

THE  
SOUTHERN PLANTER.

*Devoted to Agriculture, Horticulture, and the Household Arts.*

Agriculture is the nursing mother of the Arts.  
—Xenophon.

Tillage and Pasturage are the two breasts of  
the State.—Sully.

FRANK. G. RUFFIN, EDITOR.

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TO CHRISTOPHER QUANDARY.

DEAR CHRISTOPHER:—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter asking my advice about overseers—the management of your farm, and the best course to pursue, to enable you to pay your present debts. You also desire to know whether I think it wise or unwise for the agricultural class to purchase goods, &c., upon credit, and in anticipation of large crops and high prices.

Rocheffoucault has truly said “there is nothing of which we are so liberal as of advice” and that we may “give advice, but we cannot give *conduct*.” My advice is not gratuitous, but offered at your request. Your father and myself were old friends. He died in 1850, (about the time you graduated at the University,) and through him you inherited a good estate. I learn from you that you reside upon this farm and that for the last five years you have been engaged in agricultural pursuits. I have lived longer than you, and as I sincerely desire the prosperity of all the agricultural community, I shall comply with your wishes. Educated young gentlemen cannot expect to become good managers *instantly*. Their ignorance of practical agriculture, and their want of experience have more frequently attracted my sympathy than excited my surprise. If any of the suggestions which I design to present, should prove of any service to you, I shall be fully compensated for addressing you.

If you have read the excellent editorial articles in recent numbers of the Southern Planter upon the duties and qualifications of overseers, you will not care much to read my views on the same subject. Referring you to those essays, I content myself with only a few observations on this topic. The supply of *really good* overseers is not adequate to the demand, and hence it often happens, that farmers are induced to employ, as overseers, men wholly incompetent to discharge the duties ordinarily required. An overseer should possess discrimination and judgment, a strong constitution and good health, industry, integrity, patience and perse-

verance. To these let him add sobriety and self-command. He should not delude himself with the notion that the political affairs of the country and the salvation of the confederacy imperatively require him to become a political partisan, or that the municipal affairs of his county will be entirely mismanaged unless he neglects the business of his employer and rides to every monthly, quarterly and circuit court to “hear the news” and “to see and be seen.” He is paid for his time and services, and to the diligent performance of those services he should devote himself. He should push his business and not allow his business to push him. He should love and speak the truth, and remember that if he does not, his employer will soon detect and cease to respect him. He should maintain a proper discipline, but always observe justice and humanity. He should require fair and reasonable work, but carefully abstain from excessive labor, or improper exposure of his laborers during bad weather. He should strive to make good crops and at the same time improve the soil—attend faithfully and regularly to the horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, &c. Between him and his employer there should be courtesy always—consultation occasionally—familiarity at no time. It is the duty of the overseer to respect the wishes and execute the orders of his employer, whether the overseer approves of the orders and plans of said employer or otherwise.

But few overseers have sufficient maturity of judgment or requisite experience, before they are thirty years old, to be qualified to manage a large farm or superintend many hands; and after attaining the age of 45 to 50, their physical powers are impaired, and they are less fit for the energetic and prompt discharge of their duties. After deciding upon your plans, give orders, not to your negroes, but give directions to your overseer. Respect for him enjoins this course, and by its observance you will prevent conflict of orders and misunderstanding between yourself and overseer, as well as negroes. Regard with some distrust the flattering certifi-

cates and recommendations handed to you by those who are candidates for employment as overseers. Some farmers of very kind hearts and generous feelings have erred in recommending overseers, who, upon trial, have been found sadly deficient. Contracts with overseers are generally made in May or June, and overseers move 15th November. The farmers and planters should consult together and resolutely determine to postpone making contracts with overseers until August or September. The present practice is injurious to the farmers and planters, and beneficial only to such overseers as have really but little merit. If a new overseer moves to your farm on the 15th Nov. you ought to have by general acquiescence and established usage, until August or September to decide whether his management is such as to entitle him to a continuance for the next year. No overseer who wishes and intends to do his duty, and who is conscious of possessing proper qualifications need apprehend any difficulty in getting a good situation and reasonable compensation, by a postponement of the period for making contracts as is here suggested.

Half a century ago, a majority of the wealthy planters of Virginia relied almost entirely upon the management of their overseers, and seemed to regard agriculture as a pursuit unworthy of the regular attention of a gentleman. Hence many of them were impoverished. Within the last thirty years a great change in public sentiment has taken place, and now the farmer or planter, who is too proud or too indolent to superintend his overseer and control the affairs of the farm, is more likely to excite ridicule than win approbation. Do you not know, Christopher, that "the eye of the master will do more work than both his hands"—that "*want of care does us more damage than the want of knowledge,*" and that "not to superintend workmen is to leave them your purse open?" Remember that in many of the affairs of this world, men are not saved by faith, but by the want of it.

You tell me that you are in debt, that you are anxious, uneasy and unhappy; that you know not which to do, whether to sell half of your negroes and thus pay your debts, or sell your land, pay your debts with the proceeds, and then move with your wife, children and negroes to Texas; or whether it would be best to remain in Virginia, hold your property, and try, by diligence and frugality, to discharge your pecuniary obligations. You say that the estimated value of your land when you obtained possession was thirty thousand dollars, that although the family mansion was comfortable and in good order, you thought it deficient in elegance and taste, that you took it down and built a new house which cost you ten thousand dollars and that when this house was completed, you and your wife went to New York and bought furniture to the amount of ten thousand dollars for your charming residence, that you have paid only five thousand dollars in fact

for said house and furniture, the other fifteen thousand having been borrowed of two or three friends, who require you to pay the annual interest punctually, &c., &c. I regret your perplexity as well as its cause. You are well acquainted with the Latin and Greek, the French and Spanish languages—with ancient and modern history—with chemistry and mathematics, with natural and moral philosophy; in short, your head is a perfect storehouse of learning, yet cousin Christopher, excuse me for saying that after all "you are a bit of a goose." The comfortable house in which you were born and raised, and in which your father died, might, you thought, do very well for an "old fogey" like him, but was wholly unfit, as you believed, for "Young America." You have certainly made considerable "progress," but whether or not in the right road is exceedingly questionable. No wonder that you are found complaining because the last Legislature doubled the State taxes. Men, when much involved in debt, are prone to find fault with all kind of legislation—except the passage of a bankrupt law. Our taxes have been doubled, and very justly and properly doubled. The taxes imposed by government are not the only taxes we submit to. Many persons (perhaps you among the number) are taxed twice as much by their idleness, three times as much by their pride, and four times as much by their folly. Dismiss from your mind the thought of selling your inheritance and moving off to Texas, remain where you are, reform your habits, reduce your expenditures, apply yourself with augmented industry and zeal to the management of your farm and endeavor by all honest exertions to pay your debts as soon as practicable. *Take care of your estate and your estate will take care of you.* Oh! that every young man in Virginia would bear in remembrance this simple truth. Remember that "he who sells an acre of land sells an ounce of his credit." Debts are paid, not by despair, but by industry. Like many others, you have not learned to appreciate the value of time. What we call time enough, always proves little enough. "Then plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep." If you love life, then do not squander time, "for that is the stuff life is made of," as poor Richard says. Rise early and devote several hours of every day (Sundays excepted) to your farming operations. Your overseer and negroes seeing this improvement in your habits, will be encouraged and stimulated to perform their respective duties with greater fidelity and zeal. Inform your wife frankly and fully of the extent of your debts, and your anxious desire to pay them as soon as you can, and ask her in a kind manner, to abstain henceforward from buying so many costly silks, &c., from Stewart's fashionable store in New York and certain stores in Philadelphia and Baltimore. You will, I am sure, find her willing to co-operate with you in your laudable efforts to pay

your debts without selling your land or negroes. Besides this, you must abandon your love of locomotion, and cease your visits to Cape May, Saratoga, Niagara, and the Lakes. Your residence is entirely healthy throughout the year, and being in debt, you can urge no good reason why you should apply the proceeds of your crops to trips of recreation instead of to the payment of your just debts. If compelled by bad health to leave home during the summer, go to Old Point Comfort or to some of the Virginia Springs. No state in the Union surpasses Virginia in beauty and variety of scenery or in the number and efficacy of its mineral waters. Unless required by bad health to leave your home and business, remain at home. With farmers, summer is an important and busy season, while the reverse is true in regard to the inhabitants of cities. It costs city people not much more to travel in summer than to live in town, as they always have to pay for their meats and vegetables, milk, butter, &c. Not so however with the farmer. But I am digressing and must return to my subject. Remember that there are no gains without pains, and that he who "rises late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night," as poor Richard says, and truly. To industry you must add common sense, if you wish to avoid shipwreck. Your father had a good share of common sense, but if I were to judge you by your \$10,000 dwelling and your \$10,000 worth of furniture, I should say, Christopher, that you had not an ounce, yea a grain of common sense. Do then try and acquire this essential kind of sense. Instead of acting like Don Quixote, follow the good example of your father. Be your income what it may, never allow your expenditures to exceed your income. Unless you learn to save as well as how to make money, you will keep your nose all you life to the grindstone and die not worth a groat at last. You must learn how to make large crops, you must exhibit your industry in making and saving them, your sagacity as to the time for selling them, and your economy in using the proceeds. Some verdant youths speak of economy as synonymous with parsimony. This absurdity may pass among juveniles and also among some extravagant young men. Economy is, in truth, as far removed from parsimony as from extravagance—the two last being extremes, and economy occupying middle and mutual ground. The prudent man likes economy—the miser delights in parsimony and the spendthrift in extravagance.

There are probably not more than fifty farmers in Virginia who would be justifiable—in consequence of their wealth—in spending \$20,000 in building and furnishing a country house. Your means certainly did not authorise such an expenditure. Have you forgotten that

"Vessels large may venture more,  
But little boats should keep near shore."

Not content with the dimensions of a large frog you have nearly exploded in your abortive effort to rival the ox. You now find, as Poor Richard says, that "creditors have better memories than debtors." Unless you abandon your extravagant habits, you will find as poor Dick says, that "it is hard for an empty bag to stand upright" and that "Lying rides upon Debt's back." I will not however despair of you. You have a large share of pride but not of the right kind. Your pride is of the fashionable kind, and savors of the New York "cod-fish aristocracy"—a love of fine houses and costly furniture—fine clothes, new carriages, dear horses, diamonds, &c. These things have not brought happiness to you, and your last letter contains your acknowledgement of the fact. To keep up appearances and delude the public, you contracted debts and have been annoyed by duns. By reforming your habits and paying your debts, you will recover your former independence and cheerfulness. Duns will not then annoy, or debts disturb you. You will then feel better, breathe more freely and sleep sounder. The farmers and planters living around you will be gratified to see this change in your conduct, and will respect you more highly.

Two pair of carriage horses, a buggy horse and a riding horse, making six in all, kept for the benefit of yourself, wife and two children, is a larger number of pleasure horses than you ought to keep. I suggest that you sell at least three of these horses, and thereby lessen the tax upon your corn-house, and at the same time discharge a part of your liabilities. One pair of carriage horses and a riding horse besides, ought to suffice for you and family, and I doubt whether you would have had more than this number if you had not built a costly house and desired every thing to correspond. Retrenchment should be your motto. Don't forget, Christopher, that "a ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees," and when you think of little expenses, reflect, that "a small leak will sink a great ship." Your wife knows, or ought to know, that "always taking out of the meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom." If she, good soul, hints to you, that she would like for you to order five or six silk dresses for her, remind her that "silks and satins, scarlets and velvets put out the kitchen fire." Both of you have found out that "pride is as loud a beggar as want, and a great deal more saucy."

You ought to keep a journal of all your receipts and expenditures. This can be done easily, and you will soon derive benefit from the habit. I have followed the practice for more than twenty years, and would respectfully recommend it to you and all other farmers. No man who will try the plan for one year will ever willingly abandon it. I beg you to ad pt it without delay. Do not misunderstand me, Christopher. While I condemn your extrava-

gance and deplore your past follies, do not suppose for a moment that I wish you now to become a sordid miser and close your heart to every feeling of charity and generosity. Far, very far from it. I wish to see you avoid the character of a miser as well as that of spendthrift—to convince you that without economy, as well as industry, you cannot pay your debts—to urge you to remain in Virginia, and exert your powers in elevating her agriculture—to induce you to cherish a proper self-respect, and seek an honest independence.

You ask me whether I think farmers ought to buy goods, &c. upon credit, and in anticipation of large crops and high prices. The practice is, I think, very reprehensible. As a general principle, farmers and planters ought not to buy upon credit, but adhere to the cash system. Young and inexperienced farmers, and especially those of a sanguine temperament, sometimes make ludicrous blunders, besides contracting very large debts upon the faith of large crops which they certainly intended to make, and high prices which they resolved to obtain. The last few months have afforded many illustrations of the latter. Some farmers who were offered \$2 30 for their wheat, refused the offer, demanded \$3 per bushel, and finally accepted \$1 50. The amount of the crop is dependent upon many contingences, and varies from year to year, as well as the price. Hence the hazard and impropriety of contracting debts in anticipation of large crops and high prices. Some farmers make large crops — by arithmetic, but are nevertheless surpassed by others who never like to cipher until after their crops are sold and the money paid. Whenever you see a man convince himself by arithmetical calculations that he will make large crops and sell them at high prices, be assured that he is partially deranged. The credit system has at different periods inflicted immense injury. For some time past, agricultural products have commanded good prices, and there are, no doubt, more farmers now dealing upon the cash system than formerly. Ere long, I trust, it will prevail almost universally. When that time arrives, we shall hear less said about “hard times” and going to Texas, Kansas, Missouri or the Moon.

I am sorry to say, Christopher, that there are several other farmers who have “progressed” in extravagance and fashionable follies nearly or quite as much as yourself. The sun has its dark spots, and it can excite no wonder, that the great agricultural class should exhibit a few peculiar specimens of humanity. Some few farmers refuse to expend their money to accomplish purposes plainly useful, in order that they may indulge their imaginary wants, or servilely obey the behests of fashion. A few illustrations may be given.

Mr. A. makes very good Tobacco, and is an excessive smoker, but thinks a pipe is not *gentle*. He spends \$300 annually in Havana ci-

gars, has draw-bars instead of gates to the several fields of his plantation; acknowledges the superiority of gates, but says he cannot afford to pay for them.

Mr. B. cannot tell one tune from another, but professes intense love for fashionable music.— So soon as Jenny Lind arrived in New York, Mr. B., his wife and daughters took the cars and soon reached the Astor House. Of course, they were enraptured by Jenny’s unsurpassed and heavenly music. The ladies did not find any book-store in New York, but were compensated by the China stores and jewelry shops which they pronounced to be equally charming and splendid. The young ladies helped themselves freely to jewelry, but their considerate mother determined to spend her money usefully, so she bought a fine set of dinner China at one thousand dollars. This trip of pleasure cost Mr. B. only three thousand five hundred dollars. Mr. B. has no apple trees or peach trees upon his farm, laments this, but says he will not submit to imposition and stoutly refuses to give 25 cents each for young trees. He and his family are fond of fruit, and in addition to all the fruit they beg from their poor neighbours, Mr. B. sends to town every winter and purchases ten barrels of Northern apples.

