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AGRICULTURE

OF

THE UNITED STATES

IN

1860;

COMPILED FROM THE ORIGINAL RETURNS

OF

THE EIGHTH CENSUS,

UNDER THE

DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

By JOSEPH C. G. KENNEDY,
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PREFACE.

The importance of agriculture as a recourse for wealth, and as supplying the means of subsistence to all classes of community, is so well understood, and its relation to manufactures, so many of the products whereof it consumes, and which it supplies with so many of its most important elements, is so generally appreciated, as to render superfluous any argument to prove its value. It is an interest which, better than any other, may be expected to flourish as manufactures and the arts prosper, and it is of more importance to those interested in its advancement to understand its progress from time to time than to secure any special legislative acts with the view to stimulate its productions. Agriculture will prosper in proportion to the progress of population, and its employment in other productive pursuits. In the early history of all countries prior to the period when manufactures flourish, and the arts are cherished, foreign demand is relied on for the surplus products of the earth, and the ease with which they are supplied enables the producer to incur the cost of their transportation to market to procure certain necessaries and luxuries in exchange; but as a country becomes peopled, the relation of the producer to a foreign market insensibly becomes less, until at last it ceases, except upon peculiar emergency, or for articles restricted to climate With an intelligent people, where land is abundant, the direct application of laws is of but little consequence in invigorating a pursuit which will be prosecuted with greater activity only with the ratio of increased home consumption, as foreign demand, with the exception of that for strictly climatic productions, is too precarious to justify any great expenditure of labor and means solely with a view to exportation; and that country of any great extent which never fails to produce a full supply of the necessaries of life for the wants of its own population, will be sure of ability to spare whatever may be necessary to fill any casual extraordinary demand abroad. Many persons are impressed with the belief that it is in the power of the government to promote the interests of the farmer, and that great and direct efforts should be put forth by the state to advance the science of husbandry. In our opinion, however, the surest way in which the power of the government can effectually promote agriculture, is by a steady and consistent policy adapted to encourage the arts and give confidence to the stability of our manufactures; population will then rapidly increase, commerce be promoted, internal improvements multiply, and the power of the state will augment as a natural consequence. Political laws will not modify climate, change the nature of plants, nor fertilize land; they may occasion the distribution of cotton-seeds north and west, but cannot insure the growth of cotton north of thirty-eight degrees, while private enterprise produces 8,000,000 pounds of tobacco in Connecticut, and will produce it wherever the conditions are favorable. The enlightened wisdom of the world, if applied directly to the improvement of agriculture, would not be productive of any sensible increase of crops, while any contingency tending to a greater consumption of the earth's products would be certain to stimulate the efforts of the husbandman, and insure enlarged production. That which renders the pursuit of agriculture honorable and remunerative,

and therefore attractive and popular, is a certain home market; and wherever such exists there prevails a better system of culture, a more refined population, higher energy, a better morality, and in all things a happier condition both for the permanent welfare of the people and good of the state. It is under such circumstances that the merit and adaptation of every new plant deemed useful for food, or in the arts, will not only be cheerfully and intelligently tested, but its value will be made available. Under such circumstances the crops seldom fail, nor do the lands grow poor; the people are not addicted to efforts in short roads to fortune by impositions of marvellous productions at fabulous prices, and it is but seldom they are the victims of such. They never find abundant crops ruinous, nor realize the fertility of their fields only with chagrin. Home demand for many products stimulates variety in cultivation, and increases the capacity of the soil, and as in this country scarcity seldom attends more than one staple production in a season, and then only to a limited extent, the nation is protected from all danger of want or famine so paralyzing to every interest, and so much feared in countries of more dense population, and of smaller area. The state or kingdom, therefore, which pursues a policy best adapted to consume as food, or in manufactures, the products of the soil, confers the greatest possible benefit, not only on that portion of its people engaged in agriculture, but upon all classes of population; and the most enlightened farmers only desire that the general government abstain from all legislation tending to make precarious a sure remunerative demand for its products, and observation proves that those who depend much for direct aid from government are not of that numerous class in our country who by their industry, energy, and success, present noble examples for imitation, and elevate and distinguish the pursuit of husbandry. There is not anything but confidence in certain adequate remuneration that will insure heavy crops of grain and grass, choice breeds of live-stock, produce good fruits, good wine, and develop an improved agricultural literature, and without such inducement we would no sooner expect the farmer to raise supplies of either, if the government should devote all its revenues to the free distribution of seeds and plants, than we would expect the mechanic arts to flourish without a demand for their products, should the government distribute gratuitously the tools of trade; and there rests no more obligation upon the state to legislate specially for the one interest than for the other. By the anomalous policy at present pursued to promote agriculture, the government is sure to incur a large outlay of funds, often resulting in loss of time and disappointment to individuals, and it is an inevitable consequence of failure to equal cherished expectations, to perceive recourse to some novel fallacious expedients to blunt the edge of disappointment, or raise new hopes—at the same time charging iniquity or folly upon former administrators, rather than admit the impracticability of the resort and confess its failure. It was a remark of Buffon, that in "agriculture, as in all other arts, the model which performs best in small, oftentimes will not execute in great;" but our people have been too much tempted by highly colored representations, to build hopes on something new, which, although procured at much outlay, has not so much as been previously tested as to its adaption to our climate or soil by the most limited trial.

