,000 tons of sugar in a year. Under American management and methods the yield will doubtless be increased, but the proportions of supply to demand would absorb the output from the island for some years to come without any effect upon the value of sugar beets to the farmer. The consideration of the subject opens up a wide field of discussion, but one of the most important points to be considered is the effect of Americanizing the Porto Rico laborer. Under his old conditions he was practically a slave, with no education, and wages that would provide for his wants where Nature provides without assistance most of the food of the poor classes. These conditions must now change. The Porto Rican must at first strive to maintain himself against American competition. The climate will help him to do that. In his effort to keep his place in the field alongside the American laborer he will be educated in our ways and will imbibe some of our thoughts. The result will be to elevate him to our level rather than degenerate our workmen. He will learn of the world and of the value of his labor, and will want more wages. It is unreasonable to expect the Porto Ricans of to-day and their children to continue working under the old conditions. There must be an increase in the cost of labor on the island, and with it will come a decrease in the value and probably in the tonnage of the sugar crop.

The Secretary of Agriculture is fully of the opinion that just as soon as the neighborhoods that grow beets for sale to the sugar factories learn their value as a food for the dairy cow sugar will be produced as cheaply in this country as it is anywhere in the world. The average yield per acre in the United States at the present time is probably twelve tons of sugar beets, and this is found to be profitable and large divi-

dends are being paid by all the factories. It is entirely practical for the farmers on the rich lands of Northern Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and other states to greatly increase the tonnage per acre. During six years' experimentation at the Iowa Agricultural College the yield was twenty tons to the acre under all conditions. Sugar beets can be grown just as readily as corn in the localities mentioned, and where the beets are grown in rotation with other crops and one crop taken from any given piece of land in every four or five years, there will be no more difficulty, in the opinion of the Secretary of Agriculture, in getting twenty tons to the acre than there is in getting fifty bushels of corn from an old pasture.

Grasses for the Range.

The agricultural college at Pullman has been experimenting with some new varieties of grasses in the Yakima valley and notwithstanding the dry season good results are being obtained. The experiments were made on the farm of Walter Haywood near Thorp. If the experiments are a success it is expected the grasses can be made to reproduce to a great extent the eaten out ranges. Further developments will be watched with interest.

It is stated by the Hood River Glacier that the upper part of the valley and the surrounding foothills will furnish most of the apples for shipment from Hood River this year. Some of the orchards at Mount Hood and on the east side have pretty fair crops. Many apples will come also from the orchards in the foothills of Mount Defiance. The whole crop for export from Hood River will not be more than 4,000 boxes.

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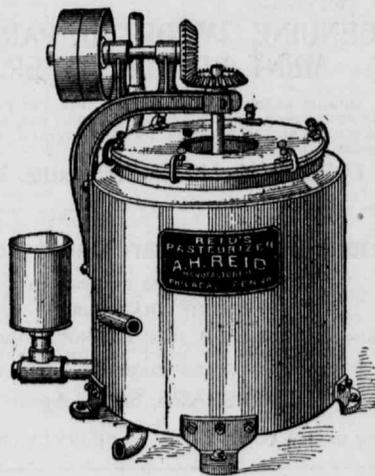
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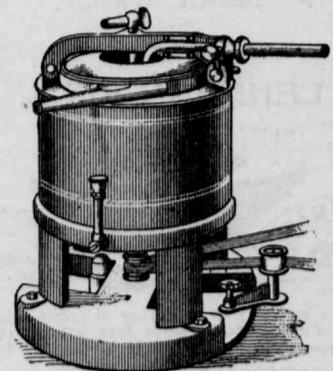
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