Mr. C. built a large dwelling-house five years ago, but it has no shutters and has never been painted, merely because he “has no money to spare.” Last year he said he was resolved to have the finest equipage in his neighbourhood. Accordingly he went to Philadelphia where he bought a carriage for \$1,000, and then to New Jersey where he purchased a pair of fine trotters for another \$1,000. When he went North he saw so many painted houses along the route, that he thinks his house looks best without any paint at all, and that he will save his money for some better purpose.

Mr. D. is unwilling to give \$30 for a corn-sheller, although his negroes consume thirty bushels of meal a week. But he is willing enough and able enough to spend, and has actually paid five thousand dollars for the education and clothing of his two daughters during the three years these fashionable and accomplished young ladies attended a celebrated female school in Philadelphia. While there they attended the theatre and opera, acquired a superficial knowledge of French and Italian, learned to dance most beautifully and to play admirably upon the piano, guitar and harp.— Unfortunately their knowledge of books is not extraordinary. The one says that the history of Robinson Crusoe, by the historian, David Hume, is the most interesting and valuable history recently published: the other maintains that the “Children of the Abbey” was never published until 1855, and is by far the most powerful novel ever written by the *pious* Wm. Cobbett of England! With the history of Virginia, they are as thoroughly acquainted as with the interior of Japan. Their mother is

in delicate health and would like to be relieved of the cares of housekeeping, but these charming girls are unwilling to submit to such low drudgery. They are too proud—to think too highly of their social position—to condescend to learn how bacon is cured or cooked, or milk is churned. Of course, their dresses are all made in Philadelphia, and cost a large sum annually. Their father has a piece of flat land, which by an expenditure of fifty dollars, might be made fine meadow land. He makes no hay, buys several tons of Northern hay every spring for his horses, and declares that ditching is so expensive he cannot afford to pay *his money* for such work. Unwilling to be so *extravagant* as to give his cows anything more than straw during the winter, he goes without cream and milk during cold weather, and sends to the North for his *butter*. His cows gives him no milk, and he makes no butter from the 1st December to 15th April annually.

Mr. E. cannot spare any money to buy clover seed and plaster, although anxious to improve his land and appreciating clover and plaster very highly. He has, however, resolved to educate his son thoroughly, and therefore sent him to the University. He is allowed four hundred dollars a session to pay for books, board and tuition, and the kind-hearted father being solicitous that the son should avoid vulgar company, and move in the first circles, gives him \$400 for clothing and \$400 more for pocket money. The promising youth keeps a fine buggy and horse, flirts with the young ladies, gives nice suppers and entertains his numerous friends with excellent wine and cigars of the best flavor. He is quite popular and universally spoken of as a noble and generous fellow. Although his circulars are by no means flattering, his father (like Mr. Macawber) hopes something favorable will turn up, and that if his son fails to be President, he will, at least, become a Senator of the U. S.

Mr. F. avows himself to be an ardent friend of agricultural improvement, talks fluently and praises lime, bone dust and guano as absolutely indispensable for all farmers. For five years past, he has intended to buy freely of each, but he could not well afford it. His farm is in full view of the Blue Ridge, and his residence unusually healthy. His fortune was at one time large, but has been impaired by his inattention to business and by fondness for card playing, good dinners and good wines. He walks a little about his yard and garden daily, and rides over his farm once a week to see the overseer and enquire what has been done the preceding week. In June he is resolved to buy 20 tons of guano to sow with his wheat in October, but in July he borrows money of his commission merchant upon the faith of his new crop of wheat, and by the 1st of August he and his family start for the White Sulphur. His frequent trips to the Springs in pursuit of recreation and pure air have probably cost him not

less than \$10,000. He admires no other form of government so much as what he calls a parental government, and vigorously maintains that as all the sons of Virginia belong to Virginia, it is the duty of the Commonwealth to educate all of the white boys of the State. He advocates the largest liberty upon this subject, while avowing aristocratic and exclusive preferences generally. Denying his obligation to educate and provide for his children, he proposes to send three of his sons to the Military Institute and the other three to the University, *provided* he can enter them as *State students*.

Your family, Christopher, is small at present, but it is your duty to look to and provide for the future. You too may have six sons. Have you any moral right to squander your money in selfish and superfluous gratifications, and then call upon the State to educate your children at the expense of your fellow-citizens?

Some years ago, Mr. G. was induced to subscribe to a northern paper, which zealously advised the farmers to plant the *Morus Multicaulis* and to raise silk worms. Intent upon money making, he resolved to acquire a fortune by raising and then selling the Mulberry. He invested \$1,000 in little Mulberry slips at 4 cents each, and planted them in a lot. A few months after, his delightful visions took wing. The *Morus Multicaulis* mania—like the Tulip mania which once prevailed in Holland—had a brief existence. Mr. G. had demonstrated his ardent desire to advance agricultural improvement by subscribing to the agricultural paper just mentioned. The result was unfortunate. Ever since that time, he has abhorred and denounced all agricultural papers and agricultural books, as the mere instruments of deception and the organs of villainous imposture. If you were to suggest to him the propriety of subscribing for the Southern Planter, he would probably knock you down. He threatens to disinherit any son of his, who in disregard of his orders, shall venture to look at any agricultural journal, or quote before him an agricultural book. By his stubborn refusal to profit by the agricultural information which he might easily have acquired within the last fifteen years, he has lost more than he expended upon his *Morus Multicaulis* speculation.

Mr. H. cherishes old customs and abhors nearly every innovation, and is "too old a bird to be caught with chaff." His neighbours may throw away their money in buying all kinds of new machines, but being a prudent and sagacious man, he waits until he can profit by their experience. Many years back, they abandoned the absurd practice of treading out their wheat crops with their horses and upon the barnyard, threshing machines were introduced and proved entirely successful. After cogitating, hesitating and reflecting upon the subject from time to time, for five years or more, Mr. H. concluded that he would purchase a wheat machine the next year. In the interim, he had a visitor who

hailed from Vermont, and who had for sale machines for washing clothes more elegantly, economically and expeditiously, than clothes ever had been washed before. Mrs. H. begged her husband to relieve her of vexation and trouble, by buying one of these admirable machines, the utility of which was so apparent, and the price so very moderate—only \$20. While Mr. H. loved his money, he loved his wife, and as this was the first time she had ever asked him to indulge her, he bought a machine and paid the money without a sigh or a tear. The machine soon proved to be utterly worthless and *ergo*, argues the logical Mr. H., all wheat machines, &c. recommended for agricultural purposes are no better. He congratulated himself, that he only paid \$20 for his experience, declares that but for that little enterprise of his dear wife, he would, by this time, have sunk at least \$500 in buying wheat machines, boasts publicly, that although he has made wheat for nearly forty years, he has never bought or hired a wheat machine, and swears that he never will to the day of judgment. His neighbours confidently assert that he has lost hundreds of dollars for the want of a wheat machine, while he declares that his Vermont friend is the most consummate and magnificent swindler in the Union, though indirectly a great benefactor to him as a teacher.

Mr. I. says that he suffers considerably from the depredations of rats, which he thinks destroy annually at least twenty barrels of his corn, besides eating wheat, &c. Being a rigid economist, he peremptorily refuses to buy any rat traps, or any thing else to protect his corn or meat house. He has never lost a pig or lamb by foxes, to the best of his recollection, and huntsmen contend that foxes are rarely ever heard of in his neighbourhood. Mr. I., however, asserts, that these circumstances do not prove that his lambs and pigs are not *in some danger*. He had several hounds, but they having gone off and killed thirty fine Cotswold sheep belonging to a neighbouring farmer, the law of retaliation was promptly enforced upon the aggressors. Determined to protect his lambs and pigs, and having by the way, a slight *penchant* for fox-hunting, Mr. I. shortly after purchased six fine hounds which cost him only the small sum of two hundred and fifty dollars. He is proud of his bargain and declares he would not sell them for \$500. He spends a great deal of time in fox-hunting, but has never caught a fox. When I last saw him, he swore, that unless the rascally rats would emigrate, he would sell his premises and move to Texas before the end of the year.

But enough. The rain is over, the sun is shining, and I must go out and attend to my crops. Wishing you, Christopher, and all of my agricultural brethren, health and prosperity, I remain

Your kinsman and friend,  
LEWIS LIVINGSTON.

June 10, 1856.

## DISEASE AMONG FOWLS.

SPOTTYSYLVANIA, July 12th, 1856.

*Mr. Editor*:—Will you or some of your numerous subscribers inform me of a remedy for a disease which has prevailed amongst my fowls of all kinds since 1848. During that year we lost from two to three hundred of different kinds of fowls, viz: Turkeys, ducks, (both kinds,) dunghill and guinea fowls. This year my wife has lost all the goslings she raised, and the disease bids fair to be as fatal as it was in 1848. The first symptoms are a partial loss of the use of their legs, and in some cases, particularly with ducks, there is a watery fluid running from the mouth. In a short time they are deprived of all use of their legs, and in a short time die, often the first day of the attack, rarely living beyond the third day. The disease seems to be confined to my premises, as I have not heard of any of my neighbours having lost any. If you, or any of your subscribers know anything about the disease you will please inform me through your valuable paper.

A SUBSCRIBER.

## OXEN VS. HORSES.

The "Wool Grower" says that "the plowing matches throughout the country have established the fact, that oxen can plow a given space of ground *as quick and as well* as horses." We do not know how this may be, but we do know a gentleman who puts a yoke of Devon oxen to a plow, immediately behind a team of three good horses, and they do the same days work of plowing that the horses do. They are stabled and curried and fed like horses, and do all the work required of them with as much spirit.

## SMUT IN WHEAT.

Should there be smut this harvest, will the observer be kind enough to examine the smutted heads carefully, it may be he will find all the smut grains punctured through the chaff by some small insect, (several species perhaps), when in the milk state; the atmosphere being thus admitted into the grain, fermentation may be found to have taken place, and the smut produced. This would account for sound and smutted grains in the same head, and perhaps the only rational way of doing so.

DON'T FORGET.

## WET LANDS.

If any of your fields are wet make arrangements to have them thoroughly drained, and take our word for it, that the expense the draining may cost you, will be returned

with compound interest in a few years. Your soil once relieved of excess of water, their textures will become greatly improved, their earliness will be increased fully three weeks, and to that extent you may be able to work them earlier in the spring; their productive capacity will be increased at least one-third; they will produce crops of better quality, and withal the health of your place will be meliorated.

### CLOVER SEED—GATHERING AND CLEANING.

In the May number of the *Valley Farmer* we promised to give some information in regard to the proper machinery for gathering and hulling Clover seed, the manner of gathering, &c.

When it is intended to save the seed from a crop of clover, the spring growth should be cut for hay, or it may be pastured. When eaten quite close, the stock should be turned off till the seed is ripe and harvested.

The most common method of saving clover seed, is to mow it at a time when the largest quantity of seed is ripe, and before it begins to fall off from the heads. The heads, when fully dry, are threshed off by hand or with a thresher, or trod out on a barn floor, or in the field. The straw is then separated from the chaff and the seed is ready to be hulled and cleaned. With Manny's Combined Reaper and Mower, which is adjustable to cut any height, the heads can be cut off and received upon the apron until full, and then cast off in heaps upon the field.

There are also a number of Patent Clover Seed Gatherers. These we have never seen in operation, but understand some of them perform well. The best that we have seen is patented by Mr. John S. Gage, of Michigan. We expect to see these fully tried the present season and will then publish the result. We once made and used for many years, a very simple machine for gathering clover heads, with which a man and horse can go over and gather the seed from double the quantity of land in a day that he can cut over with a scythe; and when the heads only are gathered, they require no other labor, except drying, to prepare them to run through the hulling and cleaning machine. Any tolerable workman

can make one of these machines in two days. It is upon the following plan: Make an ordinary sled with the sides or runners 14 inches wide and 6 feet 6 inches long. These may be placed 5 or 6 feet apart, and secured together with two cross pieces only at the back end, leaving the forward part open to the length of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or 4 feet; then a box is made to nearly fill the width between the runners. The box is 4 feet long and 15 inches deep, with the forward end open. To the cross pieces at the bottom of the box, at the forward end, teeth of hard wood are secured so as to project about 12 inches; they should be  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch thick and 1 inch wide on top and made a quarter of an inch narrower or beveling on the underside. These teeth are placed *three-sixteenths* of an inch apart, so as to form a comb. If the upper sides of the teeth were capped with hoop-iron, neatly fitted, it would be better. This box is hung between the sides of the sled upon two gudgeons or pins two inches in diameter, just as a cannon is hung in its carriage. With two handles, four feet long, secured to the box and projecting behind, the box may be moved on the pins so as to raise or lower the teeth to adapt them to clover of any height. A man with a horse can strip the heads from four or five acres of clover in a day with this machine, and collect it in the box. With one of these machines a farmer can gather as much seed in a day as would be required to seed forty or fifty acres. It needs no hulling or cleaning unless it is designed for market. Some prefer to sow the seed in the chaff to that which is cleaned.

For market, the seed must be hulled and cleaned. For this purpose a great variety of machines have been invented, nearly all, however, upon the same general principle. Those in most common use in the clover growing counties of Ohio, are Mansfield's patent, manufactured by Mansfield & Whiting, Ashland, Ohio, and Crawford's patent, by other manufacturers. A specimen of these machines may be seen at the Reaper Warehouse of H. B. Howard, in Louisville, Ky. Others may be seen at the Agricultural Warehouse of Wm. M. Plant & Co., St. Louis, Mo.

We have received from a gentleman in Missouri the following letter, which was sent him by a gentleman in Ohio, upon the subject of clover seed. It contains infor-

mation of so much importance that we publish it in this connection. The Syracuse machine referred to, is the Endless Cham or Railroad Horse Power and Thresher, manufactured by Emery & Co., and Wheeler, Melick & Co., in Albany, N. Y. In order to make the subject of cleaning with the Thresher, as referred to, a little more clear, we will state that the teeth in the Thresher are placed spirally around the cylinder, the front of the cylinder being cased up with iron or wood. The seed is filled in rather compact at one end, and by the spiral action of the teeth it is hulled as it is forced forward and discharged at the other end of the cylinder. The method of hulling will answer where a farmer has the Thresher on hand, but a regular Huller which hulls and cleans the seed at one operation, is to be preferred. These are run by any of the ordinary horse powers, the same as a common wheat thresher is run.

—  
BUCYRUS, Ohio.

Dear Sir,—Yours of the 4th inst. was received last evening. It is with pleasure that I furnish you with all the information within my reach, on the subject mentioned in your letter, to wit: the Raising of Clover and Clover Seed.