That we might advantageously imitate the example of other countries in maintaining public parks and gardens, where all the known useful and ornamental plants of the world should be cultivated under proper direction, coupled with facilities for instruction, no intelligent man will question; but that would be quite different from a system encouraged and practised to the prejudice of that enterprise, which would effectually promote the public interests by supplying everything demanded by the spirit of improvement, both useful and ornamental. One half the amount heretofore fruitlessly expended for the promotion of agriculture could be made to support an institution embracing the practical, orna-

mental, and instructive, which through succeeding time would promote the interests of the agricultural community, improve the tastes, and enlarge the knowledge of all. The useful and ornamental character of trees and plants once illustrated by example, the enterprise of our own farmers, gardeners, and seedsmen will make avail of their advantages, as those interested in the mechanic arts do from useful mechanical inventions, and do so at their own charge. With such an organization a serial publication might be advantageously connected, to give the results of its experience, and make record of the current inventions and improvements in agricultural implements and machinery, at home and abroad, which should be conducted with sufficient ability to command respect, and integrity to inspire confidence in its representations. It may appear very easy to pursue a practice involving in its administration no demand for enlarged views, or scientific attainments, but time will demonstrate that the utility of such a procedure will not be found commensurate with its expense. If any differ from us in these opinions, we are inclined to believe they realize but little of the disappointed hopes and misapplied labor of thousands, and form their conclusions from results which should naturally follow the vast expenditures so lavishly made by our government in behalf of agriculture, and the cheering promises which have induced them, rather than from clearly ascertained beneficial results in any degree comparable with their cost. It is obligatory upon the state, and beneficial to all, to present periodical exhibits of our various productions, because this can only be done by the state, and this is especially necessary in a country where there exists such a boundless expanse of unoccupied territory adapted to agriculture, mining, and manufactures, which may be made available in increasing our power and wealth as rapidly as may be consistent with healthy progress. When we shall have more nearly attained to the conditions of some older nations, where production and consumption are so nicely balanced that the slightest failure in any one staple crop would endanger the security and happiness of the people, or stability of the state, the direct active co-operation of the government with the people may become judicious; but happily for us, such a contingency is far distant, as, apart from the general spirit of inquiry and enterprise of our people, it will be long before population becomes redundant, and the conditions of our climate are such that what may produce failure in one crop promotes the growth of others.

With us but few of the prejudices have to be overcome which in older countries attach to the use of improved agricultural implements, and to a system of culture obsolete where intelligence prevails. Here we have no dull, lethargic confidence in the perfection of anything connected with agriculture, because we cannot move without realizing the rapid, ever-varying improvement, such as must convince even a man blind from his youth that nearly all the operations of the farm are conducted in a manner different from what they were formerly.

It has become the wise policy of the general government to take a periodical account of the productions of agriculture, as well for the instruction of the people as for the information of the state, and it is upon this "account" that all estimates of the productions of subsequent years are based, so that really all we know of our annual productions from one decade to another, is deduced from the decennial returns of the census. While such investigations are not of recent origin, it is believed that we have entered into more general details than have other nations, of whom comparatively few have found it practicable to obtain the results, while lamenting their want. The object of the present volume is to represent the agricultural productions of our country for the year ending on the 1st of June, 1860, and the live stock on the day mentioned. In presenting these results, we shall at the same time represent the growth and progress of some interests, and the proper method of culture as to others, in the

hope of being able to render the volume more useful and instructive to the agricultural community, and interesting to the general reader. It is our intention to be historical and practical, rather than theoretical, and while those partial to startling and visionary suggestions may deem the commentary wanting in interest, the intelligent farmer will, we trust, acquire instruction from the perusal of the text, as well as derive advantage in the study of the figures. To be enabled to perform our duty more acceptably, we have availed ourselves of the opinions and agricultural experience of others, whose opinions have been verified by the success with which their professions have been attended. Our thanks are due to B. P. Johnson, of Albany, for counsel cheerfully accorded when a sense of incompetence created doubts of our correctness; to Joseph Harris, of Rochester, New York, and to Edward D. Mansfield, of Ohio, for much general information on the subject of agriculture and the effects of internal improvements; and to J. F. Ballantyne, of Chicago, for information relative to that prodigious interest of the country, the grain trade. For the article on the vine and wine-making, we are indebted to Robert Buchanan, of Cincinnati, Ohio, a gentleman not more distinguished for his successful cultivation of the grape than for his investigating mind and general attainments. To William Renick, of Pickaway county, in the same State, we are under obligations for the facts connected with the past history of the cattle trade of the west with the east, and the driving system, formerly of such vast importance to the intermediate regions, but which will soon be forgotten, the railways now supplying a more easy and profitable means of transfer. As our country confers no honors for distinguished services in the peaceful walks of life, as well for history as from a sense of justice, we make frequent allusions to individuals in the body of these volumes, and take pleasure in associating with their beneficent works the names of men who have proved useful to the country, as a duty to them, and an incentive to others. Charlatans enjoy and outlive their honors, while the reputation of real benefactors continues a rich inheritance for their children. Regretting our inability to present a more complete commentary on the figures, we believe the volume will prove useful as a statistical compilation, and more generally interesting to the agriculturist than have any of its predecessors. The duties of the Census Bureau involve so wide a range of practical and scientific inquiry as to preclude claim to anything approximating perfection in the illustration of its multifarious details, and we only ask the concession of having performed a laborious duty with an earnest intent to develop impartially the material interests of the country.