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in practice the injunctions which flow from it. From what has been said, the paramount importance of the maintenance of the fertility of the farming lands is evident. A rough glance at the marvellous increase in the production and exportation of cereals seems to convey the idea that a corresponding increase in the producing capacity of soil has taken place. But this is not the case. On the contrary, the area on which crops are being raised has been increased; but, speaking in general, the productiveness of the land has decreased. That the fertility of the soil, over large and productive areas of this country, has suffered appreciable diminution within the past decade, there can be little doubt. Carefully compiled statistics prove that the soils of the New England States, though they have been under cultivation for well nigh two hundred years, and though they were surpassed in natural productiveness by the rich virgin soils of the West, and showing an increased percentage of returns, while the latter become from year to year less productive. Now, it is very important to learn why this is so; and the plain reason is simply that a reckless way of farming is practised in the Western States; while the New England States, profiting by the lessons of European countries, have struck out upon a new method of farming, and take great pains to put into the ground the requisite amount of plant-food for each crop.

Nevertheless, there are not a few who believe that the farmers would be better off without commercial fertilizers than they are with them. To this opinion no stronger evidence to the contrary can be adduced than the fact that the most intelligent farmers began to use them in the first place, and have ever since continued to use them. And the supposition is perfectly preposterous and untenable that any farmer, with but a grain of common sense, will continue to use what proves to him not a source of profit but a source of loss. As it is possible to own treasures, and to waste them, nay, to throw them away, so it is not only possible, but, in individual instances, sometimes, no doubt true, that no benefit may accrue to a farmer from manufactured fertilizers. But, on investigation, it will always appear that the fault must be found with something else than with what he used. Commercial fertilizers do not pretend to be an absolute, an infallible guarantee for a remunerative harvest—an error which is not unfrequently entertained; for the preparation of the ground, the time of their application, the quantity in which they are applied, the season, whether wet or dry, propitious or unpropitious, and a variety of other causes, may neutralize the beneficial effects the elements of plant-food would not have failed to exert under more favourable circumstances. Commercial fertilizers possess only this value, that, judiciously applied, they make large and paying harvests possible, where these without them would be impossible. Their unquestioned merit consists in this, that they enable the farmer to derive profits from lands, even, which without them promise no return for the labour entailed by cultivation. And, as a matter of fact not unworthy of record, the cotton-growing region has been extended by their use fifty miles beyond the limit where it was considered possible to raise that staple. The negative testimony of many failures has therefore no weight when science, supported by the experience of European countries and by an overwhelming majority of intelligent, practical farmers, bears witness to the efficacy of, and the beneficial results derived from commercial fertilizers.

The trade in this indispensable necessity has demonstrated its right to exist, and it deserves fully the recognition which lately begins to be accorded to it. In every direction its work and influence have proved highly advantageous. Of offensive and dangerous matters it made willing servants for the common good; valueless articles acquired a value, and were added to the list of commercial commodities. Wherever the products of the trade obtained, large returns put money into the farmers' pocket, enriching not only the land, but, through it, the owner likewise.

It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the agriculture of the future depends upon the growth and development of the fertilizer trade. For it depends upon supplies of plant-food brought from sources outside the farm, and prepared for the farmers' use by those who make it their business to do so, and who must, in order to succeed, bring to it not only a large capital, but likewise science as a handmaid, skill, and business talent as absolute requisites. The progress of this industry measures the true progress of this country, and promises results which it is impossible to foresee at this day. It opens up a wide vista of changes and improvements. It heralds the awakening of agricultural thought, and has partly awakened it. And with thinking comes improvement, comes better tillage of the soil, comes better stock, comes larger crops, better profits, and lastly, a higher moral and intellectual standard.

The practical question to which each farmer or planter must frame his own answer may be summed up as follows: Whosoever enters upon the cultivation of land opens, as a matter of fact, an account with the ground he undertakes to till, as with a bank. When he takes possession of fields, either by purchase or inheritance or exchange, the ground contains certain deposits of phosphoric acid, of potash, or nitrogen, etc. The raising of every crop is practically making a draft upon these deposits. As banks do not honor drafts if the amount of credit does not equal the amount of the draft, so the ground is unable to honor the drafts unless the deposits enable it to do so. The more liberal the deposits made in bank, the greater the balance to the credit. So with fields. The more generous the supply of plant-food deposits, the greater can drafts be made in the way of expected harvests. Let no one suppose that Nature refuses to honor drafts. Nature knows not of stinginess: but it obeys simply the universal law, that it is necessary to have in order to be able to give, and that it is necessary to receive in order to be able to return. Nature is generous. Improve the land by fertilization, and the value returned by Nature invariably surpasses the value of the outlay to make the ground fertile.

A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned.—To incorporate daily a certain amount of fine ground phosphate of lime into the fresh barnyard manure by scattering it over the manure pile, or to compost them for some months previous to their designed application, is a universally indorsed practice. The good economy of applying these phosphates in a freely divided state to the compost heap has been illustrated again quite recently by Professor H. C. White of Georgia.

The compost heap was prepared of 40 parts of earth, 34 parts of fine ground phosphate and 31 parts of cotton-seed meal, and the mixture kept moist with water.

The compound was made in June, and tested