I have consulted a Mr. Ludwig, who is a farmer of much practical experience and observation. I have also consulted some other farmers whom I knew had raised considerable clover seed, and I find their statements all substantially agree. I therefore give you the information as derived from Mr. Ludwig, believing his to be as reliable as any to be obtained on the subject. I drew up a series of questions which I supposed would, when answered, embrace the information you desired, and obtained his answers thereto in the following order:

1st. What is the best soil for the cultivation of clover?

Ans.—Clay soil, decidedly, for clover or wheat. Lime should be an ingredient of the soil.

2d. The best method of preparing the ground?

Ans.—I have found it best to prepare the ground well for wheat, and if it has not been done in the last three years, the subsoil plow, or Michigan Double Plow should be used. Sow the wheat in the

fall, and on the same sow clover in the spring.

3d. The best time to sow clover?

Ans.—Generally about the first of April, if pure seed is used—if in chaff, earlier.

4th. The quantity of seed to acre?

Ans.—About eight quarts of pure seed to the acre. You can scarcely use too much.

5th. The best time to cut clover for seed?

Ans. When the largest quantity of seed is ripe. When more is falling off from over ripeness than is getting ripe, it is high time to cut.

6th. In what manner should the grass be treated when cut for seed?

Ans.—Get it dry as fast as possible, and with the least handling. Get it into barn (not stack, it will not turn rain). It was formerly the plan to let it lay to *bleech*. That is wrong; it should not get wet if it can be avoided. It causes a great loss of seed.

7th. What is the best method of getting out the seed?

Ans.—I have used and seen used a number of Clover Hullers, but have found a good Syracuse threshing machine (for wheat) to answer the best, by adding thereto a *concave* of sheet iron, to be placed on the outside of the cylinder; the clover heads let in at one end and passing out at the other. Mr. Ludwig constructed this improvement for his own use, and also a *revolving screen*, through which it was first run and under which was a *fan*,—these separated the stems, leaves and light or seedless heads from the valuable portion, which being by this process much reduced in quantity and bulk, was then run through the threshing machine or huller, arranged as before mentioned. He however says, that it would be difficult to so describe the arrangement as to enable any one at a distance to arrange it. He informs me that by his plan he could, with three hands and two horses, clean forty bushels of seed per day. Twelve to fifteen bushels is a good business with a clover huller.

8th. What clover machine or huller is esteemed the best?

Ans.—Those invented and made by M. H. Mansfield, of Ashland, Ohio.

9th. What quantity is usually raised per acre in Crawford county, Ohio?

Ans.—It is a very uncertain crop. From



seven bushels to a total failure. Average, two and a half bushels per acre.

10th. The price per bushel.

Ans.—Very fluctuating, owing to crops, here and in other clover raising districts. Varying from \$3 to \$6 50.

I have given you what I believe to be the best information I could obtain, and as it comes from those whom I know to be successful cultivators and those who have raised from one to four hundred bushels of seed in one year, I presume it is to be relied on as correct. This county, a few years since, sold for export, over 20,000 bushels of clover seed, which I believe is more than what has been produced by any other county in the Union.

The time is fast approaching when farming, to be successful and profitable, must be done on scientific principles. Our old *guess work* and *chance* operations will not compete with scientific knowledge

With the hope that the above imperfect information may be of some service. I am

Very resp'y yours, J. B. LARWILL.  
*Valley Farmer.*

HARVESTING WHEAT.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Having observed for several years a great difference in the mode of harvesting wheat in upper and lower Virginia, I am induced to give you the cutting of my hands, who harvest as they do in the Valley, the great wheat growing section of the State. I commenced on the 16th of June.

	Acres.	Roods
June 16, Monday, worked 8½ hours and cut	12	0
June 17, Tuesday, worked 9½ hours and cut	13	3
June 18 and 19, helped a friend in his harvest.		
June 20, Friday, worked, 10¾ hours, and cut	16	0
June 21, Saturday, worked 11 hours and cut	11	0
June 23, Monday, worked 7½ hours and cut	10	0
June 24, Teusday, worked 10 hours and cut,	16	0

Worked 6 days, only cut during 57½ hours, and cut acres, 78 3

Fifty-seven and a half hours reduced to days of 10 working hours, give 5 days and

about ¾, which would bring the average to about 13 acres to 3 scythemen, or 4½ acres to each scytheman per day. This work was done without a word of hurry during the harvest. On Saturday three cutters worked in the forenoon and only two in the afternoon, yet I have made no deduction in the table of time and quantity.

My mode is this; I use a light cradle with only 4 fingers, which, with the blade, weighs 6½ lbs. We cut the grain and lay it, or cradle it; a lad (a half hand) follows with a long handle rake, and rakes the cut wheat into bundles; a woman, or three quarter hand, follows next, who also carries a long handle rake; this hand binds the wheat with a double band, throws the bundle behind, rakes the butt of the bundle, rakes up trash wheat and places upon the next bundle, and binds the whole together. This operation, if well done, gets nearly every straw and head.

I worked only 4 takers up after 3 scythemen. I should have had 6; if so, I could have cut a great deal more grain in the same time. I cut only what the hands could take up. My force consists of 4 men under 22 years old, 1 lad about 14 years, and 2 boys 9 years each. I hired the first two days a Prince George cutter, but he soon gave out, and was too trifling to work. I also hired during these two days and after, 1 young man, a very poor binder, a boy who could neither rake nor bind well, and an old man, who was a good, but a very slow hand at shocking. My harvest expenses were \$17, and my hands earned for themselves in the two days they cut from home \$10. This, of course was mine, and had I retained it, my harvest expenses would have amounted to \$7.

Some of my neighbors say my mode of cutting (never walking back with the scythe on the shoulder, if the wheat does not compel you to do so by leaning very much,) would prevent their getting hirelings. What an idea! Judge H. St. George Tucker, used to say that rye and sheep were more abused than any two things he knew of—that you would be told any time to sow rye, and any place for sheep. Let me add the farmer to these: must be alone of professions or trades, pay a man for working half of the working day? It will take a man nearly as long to walk back with the cradle on the shoulder, and then whet, as it did to cut the swath.

Are the farmers of Prince George more dependent on the free negroes than the negroes are on them? If so, I have gotten into the "wrong pew."

My hands cut twenty strokes in one minute, when going at their ease, and in making twenty strokes they pass over 22 yards. They, in such wheat as I had, averaged 9 feet or 3 yards, to the swath. In sixty minutes, or one hour, they would cut 1320 yards, which multiplied by the breadth 3 yards, and the product divided by 4840, gives about 3 roods and 10 perches. Ten hours would therefore cut 8 acres, 0 roods, 20 perches. My hands only averaged  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres, and I therefore lost by whetting, drinking and stopping,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  acres. Is not this enough to lose? I am informed that  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres per day to the scytheman is thought a fair day's work. I pity the farmer, for he is certainly very thoroughly and systematically abused. I have known 7 acres to the scythemen to be averaged throughout the harvest in heavy wheat. This was done by putting 3 good hands on each swath. They cut fast and saved all, which is economy in the end.

Cutting and catching, or gripping the wheat, is a piece of old foggism that should at once be abandoned in lower Virginia.

Very Respectfully,

THOS. G. BAYLOR.

Arrow Wood, Pr. Geo., June 25th, 1856.

*Southern Farmer.*

#### WHAT MAY BE DONE WITH A POOR ORCHARD.

We condense from the experience of a friend, whose whole statement would occupy more space than we can give. The following may be relied on as entirely accurate:—Five years ago, he purchased an orchard containing 23 years. They had never borne much, having been planted but a few years. Their treatment had been miserable. Cows and horses had been pastured in the orchard. More than one quarter of the trees had been bruised or bent, so that it seemed that they must die. The rest had been left unpruned, the suckers were growing from their roots, and large scars where the bark had been torn off by the horn of cattle, disfigured many of them. The insects, too, had held carnival among them. Apple borers had pierced their trunks; caterpillars had spun their webs from year to year in their branches; and ants, whose hills had multiplied

around, were swarming on the trees or fruit, during all the warm months.

Such was the condition of the trees. When our friend considered the case, he seriously thought of cutting them all down, and beginning anew. But the entreaties of his wife, who thought that some fruit might be grown on some of the trees, while a younger orchard would be coming on, induced him to try what could be done with these ragged, hopeless subjects.

His plan was a simple one. He turned out all animals. He pruned the trees carefully, covering all the wounds with grafting wax or shellac. He propped up the trees that were bent almost to the ground, and covered the large scars with cotton cloth that had been spread with grafting wax. He removed all the sprouts from the roots, and kept them cut off as fast as they re-appeared. He battled the insects as best he could. The borers he dug out of the trees, with a knife. The caterpillars he burned up, cutting off the limbs where their nests were, and putting them into the kitchen stove. The ants he destroyed by pouring hot water after the Monday's washing, into their hills. And he destroyed the moss, and numberless eggs, and grubs, by removing the rough bark, on the trunks and limbs, and washing the trees generously with old soap. He enriched the ground by spading under manure mixed with lime, and a little salt. This course he has kept up, as he thought needful, every year since.

But what are the results? We will state them. Every tree has lived. The most hopeless ones have borne generously. The trees have quadrupled the size of their tops in the last five years. The orchard attracts the attention of every passer by. All exclaim: "What fine apples you have Mr. —!" The insects, above mentioned, have almost entirely disappeared. Last year, (1855,) these 23 trees bore between 100 and 150 bushels of apples, and when this statement was made to us, more than half of them was just blooming, as if for another generous yield in 1856. Such are the results thus far.

Our readers will not wonder that our friend is greatly encouraged by his experiment. He adds at the end, this application:—1. Consult your wife before cutting down your apple trees. 3. Take good care of your trees if you have any. 3. Don't be

encouraged in view of some rather hopeless prospects. 4. Take the *Ohio Farmer*, for it was from this, (he says), and from other less valuable papers, that he gained the knowledge to which enabled him to save his orchard—*Ohio Farmer*.

#### BROADCAST CORN.

As your pastures will be giving out in August and September, it would be well to put a few acres in Indian corn sown broadcast, in order that you may have provender to soil your stock upon. An acre will grow food enough for 10 head of stock. In the preparation of the ground, manure liberally, plough deep, and harrow and roll till you get a perfectly fine tilth; then sow on each acre 3 bushels of corn, harrow and cross-harrow that in, and then roll.

#### THE APPLICATION OF LIME.

A WELL-KNOWN Virginia farmer, who is generally "down" on everything having any affinity to agricultural chemistry, writes us as follows:

"I respect your *science* more than I do that of most agricultural editors, and am about to prove my sincerity by asking you, without alluding to me, however, to write an editorial, giving the views of Prof. WAX on the application of lime—I have no access to them myself—and their adaptability to stiff clay flats, wet, but rich when drained and limed—diluvium

"The question of applying lime to such soils is one of much interest to me, as I have several hundred acres of just such land in cultivation to which I should be happy to introduce you if you can trust yourself among slave owners."

The views of Prof. WAX, (Chemist to the Royal Agricultural Society of England,) referred to, we presume are those contained in a lecture of his delivered some three years ago, portions of which were pretty extensively copied into our agricultural papers at that time.

Prof. WAX had made a series of investigations on the "absorbive properties" of soils. He found that ordinary soils possessed the power of separating from solution in water the different earthy and alkaline substances presented to them in manure; thus, when solutions of salts of ammonia, of potash, magnesia, &c., were made to filter slowly through a bed of dry soil, five or six inches deep, arranged in a

from solution, but the filtered liquid would contain sulphuric acid in abundance—not in the free or combined form, but united to lime; instead of sulphate of ammonia we should find sulphate of lime in the solution; and this result was obtained, whatever the acid of the salt experimented upon might be. It was found, moreover, that the process of filtration was by no means necessary; by the mere mixing of an alkaline solution with a proper quantity of soil, as by shaking them together in a bottle, and allowing the soil to subside, the same result was obtained. The action, therefore, was in no way referable to any physical law brought into operation by the process of filtration.

It was also found that the combination between the soil and the alkaline substance was rapid, if not instantaneous, partaking therefore of the nature of the ordinary union between an acid and an alkali.

In the course of the experiments, several different soils were operated upon, and it was found that all soils capable of profitable cultivation possessed the property in question in a greater or less degree. Pure sand, it was found, did not possess this property. The organic matter of the soil, it was proved, had nothing to do with it. The addition of carbonate of lime to a soil did not increase its absorptive power, and indeed it was found that a soil in which carbonate of lime did not exist possessed in a high degree the power of removing ammonia or potash from solution.

To what, then, is the power of soils to arrest ammonia, potash, magnesia, phosphoric acid, &c., owing? The above experiments lead to the conclusion that it is due to the *clay* which they contain. In the language of Prof. WAX, however,

"It still remained to be considered, whether the whole clay took any active part in these changes, or whether there existed in clay some chemical compound in small quantity to which the action was due. This question was to be decided by the extent to which clay was able to unite with ammonia, or other alkaline bases; and it soon became evident that the idea of the clay as a whole being the cause of the absorbive property, was inconsistent with all the ascertained laws of chemical combination."

After a series of experiments, Prof. WAX came to the conclusion that there is

flower-pot, or other suitable vessel, it was observed that the liquid which ran through, no longer contained any of the ammonia or other salt employed. The soil had in some form or other, retained the alkaline substance while the water in which it previously dissolved passed through.

Further, this power of the soil was found not to extend to the whole salt of ammonia or potash, but only to the alkali itself. If, for instance, sulphate of ammonia were the compound used in the experiments, the ammonia would be removed in clays, a peculiar class of double silicate to which the absorptive properties of soils are due. He found that the double silicate of alumina and lime, or soda, whether found naturally in soils or produced artificially, would be decomposed when a salt of ammonia, or potash, &c., was mixed with it, the ammonia or potash taking the place of the lime or soda.

Prof. WAY'S "discovery," then, is not that soils have "absorptive properties"—that has been long known—but that they absorb ammonia, potash, phosphoric acid, &c., by virtue of the double silicate of alumina and soda, or lime, &c., which they contain.

Soils are also found to have the power of absorbing ammonia, or rather *carbonate* of ammonia, from the air.

"It has long been known," says Prof. WAY, "that soils acquire fertility by exposure to the influence of the atmosphere—Hence one of the uses of fallows.

\* \* I find that clay is so greedy of ammonia, that if air, charged with carbonate of ammonia, so as to be highly pungent, is passed through a tube filled with small fragments of dry clay, *every particle of the gas is arrested.*"

This power of the soil to absorb ammonia is also due to the double silicates. But there is this remarkable difference, that either the lime, soda, or potash, silicate is capable of removing the ammonia from *solution*, the *lime* silicate alone has the power of absorbing it from the air.

