

Communications.

CORRECTION RELATIVE TO IMPORTED CATTLE.

PORT HOPE, July 14, 1854.

SIR.—I shall feel obliged by your correcting in the next number of the *Agriculturist* a mistake made in the July publication under the head of "Importation of Pure Breed Stock." You state that the "Sarah Sands" brought out to Portland forty sheep, two pigs, and one Durham bull, for Mr. Dickinson, of Port Hope. Of the number you mention, twenty of the sheep and pigs belonged to me, while the bull was one I purchased for Mr. R. Wade, jr., at the same time. I purchased a bull and two heifers for Messrs. Hungerford and Brodie, N. Y., the whole of whose stock of sheep and Durham cattle have been imported by me.

I remain, sir,

Your obt. servant,

C. A. JORDISON.

PROPERTIES OF CHARCOAL.

[The following is from an interesting article, by J. Stenhouse, F. R. S., in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, London: ]

My attention was particularly drawn to the importance of charcoal as a disinfecting agent, by my friend, John Turnbull, Esq., of Glasgow, Scotland, the well-known extensive chemical manufacturer. Mr. Turnbull, about nine months ago, placed the bodies of two dogs in a wooden box, on a layer of charcoal powder a few inches in depth, and covered them over with a quantity of the same material. Though the box was quite open and kept in his laboratory, no effluvia was ever perceptible; and on examining the bodies of the animals, at the end of six months, scarcely anything remained of them except the bones. Mr. Turnbull sent me a portion of the charcoal powder which had been most closely in contact with the bodies of the dogs. I submitted it for examination to one of my pupils, Mr. Turner, who found it contained comparatively little ammonia, not a trace of sulphurated hydrogen, but very appreciable quantities of nitric sulphuric acids, with acid phosphate of lime.

Mr. Turner subsequently, about three months ago, buried two rats in about two inches of charcoal powder, and a few days afterward the body of a full grown cat was similarly treated. Though the bodies of these animals are now in a highly putrid state, not the slightest odor is perceptible in the laboratory.

From this short statement of facts, the utility of charcoal powder as a means of preventing noxious effluvia from church yards, and from dead bodies in other situations, such as on board a ship, is sufficiently evident. Covering a church-yard to the depth of from two or three inches, with coarsely powdered charcoal, would prevent any putrid exhalations ever finding

their way into the atmosphere. Charcoal powder, also, greatly favors the rapid decomposition of the dead bodies with which it is in contact, so that in the course of six or eight months, little is left except the bones.

In all the modern systems of chemistry, such, for instance, as the last edition of Turner's "Elements," charcoal is described as possessing anti-septic properties, while the very reverse is the fact. Common salt, nitre, corrosive sublimate, arsenious acid, alcohol, camphor, creosote, and most essential oils, are certainly antiseptic substances, and therefore retard the decay of animal and vegetable matters. Charcoal, on the contrary, as we have just seen, greatly facilitates the oxydation, and consequently the decomposition, of any organic substances with which it is in contact. It is, therefore, the very opposite of an antiseptic.

DISINFECTING OF PUTRID, NOXIOUS GASES.

A simple, cheap, and easy way of disinfecting putrid, noxious, foetid and mephitic gases, and putrid animal matter, may be accomplished by the free use of soda ash and quick lime. Dissolve twenty-five pounds of soda ash in five buckets of boiling hot water, and while hot shake twenty-five pounds of quick lime, and as soon as slaked, (which if the lime is good, will not exceed five minutes,) mix the fresh slaked lime while hot with the solution of soda ash, stirring it thoroughly for five minutes, by which time the lime will have taken up the carbonic acid of the soda ash; then pour the hot mixture into the privy vault, and it will in a few hours convert the impure and foetid gases into ammonia, and entirely divest the premises of any unpleasant effluvia, and render the atmosphere perfectly salubrious and healthy. Soda ash of eighty per cent free alkali is sold at the soap houses at three dollars per hundred pounds, and Athens lime can be bought by the barrel at seventy-five cents the cask.

Every practical chemist knows that putrid animal matter can be converted into ammonia by the mixture (in a heated state) with caustic alkali. Such is the process, and such the result in the case.

In large vaults a greater quantity than twenty-five pounds is required; the quantity should be increased in proportion to the size of the vault.

The use of one hundred pounds of soda ash per annum, in a vault prepared and used as directed above, will prevent accumulation, and render the services of a scavenger wholly unnecessary.

Bilge water may be purified by the same process.

This preparation is more economical than chlorine of lime—is fifty times more efficacious, and ten thousand times more healthful.

I have used this preparation for more than twenty years, with the most complete success.—*New York Courier.*