

Swallows Homeward Fly;" "Larboard Watch;" "Charity." Each of these costs only *five cents*, and we cannot see why they are not as legibly and nicely printed as the sheets that cost from twenty-five to fifty cents each. Mr. Hitchcock deserves much praise and wide patronage for thus cheapening down and popularizing choice music, thus bringing within the reach of the many what has heretofore been accessible, from its costliness, only to the few.

Mr. T. J. Day, of Guelph, has laid on our table:

THE HANDY HORSE BOOK.—This is an English publication, consisting of practical instructions in driving, riding, and the general care and management of horses, by a cavalry officer. It is a very useful compound. Sent by mail, post-paid, for one dollar.

LONDON SOCIETY.—\$3.50 per annum, post-paid.

THE SUNDAY AT HOME.—\$2.00 a year.

THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE.—\$2.00 a year.

THE LEISURE HOUR.—\$2.00 a year.

THE FAMILY HERALD.—\$2.00 a year.

The Farmer.

THE USE OF SALT IN AGRICULTURE.

It is still a much-debated question whether common salt is of any value as a fertilizer. Great names have lent their authority to the opinion that it is useful, but as yet no proof derived from actual experiment, has given absolute demonstration of its utility except in the garden as a dressing for asparagus-bed. The luxuriant growth of marsh meadow grass has often been quoted as proof positive that salt water is beneficial in its effects, but no signal results have ever been achieved so far as we know by applying salt to upland meadows. There have been cases in which grass has been killed outright, instead of being benefitted by this kind of treatment; and altogether it would seem probable that grass marshes yield large crops of hay more in spite of the sea water inundations, than as the direct result of them. Analysis of salt marsh hay shows the presence of potash in full quantity, but very little soda. It is likely, therefore, that other conditions and deposits account for the fertility of these marshes, and that salt has nothing to do with it, or if it has, there is a combined action along with some other element or agent not yet detected. Actual experiment has shown that salt is injurious to some plants—the sugar beet for example. Of course this does not prove that it is injurious to all plants, by any means, but it heightens the necessity for proof of utility before expense and trouble are gone to in supplying the soil with a supposed fertilizer, which may after all be of little or no real

value. The principle on which manures are applied to land, is that of restoring the constituents removed by crops. Inasmuch as plants consume little or no soda, and the trifling proportion they require is probably supplied in indirect ways, there would seem to be little use in the direct application of salt. We perceive by some of our exchanges that Professor Gossman, of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, has recently published a lecture on this subject. The lecture itself we have not seen, but quite concur in the concluding remark which we find quoted by a contemporary:—"The safest and cheapest way of supplying salt to your farm lands, if at all desirable, is to feed it to your live stock, for natural channels of distribution are always the best."

ON THE BENEFIT OF PLASTER TO THE SOIL.

To the Editor of the ONTARIO FARMER.

SIR,—As the time is now fast approaching for the Farmers to secure a supply of plaster (gypsum) for his land, I have taken up my pen with a view of setting forth, to some extent, its real merits and value, not only as I have found it, but as others have also found it, as well as the crude opinion of some few who have never used it at all, yet who are bold enough to pass sentence upon it as being next to useless and worthless—for such, however, I can of course entertain no other feelings than those of pity and sorrow; and when you have heard what some of them have advanced on the subject, you will not wonder at those feelings. It is not, however, my purpose here to condemn, but to encourage those unbelievers by statements that may be relied on as to its efficacy, which I shall now relate as having come under my own immediate supervision, and after having pointed out the enormous annual loss the farming community, collectively and individually, have sustained, it will be for them to choose and try that which I shall here advance, or for them to persevere in their own prejudiced and profitless course, confirmed as it has been by years of non-experience and ignorance combined.

I will now treat your reader, Mr. Editor, to an interview I once had with a farmer (and no mean one either in his own estimation) who resided in my neighbourhood many years before I arrived here, showing you his idea of the value of plaster to his crops. In the first place, however, I will say that I found all his crops very deficient indeed, his Herds and Flocks poor in the extreme, his land, if possible poorer still, and himself poorer than all, and his fences and buildings on a par with every thing else around him, and when I found him, on that visit, carrying his hay far from half a crop, and asked him why he did not use plaster, his answer was to me, at least a very novel one, "because it renders