It is on this fact, that the views of Prof. WAY, to which our correspondent refers, are based. Lime may act beneficially on many or most soils, by converting the soda silicate into a lime silicate, or in other words, converting a salt that will not absorb carbonate of ammonia from the air, into a salt that has this important proper-

ty. There is no manure that has been so extensively used and with such general success as lime, and yet "who among us," says Prof. WAY, "can say that he perfectly understands the mode in which lime acts?" We are told that lime sweetens the soil, by neutralizing any acid character that it may possess; that it assists the decomposition of inert organic matters, and therefore increases the supply of vegetable food to plants; that it decomposes the remains of ancient rocks containing potash, soda, magnesia, &c., occurring in most soils, and that at the same time it liberates silica from these rocks; and lastly that lime is one of the substances found uniformly and in considerable quantity in the ashes of plants, that therefore its application may be beneficial simply as furnishing a material indispensable to the substance of a plant.

These explanations are no doubt good as far as they go, but experience furnishes many facts which cannot be explained by any one or all of these suppositions. Lime, we all know, does much good on soils abounding in organic matter, and so it frequently does on soils almost destitute of it. It may liberate potash, soda, silica, &c., from clay soils, but the application of potash, soda and silica has little beneficial effect on the soil, and therefore we cannot account for the action of lime on the supposition that it renders the potash, soda, &c., of the soil available to plants. Furthermore, lime effects great good on soils abounding in salts of lime, and therefore it cannot be as a source of lime for the structure of the plant that it operates.

None of the existing theories, therefore, satisfactorily account for the action of lime. Prof. WAY'S views are more consistent with the facts of practical experience; but they are confessedly hypothetical; and his more recent investigations do not confirm the idea that lime acts beneficially by converting the soda silicate into the lime silicate.

Thus, six soils were treated with lime water till they had absorbed from one and a half to two per cent. of their weight of lime. This, supposing the soil to be six inches deep, would be at the rate of about 300 bushels of lime per acre. The amount of ammonia in the soil was determined in the soil before liming, after

liming, and then after being exposed to the fumes of carbonate ammonia till it had absorbed as much as it would. The following table exhibits the results:

	No. 1.	No. 2.	No. 3.	No. 4.	No. 5.	No. 6.
Ammonia in 1,000 grains of natural soil.	1.906	0.181	0.085	0.109	0.127	0.128
Ammonia in 1,000 grains of soil after liming.	0.169	0.102	0.040	0.050		0.125
Ammonia in 1,000 grains of soil after liming and exposure to the vapor of ammonia.	2.226	2.066	3.297	1.076	3.265	2.008
Ammonia in 1,000 grains of soil after exposure to ammonia without liming.	1.905	1.906	3.286	3.296	2.615	0.178

No. 1. Surface soil of London clay.  
 No. 2. Same soil from 1 1/2 to 2 feet below the surface.  
 No. 3. Same soil 3 1/2 feet below the surface.  
 No. 4. Loam of tertiary drift 4 feet below the surface.  
 No. 5. Gault clay—surface soil.  
 No. 6. Gault clay 4 feet below the surface.

special cause, and probably it arises from the existence of some compound silicates containing ammonia, of which lime under the circumstances can replace one-half—forming, for instance, a double silicate of alumina, with half lime and half ammonia—such compounds are not unusual or new to the chemist."

This loss of ammonia from a heavy dressing of lime is very great. A soil five inches deep weighs in round numbers 500 tons, or 1,000,000 lbs. The soil, No. 1, contained 0.393 per cent. of ammonia, or in an acre, five inches deep, 293 lbs. After liming it contained 0.169 per cent., or in an acre five inches deep, 169 lbs. The loss by liming is 124 lbs. of ammonia per acre. This is equal to the quantity contained in 800 lbs. of good Peruvian guano, or 12 1/2 tons of barn-yard manure.

In commenting on this great loss of ammonia from liming, Prof. WAY observes:

"Is it not possible, that for the profitable agricultural use, the ammonia is too highly locked up in it? Can we suppose that the very powers of the soil to unite with and preserve the elements of manure are, however excellent a provision of nature, yet in some degree opposed to the growth of the abnormal crops which it is the business of the farmer to cultivate? There is no absolute reason why such should not be the case. A provision of nature must relate to natural circumstances; for instance, compounds of ammonia may be found in the soil capable of giving out to the agencies of water and air quite enough of ammonia for the growth of ordinary plants and the preservation of their species; but this supply may be totally inadequate to the necessities of man. \* \*

\* Now it is not impossible that the laws which preserve the supply of vegetable nutrition in the soil, are too stringent for the requirements of an unusual and excessive vegetation, such as the cultivator must promote."

"In the case of ammonia locked up in the soil, lime may be the remedy at the command of the farmer—his means of rendering immediately available stores of wealth, which can otherwise only slowly be brought into use."

"In this view, lime would well deserve the somewhat vague name that has been given it, namely, that of a 'stimulant;' for its application would be in some sort an

It is evident that lime neither assisted nor interfered with the absorption of ammonia, and hence the beneficial effect of liming on such soils must be accounted for on some other supposition. This negative result, however, does not disprove the truth of Prof. WAY's hypothesis, for it may be that the silicate salt in the natural soils was that of lime and not that of soda. Indeed, the extent to which the natural soils absorbed ammonia—equal, in No. 3, to about 7,000 lbs. of ammonia per acre, equivalent to the quantity contained in 700 tons of barn-yard manure—shows this to have been the case.

*The lime liberated one-half the ammonia contained in the soil.*

"This result," says Prof. WAY, "is so nearly the same in all cases, that we are justified in believing it to be due to some

application of ammonia, while its excessive application, by driving off ammonia, would lead to all the disastrous effects which are so justly attributed to it."

"I do not wish to push this assumption too far," says Prof. WAY, in conclusion, "but if there be any truth in it, it points out the importance of employing lime in small quantities at short intervals, rather than large doses once in many years, [as is the general practice in England.]"

*Genesee Farmer.*

[For the Southern Planter.]

**RAISING HORSES—LETTER FROM  
THE LATE WM. R. JOHNSON OF  
CHESTERFIELD.**

GLOUCESTER Co., July 5th, 1856.

*Gentlemen:*

As the author of the accompanying letter addressed to me, in answer to mine, written about the same time, will no doubt be considered high authority for the opinion expressed on the subject of raising horses, I take leave to forward a copy for publication, in order that the information it contains may be generally disseminated by means of your valuable and useful paper.

I omit that portion of Mr. Johnson's letter on business of a private nature. Should you deem the letter of sufficient importance to occupy a space in the Southern Planter, you are at liberty to publish it as a contribution from a

**SUBSCRIBER.**

PETERSBURG, 14th Aug. 1830.

*My Dear Sir:*

My absence from this place has prevented me from receiving your esteemed letter of the 24th ult. until now.

With regard to the questions in your letter, I will with the greatest pleasure answer them.

I do not believe that mares in foal should be housed too much when they are advanced in age, they should be put up in bad weather; if the pasture is good they require no feeding—if it is such a one only as reduces them, they ought to be fed with corn or oats—corn is best in the winter and oats in the summer—mares ought to be kept in snug saddle horse order, never made too fat or overloaded with flesh—gentle exercise either in harness or

otherwise is not injurious but rather beneficial, unless the mares are very old, then they ought to do nothing but breed—but until they are 12 or 14 years of age they can be moderately used and safely too till within a month of the time of foaling.

After the mares have colts they ought to be fed with oats for two weeks and then be governed by circumstances. If the mare and colt do well upon pasture it is unnecessary to feed, and the condition of the mare and colt will show.

Clover when young is good grazing, but only when young ordinary pasture. Short grass is far preferable, and if not sufficient, feed them night and morning.

Colts should be weaned at about six months old, generally as soon you have gathered fodder; if you have two colts turn them in the corn field—if but one put it in a stable and feed it with meal and oats three times a day, only giving it a little at a time, not more than it will eat. feed ought to lay by a colt; after your colts are weaned turn them out in all good weather, and so trot them as to keep them growing, but never too fat; if promising and large don't force its growth—if small push it and so continue until two years old, then break it gently and by degrees afterwards it ought to be trained, and by the colt its management must be governed.

If this sketch is not sufficient for you or any of your friends, I will with the greatest pleasure answer any inquiry you may make of me.

I am in heart, most respectfully,  
W. R. JOHNSON.

**GREAT SALE OF LIVE STOCK.**

Col. Lewis G. Morris's sale of live stock took place at his residence, Mount Fordham, N. Y., on the 24th and 25th of last month. All circumstances relating to the occasion were highly favorable, and the result was entirely satisfactory. The weather was as fine and balmy as leafy June ever brings, which not only favored the attendance of purchasers, but induced many residents of the great Metropolis to take the opportunity of visiting one of the pleasantest places in the suburbs, and many gentleman and ladies went out in carriages. For several hours on the first day of the sale, the avenue leading to the

mansion was literally thronged—the assemblage comprising some of the finest “turn outs” of the city and neighborhood. A company amounting to 1200 or 1500 persons was collected. Yet so ample and complete were the arrangements, that everybody was perfectly accommodated—everybody was pleased and determined to please everybody else.

After a few hours given to the inspection of the stock, which had been conveniently placed for that purpose, the company were invited to refreshments. The ladies numbering upwards of 300—and the gentlemen whose principal duty for the day was to attend them, were entertained at the mansion, under the charge of Miss Morris, Col. M.'s niece. The larger and more strictly *business* portion of the company, lunched at the barn, where extensive tables were set with everything essential to the comfort of the inner man.

A little before three o'clock, the auctioneer, Col. James M. Miller, announced that he was about to commence the sale. The stand was the same which was occupied at Col. M.'s previous sales—in an open field, beneath the shade of “tall ancestral trees.” The animals to be sold on the first day were secured in temporary stalls, over which canvass was spread. Some of the cattle,—including the finest of the reserved Short-horns, and the entire flock of South Down ewes—were in the meantime disposed on the broad lawn in front of the mansion, and thus formed a most attractive rural scene. After the ladies had partaken of refreshments, a large number of them collected under the trees on the lawn, and for their gratification the shepherd with his very sagacious and well disciplined dog, collected the flock at a point convenient for observation—a very interesting and beautiful performance, with which the numerous spectators appeared delighted.

The stock sold consisted of Short-horn bulls—no cows or heifers of this breed being offered—Devon bulls, and cows and heifers, South Down sheep, and Essex and Berkshire swine. For future reference, we shall publish an authentic list of the sale. Some general remarks, however, will not be out of place in this connection.

We have already said that the sale was generally satisfactory. But the most gratifying feature in connection with it, so far

as the public is concerned, was the discrimination generally shown in reference to the stock. We have never before attended a sale where the relative merits of the animals was so correctly appreciated—an important fact, as showing the progress which has been made in the knowledge of points by which stock should be judged. The bidding for all the good animals—except in a few instances where age was against them—was very spirited, and they were quickly knocked off at good prices.

The Short-horn bulls were first sold. Romeo, six years old and very heavy, was bought by Reber and Kuts of Lancaster, Ohio, for \$600. They were prepared to give double this sum. Orpheus, seven months old, by Duke of Gloucester, out of Songstress, was bought by J. B. Crippen, of Coldwater, Mich., for \$675. Marmion, eight months old, was bought by B. and C. S. Haynes, of Elizabethtown, N. J., for \$500.

The Devons sold well. Frank Quarterly, five years old, was bid off by Col. B. P. Johnson, of Albany (for what destination we are not advised) at \$350. Master Birthday, four months old, was bought by Richard Peters, of Atlanta, Ga., for \$340; a higher price than we have ever before known obtained for a Devon of this age in this country. Birthday, an imported cow twelve years old, sold to L. H. Colby, of Groton Village, Tompkins County, N. Y., for \$450. Virtue, seven years old, sold to Francis Morris, of Throgg's Neck, N. Y., for \$440. Princess, nine years old, sold to the same for \$340. Birthday, 4th, to the same for \$350.

Upwards of 100 South Down sheep were sold at prices averaging higher than have ever before been obtained for a similar number. The celebrated ram, Young York, brought \$400. He was bought by Samuel Thorne, of Washington Hollow, Dutchess County, N. Y., who was also the purchaser of thirteen ewes at an average of upwards of \$150 per head. Other ewes and lambs sold high, as will be seen by the list, the publication of which we are obliged to defer till next week.

The Essex and Berkshire swine sold well, with the exception of old boars, which are less saleable on account of the cost and difficulty of transportation. Imported Essex boar Fisher Hobbs, sold for \$27 50. Essex sows brought from \$50

to \$75 each. Imported Berkshire boar Master Berk, brought \$25; Sir Robert, same breed, \$35. Berkshire sows from \$45 to \$80.

The aggregate amount of the sale is about \$22,000. Its effects on the agricultural public will be salutary. The value of good stock will be embraced by it, and it will tend to induce a more just distinction between good and indifferent or bad animals. On the whole, there have been few occasions of the kind which have passed off more happily for all parties, than Col. Morris's sale of 1856.

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### GUANO CONVENTION.

The *National Intelligencer* contains a very full report of the proceedings of the Convention which assembled in Washington on the 10th instant to consider the most eligible course for the farming interest to pursue to relieve itself from the restrictions of the guano trade. About sixty or seventy gentlemen, farmers and planters from several of the adjoining states, were in attendance. Several propositions were submitted to the convention, one of which was that such a duty should be laid upon guano as to prohibit its importation, unless the Peruvian government would supply it on more reasonable terms. Another was that the farmers should enter into a voluntary combination to suspend or discontinue its use. These propositions, however, appeared to meet with but little favor. Some gentlemen advocated the purchase by our government of one or all of the Chincha Islands, in the event that every other resource failed. We are gratified to perceive that these measures received the support of but a small number of the Convention. Finally, the Convention adopted the following resolution offered by Mr. Burgwyn of North Carolina:

"Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed by the chair to continue negotiations with the government of Peru for the introduction of guano in our country on the most reasonable terms."

The following resolution was advocated as a matter both of expediency and economy, and adopted by the Convention:

"Resolved that this Convention respectfully recommend to the farmers in the habit of using Peruvian guano exclusively,

to substitute a mixture of Peruvian and Columbian guano in proper proportions, as recommended by Mr. Booth of Philadelphia, and Dr. Stewart of Baltimore, distinguished chemists, as the most effectual means to reduce the present high price of Peruvian guano."

During the afternoon session of the Convention, it was proposed that the members should report the state of the wheat crop in their respective districts. In only a few localities was the crop represented to be an average one, while the destruction from the Hessian fly was thought to have been greater than at any time for the last fifteen years. The expression of the sense of the Convention is embodied in the following resolution:

"Resolved, That from the best information in possession of this Convention, they are of opinion that the present growing wheat crop is less than an average by one third in North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and the adjoining counties of Pennsylvania."

"COUNTRY GENTLEMAN."

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### CULTIVATION OF BUCKWHEAT.

It seems unnecessary to regard any thing in regard to the cultivation of buckwheat.

