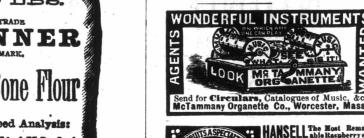
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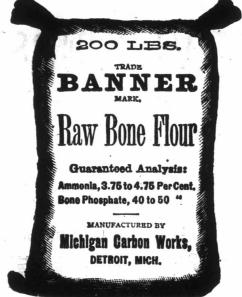
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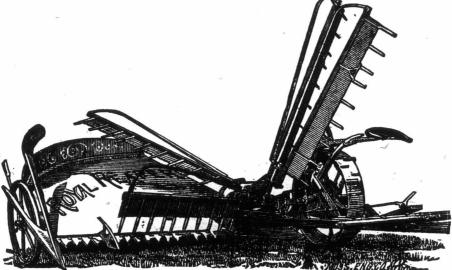


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## The Plaster Puzzle.

By J. S. Woodward, in New York Tribune.

I have known instances where plaster sown on clover in irregular streaks showed its effect as far as one could see the field; where an application of 200 pounds per acre no doubt made a gain of one ton of hay per acre. On other fields and other soils twice that quantity had no perceptible effect and it apparently was thrown away. No one can forecast results by looking at the soil, or by any the contraction of the contraction other means; practical test is the one and only way. I have sometimes sown early in spring on clover, and then again when the plants were four or five inches high, and though it is a dirty job, I prefer to have the work done in the dewy morning. Apply at the rate of about 200 pounds per, acre and if all at once, put it on broadcast by hand, or by plaster-sower, about the time the plants begin to cover the ground, and leave plots here and there all over the field without any, and one year will tell plainly whether it will pay on your soil.

For corn it should be put on the hills when the plants are two or three inches high. Take it in a bag over one shoulder, or in a pail on the left arm, and with a little practice you can pick up with the thumb and fingers the right quantity for a hill, and by timing step and motion of hand you soon get to go as fast as you can walk. Some take two rows and take sufficient in the hand for two hills, throwing to the right and left as they pass along. Try this in the same way as recommended for clover, and one season will tell very clearly whether or not plaster will pay on that kind of soil—though this fact should be borne in mind, that plaster has much more and a much better effect in some seasons than in others. In a season quite dry with frequent and light showers, plaster has always given me the best results.

But the fact should be remembered, that plaster is in no sense a manure, and in and of itself has little or no value as plant-food. Just how it helps we cannot say, and yet the fact is indisputable that on certain plants on certain soils it does exert a wonderful influence, especially on clover, peas, potatoes and sometimes corn. Since, however, it is not a manure but a stimulant, any increase of crop by its use only so much more and so much faster impoverishes our land, and unless we follow such a system of farming that we put back in real plant-food as much greater amount than ordinary as we remove in the increased crop, we shall find we are none the richer for using plaster, but have only drawn our deposit from the bank so much the sooner. But by so farming that we use the increased crop of clover or other plants to feed the more stock and to make the more manure, then the application of plaster will be one of the means to profit.

A New Jersey farmer reports that a dressing of eight bushels per acre of salt to land badly infested with white grubs, enabled him to raise good crops of corn for three years past, which was impossible previous to this application.

PORTABLE HOUSES.—Now that more attention is being paid to poultry, and the use of portable houses strongly advocated as conducive both to health and profit, it seems astonishing that no enterprising firm constructs such houses on reasonable terms, or perhaps more astonishing that if such houses are constructed they are not advertised. They do not require to be elaborately finished, but capable of ordinary farm usage.

Rats, mice and insects will at once desert ground on which a little chloride of lime has been sprinkled. Plants may be protected from insect plagues by brushing their stems with a solution of it. It has often been noticed that a patch of land which has been treated in this way remains religiously respected by grubs, while the unprotected beds round about are literally devasted. Fruit trees may be guarded from the attack of grubs and ants by attaching to their trunks pieces of tow smeared with a mixture of chloride of lime and hog's lard,