

The Farm.

Commercial Fertilizers. The Secretary of the Connecticut Board of Agriculture procured last winter samples of sixteen articles known in commerce as "fertilizers," and submitted them to Professor S. W. Johnson, of Yale College, the well-known agricultural chemist, for analysis.

Professor Johnson received them from Secretary Gold without names or labels, except numbers for identification, and on receipt of the results of his analysis the Secretary has added to each its name and price, and has published the whole for the benefit of farmers.

The report shows also how much it would cost to buy in other forms the materials which give these fertilizers their value. Thus the farmer has before him all the information needed to choose the cheapest material for his purposes, whether it be a patented or proprietary compound, or a mixture of his own manufacture.

It appears that in every instance most of the substance sold consists of water or sand, or carbonate or sulphate of lime; of some material, in short, which can be obtained at very little expense. This is mixed with phosphates and nitrogenous matters in very different proportions; but the really valuable component parts are but a small proportion of the whole. There is a strong reason to suspect that some of the articles sold as fertilizers at high prices must be products of deliberate fraud; their value to the farmer being in strange contrast with the price at which they are offered and advertised.

The sample which proved the best of all is sold for \$54 per ton, and contains actual fertilizing ingredients which would cost the farmer \$47.32 in gold, or more than \$80 in currency, to buy separately in any common form. Next to this comes one, the useful parts of a ton of which are reckoned to be worth \$35.09 in gold, and which is sold at \$65 in currency. On the other hand, a popular article, sold at \$28 per ton, is estimated to be really worth as a fertilizer not more than \$2.33 per ton in gold, or but one-ninth of its price; and many other favorite articles of this class seem to deserve their reputation but little better, if the samples obtained by Mr. Gold are enough to sustain a final judgment.

The trade in fertilizers is now very large; and it is likely that some of those engaged in it are not scrupulous. It becomes farmers to investigate with care the question, what is the best? and to drive from the market articles in which a high standard of value is not maintained. This is better than to invoke the aid of the state, with Mr. Gold, who thinks that other States ought to imitate Maine, where a law has been passed requiring every package of this kind of goods to be marked with the percentage of valuable ingredients contained in it; and inflicting penalties for inaccuracy. There seems to be no good reason why farmers cannot take care of themselves in this matter as well as other consumers, who are likely to be imposed on by poor or adulterated goods.—N. Y. Eng. Post.

The Farm.

Farming is a profession, not to say a science. If any one doubts this statement let him leave his city home—for no one bred in the country will doubt—and undertake to cultivate even a garden of half an acre for the summer. He will then find that knowledge is as essential to the right use of the spade as of the pen, and that there is as great a difference between the scientific farming of Flanders, where literally not a weed is to be seen, and that of many of our farmers, the wealth of whose soil is about equally divided between fruits and weeds, as between the trade of a modern commercial city and the barter of a back-woods settlement. It is true that agriculture has been the last to receive the impetus of modern science. It is true that many agriculturists are content to go on, in the

ways of their fathers, because experiments are costly. But it is also true that they are unable to compete with those who understand the use of new instruments, methods, and fertilizers. Agriculture is also becoming in this country a popular recreation. Many a gentleman is content to spend on his country-seat money which he makes in the counting-room. The practical farmer is thus able to get the benefit of experiments without paying for them. This change in agriculture, which has converted it from drudgery to an art, has created a demand for a corresponding literature. "Fifty years ago a stable agricultural periodical did not exist on the American Continent."—Now every considerable district has one, while almost every weekly, paper, secular or religious, has its agricultural department; and it will not be long before something of a library will be a part of the furniture of every well-ordered farm.—Book Table, Harper's Magazine for July.

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