Throughout the Eastern, Middle and Western States and the Canadas, it grows almost spontaneously, and it would seem that the only thing requisite to secure a crop is to scatter the seed. It sometimes receives injury from early frosts, but as a general rule, no crop is better adapted to the short, hot summers of the Northern States. Botanically it is not a *cereal*, but its natural character and composition closely resemble this useful order of plants. Except millet, no plant used as food for man can be sown so late in the season; and this to the farmer is one of its most valuable qualities. It is frequently sown after a crop of rye has been taken off the ground, and thus even in the comparatively short seasons of the Northern States and the Canadas, two crops used as food for man can be obtained from the land the same year—a result seldom or never obtained in the long, damp seasons of the British Isles.

Buckwheat is a plant known in almost every part of the world. It is supposed



to have been first grown in Europe about the time of the Crusaders, and the French called it *ble Sarrazin*. In China, Japan and Russia, it forms a large portion of the food of the inhabitants, and in Switzerland, the South of France, and Flanders, it is cultivated to a considerable extent. It has been grown in England for upwards of three hundred years, but the cool climate of England is not well adapted to its perfect elaboration, and hence it is not very extensively cultivated. In no country does it flourish better than in the United States—no where else do we find the luxury of hot buckwheat cakes so frequently upon the breakfast table.

Buckwheat will grow on the poorest of sandy soils, and it has been extensively cultivated for the purpose of plowing in as a manure. Nevertheless, we are inclined to consider buckwheat as an exhausting crop. EMERSON, in the *Farmers' Encyclopedia* says: "It is generally thought to be a severe crop upon land, and for this reason it is seldom sown upon highly improved ground. Rough and hilly districts are considered peculiarly favorable to the culture of buckwheat, which is admirably adapted to subdue new or wild lands."

MR. BALLIGAL, in the *Transactions of the Highland Society*, has given an account of his experiment with it upon a clay loam recently limed; from the results of which he warned his brother farmers that it is "needless to attempt to grow it upon damp soils, or to expect full crops upon lands exhausted by over cropping." We certainly cannot recommend the cultivation of buckwheat for plowing under as a fertilizer. Clover is by far a better crop for this purpose. If the soil is too poor to grow clover, we should expect better results (in the Middle States, at least,) from the white lupine, or some other leguminous plant.

"The mode of culture," says an experienced writer, "has varied considerably since my recollection. It was formerly the custom to reserve the poorest land for buckwheat. It was considered a great reproach to land to say it would produce only buckwheat. The practice was to break up sward land early in the spring, and let it lie until about seeding time, and then cross plow and seed. The practice now among good farmers generally, is to sheep the fields intended for the crop as

long as can be done before sowing, and plow but once." The time of sowing varies in this State from the 20th of June to the 4th of July. It is sometimes sown as early as the 10th of June, and as late as the 15th of July. If sown too early it is liable to blast, and if too late it is frequently injured by the frost.

When grown for the grain, a bushel of seed to the acre is usually sufficient, and if the ground is rich, it is not safe to sow much, or it will run too much to straw. It flourishes best in a mellow, dry, loose sandy soil. "No crop," says G. W. DURANT, in the *Albany Cultivator*, "will feel manure of any kind, or in any state so quick as buckwheat. Barn-yard manure, whether green or rotted, ashes, lime, plaster, all seem to produce a wonderful effect when applied to this crop. Guano, as far as my knowledge extends, has not been tried, but I have no doubt the effect would be a considerable per cent. above any other manure, barn-yard manure not excepted." We have seen Peruvian guano applied to buckwheat, with the most astonishing effect. One hundred pounds per acre doubling the crop.

The flowers of buckwheat are particularly attractive to bees, and where bees are kept in considerable numbers, at least a small patch of buckwheat should always be sown.

Buckwheat is an excellent food for poultry. Pigs thrive upon and are fond of it, and when bruised it is good food for horses, two bushels being equal (for this purpose, it is said,) to three of oats. Cows, when fed with it, yield a large increase of milk. Sheep, when fed upon the plant when in blossom, stagger and tumble about as if drunk.

We throw out these hints with the hope of eliciting the experience of some of our practical readers.—*Genesee Farmer*.

#### MANGEL WURZEL.

A correspondent says: "I never drop but one Mangel Wurzel seed in a place. This one seed brings two or three plants which I transplant—the transplanted grow as large as the others." Is not our friend mistaken in regard to getting two or three more plants from one seed?

He adds: "I don't believe superphosphate of lime would help my beets, or

plaster either." Superphosphate would certainly help them during the first stages of their growth, but it is necessary to supply considerable quantity of organic matter—say farm-yard dung—in order to obtain a large crop. They are gross feeders.—*Genesee Farmer*.

### THE CULTIVATION OF ROOT CROPS.

At a recent Legislative Agricultural Meeting in Boston, the subject of "Root Crops" was discussed, and we condense from the *New England Farmer* such portions of the discussion as we think may be interesting and useful to our readers at this season:

SIMON BROWN, Esq., of the *New England Farmer*, said he thought we did not yet fully understand the value of root crops. In England they are highly valued, because more can be obtained from the same surface for the support of cattle, by their cultivation, than by the cultivation of grain, and because they are valuable in producing beef and mutton, which are in great demand there. They are a favorite diet for sheep. With us, there is a prejudice against the cultivation of roots, perhaps on account of the amount of labor required. They need a deep soil, and most farmers have not got into the habit of cultivating deeply. Not more than one farmer in a hundred, in Massachusetts, had made any fair experiments in trenching. There are sandy loams, and in some cases, clay loams, that are well suited to raising roots. If well cultivated, from six hundred to twelve hundred bushels may be obtained from an acre. He had raised parsnips at the rate of twelve hundred bushels to the acre. The mangel wurzel is very easily raised; it grows large, and is always an excellent root for stock. It grows much out of the ground, and therefore seems to require a different kind of cultivation from some other roots. In cultivating, it is necessary to have the ground well pulverized, and then two furrows are turned together, and upon the top of the ridge thus formed, the seed is sown; the ridge being first flattened a little. The labor of harvesting them is less than that of turnips or ruta bagas. Cattle are very fond of them, and they are highly nutritious. He had not succeeded so well with beets as with other roots; but he had no

doubt they could be raised at a handsome profit.

Round turnips may be cultivated easily by sowing them upon the land which is designed for grass, the ground being first plowed in July, and thoroughly prepared for grass, and the turnip seed being sown along with the grass seed. From three hundred to seven hundred bushels per acre may be obtained without any extra labor except that of gathering them. This method impoverishes the soil very little.

The advantages of feeding roots to stock were next referred to. He had been told that milk could not be made for market unless the cows were fed on meal of some kind; but he had found it too expensive to feed wholly with meal and hay. Having determined to try roots, after an experiment of feeding six cows with meal one season, he fed the same six cows with the same kind of hay, and with roots, the next season. The roots were of various kinds, the mangel wurzel, beet, ruta бага, round turnip, parsnip, and carrot, and these were mixed in feeding. After being milked in the morning, each cow was fed with half a bushel of mixed roots, which they ate greedily. There was no complaint of the turnip taste in the milk, and his milk man returned him cash for twice as many cans of milk as he did the year before, when they were fed on grain. That experiment had satisfied him that more milk could be obtained by the use of roots, than by feeding a certain amount of meal a day, say three quarts a day, as he fed his cows the first winter. The milk from roots is perhaps of a poorer quality, but milk sellers rarely have any qualms of conscience about that, if they get a greatly increased quantity. Mr. WEBSTER was a careful observer, and rarely talked about farming, anywhere, without bringing in the root crops. He saw that their cultivation would be of great benefit to New England farmers. In closing, Mr. BROWN expressed the opinion that more could be made from a given number of acres by the cultivation of roots, than by the cultivation of grasses and grains.

Mr. WILLIAMS, of Hadley, was of opinion, that root crop might be raised with great advantage, not only in his vicinity, but throughout the State.

Mr. BROWN stated the result of feeding round turnips to a cow for fattening, to

which he fed thirty bushels, with hay, and made her very fat indeed, so that she was sought by the butchers at a high price. In preparing the land for turnips, he pulverized it well, and levelled with brush harrow. The seed was sown in drills, marked out with a machine prepared by himself. The labor of sowing in that way was very little, and they were weeded principally with a wheel hoe. He had recently seen a plan of a cultivator which weeded both sides of a row at once, but he had not seen it tried.

Mr. J. L. LOVERING, of Vermont, said that though root crops were perhaps less cultivated in Vermont than Massachusetts, there are few farmers who do not raise more or less. They raise many sheep, and it is becoming an axiom that no farmer can have a good flock of merino sheep who does not feed them with roots as often as twice a week. The green food seems to prevent some of the diseases to which they are subject when not thus fed. Ruta bagas are raised principally for feeding stock. He had not succeeded well with getting his carrots to germinate, as for some cause or other the seed failed; but when they came up well, he had no difficulty in obtaining a large crop. He had raised at the rate of twelve hundred bushels to the acre, add he thought them better than ruta bagas. Potatoes are still fed to stock a good deal in Vermont. Many are raised, and if they will not bring in market about twenty-five cents a bushel, they are considered worth that to feed out. Some farmers cook ruta bagas before feeding, and one gentleman had recently fattened a pair of old cattle with ruta bagas worth twice as much when cooked as when fed raw. Turnips are fed to sheep, and are thought to be better for them than carrots, or other roots, producing a better quality of milk for the lambs.

Gen. TOWNE, of Worcester county, had a very high opinion of the importance of roots for feeding stock; the sugar beet, for beef and for stock generally, was in his opinion, decidedly the best root that grows. One great advantage in raising teem is, that the tops are very good indeed for young hogs. He always meant to have some pigs about the first of September, so that about the first of October the milk of the mother would hardly be sufficient for them. Then he had a yard of

sugar beets near, and he would make a little hole in the fence so that the pigs might understand they were getting into mischief by getting among the beets, and they will eat off all the leaves, which are as good as green corn for them, and the eating of them off does not injure the crop at all. He thought the leaves more than paid for the labor of raising those which were near the hog pen.

*Genesee Farmer.*



## THE SOUTHERN PLANTER.

RICHMOND, AUGUST, 1856.

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#### A TAX ON FEMALE DOGS.

Holding sheep as a necessary of life to the Farmer, and viewing dogs as the greatest enemies the sheep has to contend against—worse than foxes or wolves—it is not surprising that we should anxiously desire the death of at least nine out of every ten dogs in Virginia. We view nearly the whole canine race as a pest, only endurable because we have grown up under it; and we subscribe fully to the opinion of a deceased friend of ours, one of the worth-

iest of men and best of farmers, "that if there was not a dog in Virginia, and on some fine morning we should wake up and find them established among us in their present numbers, that the whole community would incontinently go mad."

It is said, with what truth we cannot pronounce, that a law for taxing dogs can never pass in the Virginia Legislature; that two many voters who own nothing but a dog would resent such a tax as an infringement of their immemorial rights; and that rival candidates would use so potent a besom to sweep the offending Solon from his place. We shall not bring so degrading a charge against those whom the theory of our government supposes elected primarily, for their "virtue and intelligence," and therefore superior to the sordid notions which the charge implies. Nor shall we presume that any election in Virginia can be influenced by a question about dogs. But to satisfy those who believe, as many do, that such is the impediment to a necessary law, we shall offer a plan which will, if adopted, accomplish the purpose of those who side with us on the dog question, and cannot involve, very seriously, the popularity of the "ayes" who shall pass the law.

It is simply a proposition to tax every bitch in the State. The number of them is not large and yet they are the source of the evil. If by putting them under the ban we can stop the breed, the whole object will have been obtained in reasonable time without doing violence to the feelings of that large and respectable class called "many voters."

We are perfectly serious, though the proposition may not appear so. We believe that if petitions, properly signed, were sent to the Assembly, that we might stand a good chance to lay the axe to the root of an evil much more serious than it is thought to be, by those who have never suffered under it, or have never thought of it.

As some one must lead in the matter, at least so far as to show how it ought to be undertaken, we offer the following form of petition, which, with such alteration as he may choose, any one may copy and circulate for signature.

*To the Honourable, the General Assembly of  
Virginia.*

The undersigned, farmers of the county of \_\_\_\_\_, respectfully represent, that the num-

her of dogs now in Virginia, is a serious disadvantage to the Agricultural interest of the State; that the number of sheep might be vastly increased but for the losses, either actual or anticipated, occasioned by the incursions of dogs into every flock; that the present laws upon the subject are insufficient to protect either the sheep or the owners of them, owing to the difficulty of proving the act, or the invidiousness of applying the remedy.

The undersigned are aware, at the same time, that it is difficult to adopt an instant remedy in the existing state of prejudice on the subject. They would therefore most respectfully petition your honourable body to adopt such legislation in this regard as will interfere as little as possible with supposed existing immunities, and will not operate a burden or grievance on the present rights of dogs and owners; and they would suggest that a tax of not less than five dollars be laid on every bitch within this Commonwealth, charging every animal of that description in the possession of a negro to his or her owner or owners.

#### IMPROVED BREEDS OF ANIMALS.

"Why shall I buy a good Bull," we have heard several times said in reply to our exhortations to various individuals to purchase improved animals; "why should I buy a good bull, or boar, or ram? My neighbours still keep the common stock of each, they permit them to go at large, as the law allows them to do, they jump, or tear down, my fences, get into my enclosures; and a runt, a "land pike," or a shabby sheep," is the consequence."

This is most true, and it is a reflection on the farmers, that they have never made an effort to correct an evil of more magnitude than they oppose it to be.

The remedy is simple if it is only applied, and can be had, one would hope, for the asking, it is merely to affix a penalty to "wilfully," or negligently" permitting such animals to go at large. There is nothing new in this. It is now the law with respect to stallions, and has been for a great length of time, not as may be thought in account of their superior power to do mischief, but for the purpose of improving the breed. In Henning's Statutes at Large, vol. 3, p. 35, we find the following:

#### ACT FOR THE BETTER IMPROVING THE BREED OF HORSES.

Forasmuch as the breed of large and strong

horses in this country, will not only extend to the great help and defence of the same, but also prove of great use and advantage to the inhabitants thereof, which is now much decayed and impaired by reason that small-stoned horses of low stature and value, be not only suffered to pasture and feed in our woods and other waste grounds, but also to cover and leap mares feeding there; whereof cometh a numerous breed to the little profit, but great damage of this country, and will further increase to the detriment thereof, unless some effectual remedy be speedily provided to prevent the same. For prevention therefore of so great an evil, and for the increase and breed of better and stronger horses hereafter to be had in this colony.

*Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and Burgessess of the General Assembly, and by the authority thereof, it is hereby enacted, That no person or persons whatsoever, after the last day of July, which shall be in the year of our Lord 1687, shall have or put to feed into or upon any woodland grounds, marshes or other waste grounds, not having a sufficient fence about the same, any stoned horse or horses, being of the age of two years, and not being of the height of thirteen hand full and an halfe, to be measured from the lowest part of the hoofe of the forefoot, unto the highest part of the withers, and every hand full to contain four inches of the standard, upon the penalty and forfeiture of such horse or horses, or four hundred pounds of tobacco," &c.*

Under this law, dating back one hundred and sixty-nine years, and steadily continued to the present day, the breed of horses steadily improved until about the time of the Revolution, when they were about at their best.

There is no reason why it should not have the same effect on other kinds of stock, at least in Eastern Virginia, and no doubt that many are deterred from making efforts to improve for want of such a law. How many for instance, are willing to purchase such splendid cows as our friend, Mr. Mathews, of Wythe, exhibited at the Fair, when the chances are in favour of a progeny by a "ticky Bull?"

There is one defect in the law as applied to stallions which should be corrected in enactments with regard to other stock. It makes the offence punishable by a fine of twenty dollars; see Code of Virginia, p. 455; one half to the informer, and holds the offender harmless for the first offence. This is wrong; how many gentlemen would be willing to go before a magistrate at a warrant trying and present a neighbour for a nuisance of this sort, and pocket a part of the forfeiture? And how many would be found willing to appropriate an animal so found going at

large, as any one may do now under this law after a second conviction. It is absurd to think of it.

Let the offence be made a misdemeanor, presentable by a grand jury, and let the penalty be graded to the proportion of the damage done, and if, as in the case of overseer of roads, and other minor offences, let it go to the literary fund. Then there will be less difficulty in having the law enforced.

As in the case above we append the form of petition.

*To the Honourable, the General Assembly of Virginia.*

The undersigned, farmers of the county of \_\_\_\_\_, respectfully represent that the practice of permitting Bulls, Boars and Rams to go at large is very injurious to the agriculture of the State, in discouraging the improvement of cattle, hogs and sheep in this State; that many persons would purchase superior animals of each of the above kinds, but for the knowledge that they would be contaminated by the worthless brutes that are now turned loose to roam over the country. The undersigned, therefore, most respectfully petition your honourable body to pass a law which shall make it a misdemeanor to permit any one of the above described animals to go at large out of the enclosed grounds of the owner," and that on conviction thereof, before a court of record, the offending party shall pay a certain penalty for each offence, set: in the case of a bull, fifteen dollars for the first, and every subsequent offence: In the case of a boar, five dollars for the first and each subsequent offence: In the case of a ram, seven dollars and fifty cents for the first and each subsequent offence.

If such a law is adopted, the community will then have a means of protecting itself.

If this petition, and the one we have suggested about taxing bitches, can be actively circulated, we are sure they will obtain the signatures of a great many, and may be the means of obtaining something at the hands of the Legislature, which has heretofore seemed to look with a cold and indifferent, if not jealous eye, upon various petitions which have been proffered to it in regard to the agricultural wants of the State.

As we feel very certain that there will be a called, and, we earnestly hope, a *lengthy* session

of the Legislature next winter, we invoke our friends, if they mean to do anything in either or both of the above measures, to do it at once. We engage to see all petitions presented that are sent to us.

#### CROSSKILL'S CLOD-CRUSHER.

We have had this important English implement in use for nearly two years, and can testify experimentally to its great utility, and, economically considered, to its necessity to many farmers in Virginia. But we fear its cost will be a bar to its general introduction. This ought not to be the case. The practice, too common with most of our farmers, of judging of the appropriateness of particular implements rather by their prime cost than by their capacity for executing given processes, is the falsest economy. If the principle were universal, agriculture would have made scarcely a stride in the last hundred years—the period of its greatest improvements. For instance, a good hand with a flail can thresh out, on an average, about seven bushels of wheat per day, and the flail costs nothing. But a wheat machine, of modern construction, can thresh out and chaff from 300 to 850 bushels in the same time, and will cost from say \$225 to \$400, according to capacity. Not counting the delivery of the wheat at the barn or stack yard, as that has to be done both for flail and wheat machine, nor, for a like reason, the removal of the straw, and estimating the power of the machine at from four to eight horses—equal to from twenty to forty hands with from five to eight hands to tend it, we have from 12 to 18 bushels as the average work of the hands, or an excess of work by machinery of from 70 to upwards of 170 per cent., to say nothing of the saving in wear and tear of laborers, of the substitution of a cheaper kind of labor, of the advantage in time gained for working other crops, of the diminished risk from weather, and numerous other incidental advantages. These items of calculation are never considered, but are assumed as true, their accuracy having been tested by long and established usage, and being acquiesced in rather than understood. A farmer would now as soon think of grinding his corn with "two women at the mill" as of threshing his wheat without machine. But it was not always so; the wheat machine fought its way to general acceptance

against an opposition, which, in the case of the laborers, was exasperated to incendiarism.

The same principle of economy, in the true sense of the term, applies in greater or less degree to all other agricultural implements; and the mere cost of a machine is but a little matter, provided it accomplishes what it proposes. True, one machine may be cheaper or dearer than another of the same class; and particular machines—as reapers, all of which are patented at present, and bear a high price to remunerate the inventor—may be higher than the cost of construction, which is one element of competition in such cases, will justify; but as economizing labor very few good implements can be rated too high. In exigencies this is admitted by the practice of all farmers. Hence the popularity of these same reapers, which have brought enormous profit to their several makers or inventors. The necessity of cutting the wheat crop in a given time, like the necessity of threshing it, compels the presence of the most expeditious means for the purpose.

But it can hardly fail to strike one that the necessity of sowing a crop in good time, and on the most suitably prepared seed bed, is not less necessary to the great end of cropping than the need of proper means to sever the crop from the ground, or to prepare it for market.

Among implements of this class, which may be called really great inventions, *Crosskill's Clod-Crusher* is entitled to a high place. Its name is its best description, as its performance is its highest eulogy. It does not pulverize clods, though there is as much resulting dust and fine soil as from the action of the best harrow; but it reduces them, the largest and hardest, without difficulty, into minute and manageable fragments, leaving the harrow in this respect completely in the shade. Indeed, it accomplishes, at one traverse, what the harrow can never accomplish at all, as the following description will prove:

It is a roller six feet long and thirty inches in diameter, weighing about two thousand pounds. But unlike most rollers, which are either a solid cylinder, or, at most, a cylinder in two or three sections on the same axle, this implement is composed of twenty-three independent serrated wheels of cast iron—the teeth standing out like cogs, but reduced to an obtuse cone or boss at the point—“supported on four feathered arms”—each alternate wheel of some

three inches less diameter than the others—with an eye formed in the centre fitted to move easily on the common axle. But the eye of the larger wheels is expanded to such size as to give them a play of several inches on the axle, which is guarded at such points by a revolving collar, fitted to catch the wheels as they descend. Perpendicular to the angle of each tooth, on both faces of the wheel, is a small cast iron wedge, or flange, which, as the clod breaks, drops down on it and splits and mashes it into smaller fragments. With its weight and momentum, its cones and wedges, its vertical play of the larger wheels, and lateral play of all, it is evident that it must be a powerful implement, and capable of reducing the most intractable clods.

The common roller, if it does not crush the clods at once, presses them into the ground where they lie unbroken, and affording no soil for the plants around them to feed in, or are again dragged up by the harrow; or, in very hard clods, it bounces from one to another, breaking only those that it strikes with some impact.

The harrow frequently passes by or over clods, and even when the largest are broken, which is by no means universal, their fragments become rounded by attrition with the harrow teeth or with each other, and further harrowing is useless as to them, and pernicious as to the soil.

The implement in question does neither. If a clod is pressed into the ground it is just in the best position to be crushed; and so far from slipping away from it clods are frequently caught between the surfaces of the wheels, lifted up and ground to powder—in this way we have more than once seen a broom-straw tussock completely ginned of the indurated dirt that enclosed the roots—the whole surface is reduced to a mass of dust, fine dirt, and clods about the size of a hen's egg or less, and left just in the best condition to receive the seed, and allow of the best action of the covering harrow. The track of the machine presents much the appearance of sheep tracts over a mellow surface.

It thus combines the action of the roller and harrow into one implement, and performs at one working what both of them often fail altogether to accomplish, and never succeed entirely in doing.

We have not made, in any trial of this implement, a direct comparison of its work with that of the harrow and roller. A simple inspection satisfied us that was as useless as to estimate the relative speed and power of a locomotive and an ox cart; but a friend—D. W. Haxall, Esq., of Charles City county, who obtained a clod-crusher on our recommendation—informs us that a neighbor of his, who witnessed its operation, after having been at work on his own farm in the usual way, conceded that the land was better prepared, and the wheat better seeded by Mr. Haxall, with the equivalent of nine harrowings on a fifteen foot bed, than his was with nineteen harrowings on the same area. At this rate, in sowing a hundred acres, it would pay for itself in one seeding.

A simple statement will prove its economy. A three horse harrow, sweeping five feet, must lap one half at each trip, making only two and half feet of work. Supposing one rolling with the smooth roller to complete the work, which it never does, then three trips of the three horse teams are necessary to do what the clod-crusher, with four horses, does in strips of six feet at one trip. To get a thirty foot bed in order at this rate, would take twelve trips of the harrow, five of the roller—seventeen of both. But the crusher does the same work in five trips, thereby operating an excess of work of two hundred and forty per cent., or seventy per cent. more than the thrasher in the case supposed. [It is perfectly fair to offset the driver saved against the extra horse.]

As to cost, a harrow will cost \$14, and must be renewed every five years; a decent plantation roller, renewable as often, costs not less than \$10. But the clod-crusher will last, upon the most moderate estimate, at least five times as long as these implements, being nearly indestructible. Here, then, we have a cost for harrow and roller of \$120—to say nothing of the worry and bother of repairs—against a cost of \$140 for the clod-crusher, which is shown to do an excess of two hundred and forty per cent. of work.

In saving another most tedious and vexatious process, that of breaking clods with the edge of the hoe after the wheat is seeded, it is still more efficacious and satisfactory. On some stiff clay farms this is indispensable more or less every year. Let any one estimate how long it will take a hand to break the clods on a breadth of

six feet by one mile, and then consider that with this implement he can do the same work fifty times as thoroughly in 25 minutes, and he will readily conclude that in this business he can save the labor of fifty hands in a day.

It performs also another important office in fitting the land for the reception of clover and grass seed. Every one knows that a slight depression in the soil, the track of a wheel, a horse, a man, a sheep, is the best receptacle for these minute seeds. With the clod-crusher the whole surface is dotted with them.

Still another most important service will it render in compressing light surfaces, and giving them a closeness of texture which the simple roller can not effect, not only by its superior weight, but by the trampling of so many cones over the surface. For this purpose it is used extensively in England, and by many thought even more valuable on light than on heavy lands.

It is worked by four good horses or mules—at least we have worked it with that number—but five or even six is better. With the largest number it is a cheaper implement by far than two three horse harrows, and will save a driver.

It is made by Messrs. Baldwin & Cardwell, who have obtained their patterns from our castings, and make a better implement than our's is at a cost of \$140.

Let those who wish to buy, and yet think the price high, pay us a visit at Summer Hill, where we can work it any time on half an hour's notice; and if they are not satisfied to buy one we promise them a dinner, supper, night's lodging and breakfast, for nothing.

We got the Virginia State Agricultural Society to assist us in importing the clod-crusher; they importing at their risk, with the understanding that we were to take it at cost if it answered. We have never seen the day we would have taken the cost for it. And Mr. Haxall, and Mr. Chas. B. Williams, who also have one, each hold theirs as highly.

Persons may confound this implement with one made in Baltimore by Sinclair, we think—a much less costly and lighter article, and quite a good one, though very high at the price. But it is not to compare to Crosskill's in efficiency, strength or durability. We have tried them side by side, and for real work we would as soon think of matching a calf against an ox.

We are aware that this description is somewhat long, and possibly, prolix. We could not make it shorter, and yet say all that we wished



by way of testimony to the implement, or inducement to its purchase. If public spirited gentlemen will examine for themselves we shall be satisfied. If our subscribers in the Valley may feel an interest in the subject—we should they would, for they have clods as large as nail kegs—they are referred to our friends, H. M. Nelson and Nath'l Burwell, Esqrs., of Clarke county. They have seen it work, and have engaged patterns of the maker in Richmond. Those wishing to obtain them in time for use this Fall, will have time to see Messrs. Baldwin & Cardwell—consult Mr. Cardwell—in Richmond.

#### ANNUAL ADDRESS FOR THE STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY'S FAIR.

We omitted, accidentally, in our last issue to mention that Dr. Wm. H. McGUFFEY, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy at the University of Virginia, had consented to deliver the annual address before the Virginia State Agricultural Society at its next meeting. We congratulate the Society on the selection that has been made. We think Dr. McGuffey the finest thinker it has ever been our good fortune to hear, and no doubt his address will be a treat to those who can appreciate it.

#### SOUTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURALIST.

We have accidentally omitted to notice the revival of this very valuable agricultural journal, this time under the auspices of the newly formed South Carolina Agricultural Society. It is edited, as before, by Col. A. G. SUMMER. We were sorry when it was discontinued some-time ago—we place it again on our list of exchanges with very great pleasure. We like the editor.

#### "THE GREAT GUANO DISCOVERY."

Possibly some of our readers may not have forgotten an article we wrote on this subject a few months ago. We heard that we were to be answered, and tendered the Planter as the medium; but heard no more of it. We have lately understood that the thing blew up; that the guano turned out upon analysis to be worth about as much as our title to the Lobos Islands did upon investigation.

What amount of stock was sold in Virginia we have never ascertained.

#### AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL REVIEW.

In this State the wheat has all been harvested, and is now safely garnered in the farmers' barns, excepting of course, the limited quantity which has been sent, or may be *in transitu* to market. We have no definite information as to the extent of the crop, in Virginia, but believe that the annexed general review, from the Whig, of this city, is, in the main, correct:

"The wheat crop in Tide-Water Virginia is far inferior to any for ten years. In the Southern part of the State, from Powhatan to the North Carolina line, the crop, with some, and those very few, exceptions, "is miserable." The Piedmont country—extending from Alexandria along the foot of the mountains, to Franklin—fifty or sixty miles in breadth—the crop is generally very good—though produced at a heavy expense in guano. In the lower portion of the Valley the crop is fair—in Rock-bridge, almost a failure—further west, in South-Western Virginia, satisfactory. A general alarm, from the mountains to the seaboard, is felt for the corn crop. The rains have been partial and limited in quantity; the chinch-bug universal, and like the sand of the sea-shore for numbers. Many corn fields are entirely destroyed by them already, and others can only be saved by timely and copious rains."

In the July number of the Planter, we intimated that the corn crop would probably be an abundant one. From information which has since reached us, we are led to the conclusion that the reverse of this presumption will be nearer the truth. In Eastern Virginia there has been no rain of consequence for six weeks; the chinch-bug as the Whig states, has made its appearance everywhere, and, in short, if the half we hear be entitled to credit, corn will be a scarce article in Virginia next fall. The corn crop in the Western States has fared rather better, but there is no doubt, but that from various adverse causes, the yield will not begin to equal that of last year. In various localities, the seed failed to germinate until after two or three plantings. From Europe, the accounts are, as usual, conflicting. In England and the Southern part of Scotland, the prospects are favorable, but on the Continent, which has recently suffered from calamitous inundations, fears are entertained that the cereal yield will fall considerably short of an average.

The first new wheat sold in this market,

brought \$1 80. Supplies are coming forward freely, and the millers are still paying \$1 75 to \$1 85. The "Gallego" and "Columbian" Mills have re-commenced operations for the season.

Groceries and provisions still command high prices. Bacon has advanced about 2 cents per pound since our last.

July 28th.

Since our advertising department was put to press, we are requested to say that the sales advertised by D. J. Hartsook, agent for Mrs. Cabell, have been postponed. The sale in Lancaster county to the 4th September and the Laneville property to the 18th September.

See advertisement of "Lindsey's Double Acting Rotary Force and Lift Pump," on p. 5 advertising sheet.

From the Richmond Daily Dispatch.

RECEIPTS OF WHEAT.

Below we give a statement of receipts of Wheat in this city by Railroads and Canal, each week for the year, beginning on the 1st of July last. (In an annual statement published on the 4th inst., an error occurred by adding the receipts of one quarter twice, which the present statement corrects.) It will serve to compare with the receipts of the present year :

1855.		1856.	
Weeks ending	Bush'ls	Weeks ending	Bush'ls
July 7,	22	Jan. (entire)*	7,394
14,	1,070	Feb. 9,	1,440
21,	5,333	16,	3,062
28,	19,117	Mar. 1,	8,167
Aug. 4,	62,726	8,	9,338
11,	67,058	15,	12,707
18,	79,249	22,	19,278
25,	95,366	29,	15,786
Sept. 1,	64,669	April 5,	18,456
8,	34,579	12,	37,295
15,	35,306	19,	22,341
22,	25,120	26,	51,123
29,	26,675	May 3,	20,660
Oct. 6,	27,853	10,	40,535
13,	52,611	17,	30,845
20,	53,243	24,	27,169
27,	46,125	31,	23,872
Nov. 3,	36,017	June 7,	9,363
10,	38,811	14,	7,545
17,	65,775	21,	5,736
24,	78,370	28,	1,311
Dec. 1,	79,075		
8,	72,722		364,423
15,	61,329		1,186,209
22,	56,913		1,550,632
			1,186,209

A TABLE showing the Prices of Corn and Wheat in Richmond, at the close of each week, for the year 1855 :

DATE.	WHEAT, PER BUSHEL, for good to prime.		CORN per bushel.
	White.	Red.	
January 5	\$ 1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	90
Do 12	2 00 a2 05	1 95 a2 00	90
Do 19	2 00 a2 05	1 95 a2 00	90 a 92½
Do 26	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	87½ a 90
February 2	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	85 a 90
Do 9	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	85 a 87½
Do 16	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	85 a 87½
Do 23	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	85 a 87½
March 2	2 05 a2 10	2 00 a2 05	85 a 87½
Do 9	2 05 a2 10	2 00 a2 05	85 a 87½
Do 16	2 10 a2 15	2 05 a2 10	85 a 87½
Do 23	2 15 a2 20	2 10 a2 15	85 a 87½
Do 30	2 15 a2 20	2 10 a2 15	85 a 90
April 6	2 25 a2 30	2 20 a2 25	87½ a 90
Do 13	2 40 a2 45	2 35 a2 40	90 a 92½
Do 20	2 50 a2 55	2 45 a2 50	1 00
Do 27	2 57½ a2 62½	2 52½ a2 57½	1 00 a1 05
May 4	2 45 a2 50	2 40 a2 45	1 00 a1 02½
Do 11	2 45 a2 50	2 40 a2 45	1 05
Do 18	*2 45 a2 50	2 40 a2 45	1 05 a1 10
Do 25	2 45 a2 50	2 40 a2 45	1 05 a1 10
June 1	2 45 a2 50	2 40 a2 45	1 10
Do 8	↑	—	1 15 a1 17½
Do 15	↑	—	1 20 a1 25
Do 22	↑	—	1 20 a1 22
Do 29	‡ 00	‡ 00	1 05 a1 10
July 6	‡ 00	‡ 00	1 10
Do 13	**2 00	**2 00	1 02½ a1 05
Do 20	†2 00	†2 00	1 05 a1 10
Do 27	2 00 a2 05	1 95 a2 00	1 05 a1 10
August 3	‡ 1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	1 00 a1 05
Do 10	1 90 a1 95	1 85 a1 90	1 00 a1 05
Do 17	1 85 a1 90	1 80 a1 85	95
Do 24	1 90 a1 95	1 85 a1 90	90 a 92½
Do 31	1 80 a1 85	1 75 a1 80	87½ a 90
Septemb'r 7	1 75 a1 80	1 70 a1 75	83 a 85
Do 14	1 75 a1 80	1 70 a1 75	83 a 85
Do 21	1 85 a1 90	1 80 a1 85	80 a 85
Do 28	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	80 a 85
October 5	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	85 a 90
Do 12	2 05 a2 10	2 00 a2 05	90
Do 19	2 05 a2 10	2 00 a2 05	95
Do 26	2 05 a2 10	2 00 a2 05	95 a1 00
November 2	2 10 a2 15	2 05 a2 10	1 00 a1 05
Do 9	2 15 a2 20	2 10 a2 15	95
Do 16	2 15 a2 20	2 10 a2 15	95
Do 23	2 15 a2 20	2 10 a2 15	95
Do 30	2 20 a2 25	2 15 a2 20	95
December 7	2 10 a2 15	2 05 a2 10	90
Do 14	1 95 a2 00	1 90 a1 95	80 a 85
Do 21	1 90 a1 95	1 85 a1 90	80
Do 28	1 95 a2 00	1 85 a1 90	75 a 80

\* The mills ceased grinding, after having ground about 300,000 barrels during the season.  
 † Nominal; no wheat of consequence offered during the three weeks.  
 ‡ Contracts for new crop at \$2.  
 § A few additional contracts made for "future delivery."  
 \*\* For "July delivery."  
 †† New crop began to arrive, and prime sold for \$2.  
 ††† All the mills again in operation.

GENERAL NOTICE.

In accordance with the notice given in a previous number of this paper, we commenced with the July number to drop from our list, all

subscribers who are in arrears for three years or more, and shall continue to do so until the first of January next, at which time we intend to drop all who are then in arrears for two years and upwards. But in doing so we do not intend to relinquish our right to collect our dues from such delinquents, but shall send out their accounts regularly or place them in the hands of Agents for collection. We do not design to adopt *strictly* the *cash system*, but we desire to approach as near to it as possible, and wish our "Terms" which are printed conspicuously in every paper to be understood by *all* our subscribers. They are as follows:

## TERMS.

ONE DOLLAR and TWENTY-FIVE CENTS per annum, or ONE DOLLAR *only*, if paid in *advance*. Six copies for FIVE DOLLARS; Thirteen copies for TEN DOLLARS—to be paid invariably in *advance*; and to them we mean strictly to adhere with this variation only, subscribers who owe for two years, or \$2,50 and remit, \$5 will be credited for two years of arrearages and three years in advance. We think no one who intends to pay can object to this arrangement.

♦♦♦♦♦

#### RANDOM THOUGHTS UPON THE USE OF GUANO.

*Mr. Editor :*

The frequent inquiries and reports as to the use of guano seem to indicate that it is suspected of possessing some peculiar magic power different from all other manures; it is apprehended that if it was relieved from this suspicion, its use would be better comprehended, and consequently its benefits would be more diffused. The writer has long been perfectly satisfied that its properties, and as a consequence its action, are exactly similar to all our concentrated animal manures, more particularly those of the stable, and the poultry yard, in exact proportion to the concentration of their fertilizing principles, and that if either of these may be regarded as permanent manures, then may guano be. It appears almost, if not entirely, a self-evident proposition, that if any fertilizing agent, is applied to the soil, with all its elements of nutrition, eliminated and prepared to be appropriated by the vessels of the plant; and in quantity not exceeding the wants of the plants, and the season be such as to allow the full development thereof, that the land can receive no

fertilizing benefit. Guano is in this state of perfect elimination, and consequently promptly answers to the demands of the plant, and if these exceed the funds in the treasury, it runs dry and must be silent as to farther calls. Those who have used guano with tolerable liberality, have found, that for the most part, the growing plant has not exhausted the supply, and that enough has been left to show a decided improvement in the soil. The writer testifies to the fact that three successive crops, tobacco, wheat and oats, have been made from one application. An acre of poor "old field" was added to a tobacco lot: the lot was manured as usual with stable and stable-yard manure, and the old field with guano alone, about 200 pounds to the acre. Cultivation the same on each—a good crop on each. The guano part, thought by some, best—seeded in wheat after the tobacco—a good crop with similar comparative result, the spring following, was fallowed, sowed in oats with like result, leaving the land guanoed equal in appearance to the old lot along side. Does this evince permanence? If not, it is asked, what may be so regarded? Virgin fertility may be tired or exhausted; and so may any manuring. The exceedingly subtle and evanescent character of guano may be, and, by the writer, is, regarded as all a mere notion.

All good lands have certain properties in common, whose constant tendency is to seize and appropriate such fertilizing elements as may be brought within the sphere of their attractions. The limit of their capacities vary, but all will, if allowed, attract and appropriate to the full extent of their capacity; and will retain that degree of fertility, if not wantonly wrested from them. In what this property of self-recuperation consists, no attempt is made to define, but men of intelligent observation can scarcely fail to know good land when they see it; all such, if exhausted by cultivation, and left to rest will readily seize and appropriate such fertilizing materials as may be brought within the range of their appetencies, and will hold to the full amount of their capacity of appropriation. All lands may be stuffed—surcharged with manure, more than they can appropriate and retain, and if cropped in this state, with the aid of the moisture, will yield to the crop what it would otherwise

give to the atmosphere. The *essential* difference between *good* and sterile soil consists in the abundance or paucity of the elements which constitute the property of self-recuperation. A legitimate inference from this view, observation has established as a fact—that soils originally sterile do not retain manures, and from any ordinary degree of artificial fertility, rapidly relapsed to their virgin poverty, this they will fall to without the aid of cultivation. All our domestic manures contain much undigested material (some more, some less) that avails nothing for the first crop, but is left in a process of preparation for after help to the soil. Hence these manures get the credit of more permanence, merely because a large portion was not sooner available for the sustenance of crops.

What is new in the experiments reported in the last Planter by a citizen of Buckingham? Is it not evident, that in the case of the two lots where the guano was applied before planting, the supply was insufficient to meet the demands of the overgrown stalk, and ear too, and in the last case, the supply was afforded just in time to meet the wants of the ear, and was expended on that instead of the stalk! It is feared that this report may lead some to the erroneous conclusion, that it is best in all cases to apply the manure at the time of laying by. The writer has applied guano and other manures to corn and tobacco during the late workings with very satisfactory effect, and cheerfully testifies to an assurance of profitable results if the season be sufficiently moist. Any quantity short of a full and thorough supply, will, with a moist season, accomplish more if applied at the last working than before planting; but if the season prove dry, it will avail but little at best and will often prove injurious. It is no new thing that partial manuring of corn is likely to produce a large stalk and small ear, and this it will most certainly do, if the early season be a very pushing one. If regard is had to the greatest certainty of a crop and improvement of the land, a full supply, broad cast and thoroughly incorporated with the soil is the best mode of application. This holds good with guano as well as other manures. In using guano, with regard the amount of crop, especially, it may be good economy to retain a portion of the amount designed to be applied; say one

third, for a late application to corn or tobacco. This has been tried by the writer with very satisfactory results.

Your Buckingham correspondent should have stated the character of the season in which his experiment was made. It may not occur to all that the early season must have been abundantly moist—giving the vigorous stalk and thereby exhausting the manure, and the latter season must also have been moist, or the late application would not have given the larger corn. About as profitable results may be expected from turning a beef into a barren pasture for the summer and fall which had luxuriated all the spring in a rich clover field, as from a partial manuring in the hill or trench, with the early season, moist and pushing, and the late dry and backward.

B.

CEDAR HILL, Charlotte Co., July 21.

[For the Planter.]

NICHOLAS LANDS, SHEEP, &c.

*Mr. Editor.*—Being on a tour through our Western counties, I cannot resist the opportunity to speak of the lands of Nicholas county, their fertility and peculiar adaptation to sheep husbandry. I would premise by saying, it is singular that persons desiring a change of location should have overlooked this healthy and desirable section, where lands are not only cheap, but of surpassing fertility; but, I presume, this has been chiefly owing to its being cut off, as it were, from the main channels of communication, and from erroneous impressions which have gone abroad in relation to the *poverty* of the county. The sparseness of population has been owing to the lands being held in large surveys, and the uncertainty of title; this state of things is fast passing away. Settlers of the *right stamp* are rapidly coming in, chiefly Eastern Virginians; forests are falling before the woodsman's axe, valleys becoming clothed "with living green," and roads and means of communication extended. I am informed that lands have advanced from one to two hundred per cent. in five years, though now nominally very low (unimproved three to five dollars, improved eight to twelve dollars). I left Gauley bridge and travelled up Gauley and Peters' creek, by the Gauley Bridge and Weston Turnpike, to Summersville, the county seat. The road, on each side, is hedged with what appear steep and rugged mountains, though the land on the stream was of unsurpassed fertility for corn, grass, sweet potatoes, &c.; but wherever a stream descends, you find coves of well-laying fertile lands, of from two to two thousand acres, clothed with sugar-maple, pawpaw, &c., with but sparse undergrowth, when not cleared; but many of these coves have been converted

into smiling farmsteads—the *log houses* in the valleys surrounded with luxuriant meadows and the hill-sides clothed with grain. Some of the best grass farms I have seen in the State are in these coves. Burk's Garden, owned by the Messrs. Raders, is certainly unsurpassed for fertility, besides many others. Nicholas Courthouse, or Summersville, is quite a thriving village, and bears the marks of much recent improvement, owing, it is said, to the energy, taste and enterprize of Dr. Price, formerly of Mecklenburg county. They sadly need a courthouse, but the people have been over taxed to make roads, and require a breathing spell. They paid four hundred per cent. on revenue tax for the completion of the Gauley Bridge and Weston Turnpike, besides working from ten to thirteen days on the county roads.

From the courthouse I went up Muddletee, which has some fine farms, with superior meadows, as also the streams making into it. The lands on Birch are equal to any lands in the State for corn, wheat, tobacco, as also the lands on Elk river. This is a beautiful stream, and can be made navigable for steamboats to Sutton at a reasonable outlay. Its banks abound in the richest iron ore, cannel and bituminous coal. Crossing from Elk, by Sycamore, Twenty mile creek, there is some good land, and some as rough and barren as any in the State. Recrossing the turnpike, we passed up Laurel creek to the town known as the Meadows and Panther Mountain, which affords evidences of high cultivation—being thickly settled in small farms, which show unmistakable evidences of thrift and plenty—land sells higher than in other sections. The wilderness is lately settling up, but is rapidly becoming opened; new farms appearing on every hand. Returning to the courthouse by the "Open Rocks," the greatest natural curiosity in the State, we passed into the Kentucky settlement, over a miserable ford at Gauley river. This section is very productive and has some fine farms. Much unimproved land is still unsold in this section, belonging to S. McD. Moore, Esq., of Lexington, of superior quality. Recrossing Gauley at Persingen's run, we went up Glade creek, but this, to me, seemed cold and crawfishy, and the timber—white oak—shows evidences of frequent frosts. McMillan's creek is one meadow, and such meadow! yielding one and a half to three tons of hay per acre. Crossing over to Beaver and Stroud's glade, we found some beautiful land. Callaghan had a fine survey, but has sold off much; the best has been bought by Maj. T. G. Harris, and McFarland, of Richmond. There is still much good land in this section unsold. There is, from this up to Fork Lick, much very superior unimproved land—limestone—and if ever the Slaving Cabin road is completed, will be one among the best sections of the county. Recrossing Gauley at Cranberry, we examined the lands between this and Williams's river. This is high table-land, of unsurpassed fertility; the timber of such size—poplar, black oak and walnut—as

to be almost incredible. This is superior grass land, and lays well for farming purposes. Most of this section has been purchased, two or three years since, by gentlemen from Eastern Virginia, at two to three dollars; that offering for sale is held at five dollars. If improved, this land would be worth fifty dollars per acre for grazing purposes. Crossing on to Cherrytree, we passed the improvements making by Mr. Morris, Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, Messrs. Garnetts and others, well known East; they will soon have fine farms. From this to Meadow river, and Greenbrier settlement, is a wilderness, though said to contain some superior farming and grass lands. The whole county is alpine—with rich vegetation to my eye, seems peculiarly adapted to SHEEP-HUSBANDRY. It is superior grass land, and remarkably adapted to farming, that all important auxiliary of sheep-husbandry. The flocks of native sheep presented an uncommon fine and healthy appearance. Dr. Price, we understand, has introduced some superior imported Cotswolds, and is arranging for a large flock of Silesian Merinos. This move will be all important to the future of the county; and we doubt not, in ten or fifteen years, that this will be the largest wool-growing county in the State.

I would advise all persons, desiring to change their locality, to visit this county, especially Elk, Fork Lick, Cranberry and Cherrytree, they will find superior lands at three to five dollars. Those visiting that region would do well to consult with Maj. T. G. Harris and Dr. Price, both gentlemen from Eastern Virginia, and who, I doubt not, will give every information with pleasure. The society now moving into the county is of the very best, and this will add much to the future value as a permanent home; indeed, take it all in all, Nicholas possesses, within herself, the amplest resources of wealth, and is destined to be the best county in the State.

I have written the above with the view of calling attention, of those desiring a change, to this county; they have only to see, to be as highly pleased as

COSMOPOLITE.

N. B.—Those visiting this region must not expect to find houses, etc.; all, nearly, live, as yet, in primitive log cabins, but give you an Old Virginia welcome, feasting you on the best from field and wood. I may write again, during my tour through this *terra incognita*.

[For the Planter.]

#### MANURE OF FLESH.

*Mr. Editor.*—By request of F. G. R., Esq., I advertise my mode of preparing and using manure made of dead animals.

For the last ten years I have leased my lands, except my present residence, where I attend exclusively to grazing, without manure. When I did farm I had a vault for dead animals, about eighteen feet square and six feet deep. This was made in clay grounds, immediately below

my cattle yard, that the stale and surplus urine from the yard should run into the vault to further enrich the mass. In this vault I cast, annually, about two horses, four or five cattle, twenty or thirty sheep, and perhaps a goat, dog, or cat. These animals were cut into pieces with an axe and spread on a layer of vegetable mould, saw dust, or charcoal, or a mixture thereof. On the flesh I cast ashes or lime, and then immediately a layer of absorbents as above mentioned, say sixteen or eighteen inches thick. The carcase of a horse or cow should be spread over the whole face of the vault, but smaller animals must be used up as reflection may suggest.

A vault of the size above mentioned will hold seventy-two square yards of manure, which would be about the proper size for the number of animals above specified; but I found that by the addition of the urine my manure was too much concentrated for broad-cast field purposes; therefore, had I such work to do again, I would enlarge my vault.

One having no clay grounds near his cattle yard, should make his vault with plank; and it would be best to have two vaults, one near the cattle yard, and one near the stable.—What I mean by cattle yard, is a permanent enclosure for winter. And here I might (if admissible) bring up the question, whether it is best to feed cattle in a yard, or on open grounds?

This kind of manure is made principally in the latter part of Winter and early Spring; when our animals are inclined to die from starvation and cold; and for two reasons should not be disturbed until the beginning of next winter; first, that the mass may be completely decomposed and compounded; and secondly, that the effluvia may not be offensive.

And now comes the questions, when, where, and how should this kind of manure be used?

I have said above that the contents of the vault should not be disturbed until the beginning of winter, say December, when it should be cast out; leaving one side of the vault open for ingress with raw materials. For the purpose of saving expense in transportation, my rule has ever been to spread my heavy manures, of whatever description, on grounds or crops near the heap; and to cast lighter manures, such as plaster, &c., on distant grounds. If I had a grass plot or wheat field convenient, I spread my vault manure on the poorer spots thereof, immediately after casting from the vault. If no meadow or wheat near, but land intended for corn or tobacco, I reserved the pile for this or these; to be spread immediately before fallowing. If none of the above be convenient, I spread my heavy manures on the first poor spot I come to, and await my profit at the next round of cultivation. The greater portion of our arable lands are unproductive because of the want of vegetable matter; and it is a question worthy of much consideration, whether, with this object in view, it is not best to manure our lands at least one year in advance of cultivation. When a farmer, I frequently practiced

this mode, and never had cause to regret it. Remember, reader, what I have frequently told you: "Can't you wait awhile for your interest, till it is worth drawing from the bank? Better starve a few years and then be free, than always half starved."

I incline to the opinion that manure made of flesh is peculiarly adapted to the production of grass; therefore say, that no farmer should be without a manure vault and a meadow near that vault. Orchard grass and red clover grow and ripen well together, and by the application of the above manure and plaister, could be cut twice in the year, yielding altogether without the aid of foreign water at least four tons of hay, worth in our markets eighty dollars.

The bones not decomposed, should be cast back into the vault for a second round. Absorbent materials should always be ready to hand. Do not cheat by selling a worthless horse, cow, or sheep, but kill it to keep it from dying, and put it into the vault.

Look about your houses, your ditches, your roads, and under your old fences, for vegetable mould, and you will certainly find abundance. Perhaps one may not have saw dust, no matter. If you make coal for the above purpose, burn as usual, but when burnt do not draw as usual, but pour a few pails of water down the centre, and close every pore for eight or ten days, when the fire will be extinguished and the coal sufficiently pulverized for use. If ashes or lime be plentiful or cheap, then use one or both in liberal quantity; but a small quantity will suffice if applied directly to the flesh; indeed, if neither can be conveniently had, then I say neither is absolutely required. Pay no attention to the jargon of Mr. Jothead, but go to work according to the dictates of reason—I mean, when he says pity or shame.

July, 1856.

Z. DRUMMOND.

## REPORT.

*To the Locust Bottom Botetourt Agricultural Club.*

[Published by Order of the Club.]

The undersigned, appointed by the President, to present a retrospect of the Club, and what is in prospect of accomplishment, will endeavor to be brief.

It is a striking feature of the age, that every thing suitable is carried forward by association. Individual and isolated efforts have given place to combination: perhaps the rapid strides on the road of improvement, may be attributed to this salutary change in the business of life, accommodating itself to the human mind and capabilities. It has been remarked in elucidation of this idea, that two individuals combined can roll a log that one hundred, applying their powers separately, cannot effect: the persons engaged in farming being necessarily dotted over the surface, do not find the same magical influence of association: the disadvantage is greatly overcome by the superior industry the calling begets—what would be inconvenient in other callings, the farmer's life make a pleas-

ure and a recreation: by consulting with each other, and by frequent observation of the various agricultural operations, we feel bound to scrutinize, we derive information and confidence from a source we cannot impeach or call in question.

With the augmented demands which the progress of the age is making upon our exertions in the way of comfort, prudent show and enlarged list of luxuries, also in furthering the cause of virtue, education and neighbourly reciprocity, we should be inert if we were not awakened to a sense of our relations and duties in the social fabric.

Among the advantages, our association may claim to impress on its members, *in a degree, but not proportioned to its merit*, is the importance of drainage: manuring from any and every source, by purchase as well as collections on our farms; deep fall plowing necessary to invite the disintegration and amelioration of the soil, by the winter's frost; returning to the soil green crops, grown with that object; a judicious rotation of crops, the succeeding crop requiring from the soil a different element in the main to perfect it from what the preceding crop had appropriated: and last but not least in importance, to arrange to have certain products profitably consumed on the land, that the resulting offal may be returned to the soil.

When we have accomplished what may be anticipated from present prospects, we will be behind in the public improvements that are in progress of completion; a development of our resources is indispensable to sustain those improvements: in good faith we should develop the resources of the country to meet reasonable anticipations.

A large item in estimating the value of a country, is the local attachment of its inhabitants. We shall act wisely to do all within the power of each to fix the attachment of the population to the soil, and transmit that attachment to our descendants: among the things that may be reckoned to have that influence is, fruit of every suitable variety. We present it as an object deserving prominent consideration, as a monied crop, and one that will not deteriorate the soil: the canal, of all is the most suitable mode to convey such a crop to market. We would suggest that if the capacities of our country were developed in this regard, the result would exceed what would result from raising stock; in furtherance of this earnest view, we recommend that the funds accumulated in our treasury be disposed of in obtaining fruit trees of valuable varieties suitable to our climate and localities, as the nucleus of a lasting monument on our respective farms of the utility of our association.

In looking forward to duties to our descendants in transmitting enduring advantages to them, we select as deserving most consideration, a highly improved soil with appropriate conveniences. Fixed habits of industry, and a high intelligence to give that industry a proper di-

rection—as superior to money and promising as many advantages as may endure in human hands.

In the words of the preamble to our constitution we claim to be in search of the way to “improving our soils, augmenting our crops, making our farms more desirable, fixing upon the most appropriate crops, suggesting the best arrangements to bring about the greatest prosperity and convenience, of avoiding the loss of leaving off abruptly any one crop or system, that time and circumstances may point out as judicious to abandon, and instead to glide into new ones as holding forth most promise of remuneration for our labours, also of promoting virtue, sociability and friendship.”

If we have been able in our short history to find the road that leads to such results, we may congratulate ourselves upon our success, and in good time will reach the goal of our hopes.

Respectfully submitted,  
HOBSON JOHNS,  
MADISON GILMORE,  
RICH. G. HADEN.

#### A NOBLE PROPOSITION.

A subscriber who sends us the name of a new subscriber with the “*cash in advance*,” says: “If all your subscribers would pledge themselves to send one new subscriber every year, it would swell your list, [certainly it would—the very thing we want]—aid the cause of agricultural advancement, [beyond a peradventure]—and put them to little or no trouble, [not the least, but on the contrary save them an infinite amount hereafter]—I will pledge myself to do this.” Now, how many of our subscribers are there who are willing to “pledge themselves” to “go and do likewise?” It would give us “little or no trouble” to add ten or twenty names daily to our subscription list, but would afford cheer and consolation to our weak and flagging spirits this excessively hot weather, especially if accompanied with a “little material aid.” Come one, come all! you can't come too “fast” for us.

The list of payments for this number is necessarily crowded out.

**DYSPEPSIA BREAD.**—Three quarts of unbolted wheat meal; 1 quart of soft warm water; 1 gill of fresh yeast; 1 gill of molasses; 1 teaspoonful of saleratus. This will make two loaves and should remain in the oven at least two hours. It will need from eight to twelve hours to rise.

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Great Sale of North Devon Stock.

THE whole and entire herd of pure NORTH DEVON CATTLE imported and bred by R. H. Van Rensselaer, of Morris, Otsego County, N York, will be sold, without reserve, by public sale, at WATERTOWN, on *Thursday* the 3d day of October, at 1 o'clock, on the ground appropriated to the N. York State Agricultural Society on the 30th September, and 1st, 2d and 3d of Oct'r next, consisting of

**Twenty-three Females and Three Males,** which includes among the latter the celebrated and imported bull "MEGUNTICOOK," winner of the first prize at the show of the American Institute in 1850, and also the first prize at the New York State show in 1851.

Nothing is risked in pronouncing this herd one of the three best herds of North Devons in the United States, and unsurpassed by any one of them.

Catalogues will be furnished on application at the offices of Secretary of the New York State Agricultural Society, Boston Cultivator and Albany Cultivator, by Col. L. G. Morris of Fordham, Westchester Co., and the undersigned at Butternuts, Otsego Co. Aug—2t H. STURGES.

Wheat Drills and Broad Cast Sowers.

I HAVE just received a lot of SEYMOUR'S WHEAT and GUANO DRILLS, and SEYMOUR'S BROAD GASTERS. Also PINNOCK'S GUANO DRILL, and Cooper's Guano and Lime Spreader, Threshing Machines, Corn Shellers, Cutting Boxes and Agricultural Implements generally.

Seeds and Manures for sale at *factory prices*, freight added. By DRAYTON G. MEADE, Agricultural Warehouse and Seed Store, Alexandria, Va. Aug—3t

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THIS PLOW has been steadily increasing in favor with the Farmers and Planters of this State and several of the Southern States till it may now be considered the best and most popular plow in use. It has been put to the several trials by most of our large river Farmers, and has taken premiums at THREE of our State Fairs, and at the last took the FIRST PREMIUM over all the most popular plows in use. It has also taken the only two premiums ever given by the *Virginia Mechanics Institute*. Manufactured of every size from largest 4 horse to smallest 1 horse by the undersigned at their factory on *Franklin Street, Richmond, Va.*, where we may be had nearly every article used for tilling the earth. ALL MADE IN OUR OWN SHOPS, of best materials Aug '56—1y GEO. WATT & CO.

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The Sessions commence on the 15th September, and close during the first week in July following.

TERMS.—For Board and Tuition, (including everything except lights,) \$220, for the whole session. Payment for a half session is required on entrance, and the remainder on the 15th February.

For further particulars, see printed circulars, to be obtained by applying to

WILLIAM S. KEMPER, Gordonsville, Va. Aug. '56—2t

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THE third session of this School will commence on the 10th of September, and continue until 10th July following, making a session of 10 months. Instruction will be given in Greek, Latin, French and Spanish, (in which languages the subscriber graduated at the University of Virginia;) also in the elementary branches of Mathematics. The school is convenient to Louisa Courthouse, at which place scholars will be met with a conveyance.

TERMS.—Board and tuition for ten months, including everything, \$160. Tuition for classical scholars \$50; English \$30—one half invariably in advance.—No scholar taken for less than five months.

D. M. QUARLES. Address D M. Quarles or John T. Quarles, El-lisville, Louisa county, Va. Aug—4t\*