

# HURON SIGNAL

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VOLUME III.

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## The Huron Signal,

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## AGRICULTURE.

LECTURES ON AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY.

BY HENRY YOUNG, B.S.

POTASH, SODA AND MAGNESIA.

These substances exist in variable quantities in all cultivated crops. Vegetables appear to possess a limited power of making judicious use of them, especially of potash and soda. This is not the case with sulphur and phosphorus, no seed or nutritious juice, can be formed without definite quantities of each. A few examples will serve to illustrate the very variable quantities in which potash, soda, and magnesia are introduced into wheat. In six analyses of wheat made by celebrated chemists, there were found in 100 lbs. of the grain as follows:

No. 1. 26 lbs. Potash, No. 2. 6 lbs. Potash, 6 do Magnesia, 23 do Magnesia, 1 do Soda, 23 do Soda.

No. 3. 24 lbs. Potash, No. 4. 30 lbs. Potash, 13 do Magnesia, 16 do Magnesia, 10 do Soda, 0 do Soda.

No. 5. 22 lbs. Potash, No. 6. 21 lbs. Potash, 12 do Magnesia, 14 do Magnesia, 0 do Soda, 12 do Soda.

Red Clover, Potatoes, and especially Potatoes, Beetroot, Mangel Wurzel and other tubers, contain much potash, soda, and magnesia. A comparative small quantity of these substances will satisfy grain-growing crops.

An acre of Clover abstracts from 90-100 lbs. of Potash or Mangel Wurzel, 80-100 lbs. of Potash, 130-150 do of Soda, and 30-50 do of Magnesia.

The large quantity of Potash and Soda in Potatoes, is contained in the impression frequently known as "potash," that are of little use for manure.

It is a very important constituent of all vegetable cultivated for the food and use of man—and it is possible an equally important agent in the hands of the agriculturist for ameliorating the condition of many kinds of soil. Its effects as a manure will be considered under that head; it is sufficient for our present purpose to become acquainted with the kinds of vegetables which particularly require lime for the amelioration of their various organs.

An acre of Potatoes abstracts from 70-90 lbs. of Lime.

An acre of Hay abstracts from 30-50 lbs. of Lime.

An acre of wheat straw abstracts from 15-20 lbs. of Lime.

An acre of Oat straw abstracts from 10-15 lbs. of Lime.

Various vegetables possess the power of assimilating more than an average quantity of lime, it is present to them in a proper form. Its effects upon the straw of grain-growing crops is very remarkable. Farmers are acquainted with lime in three different states,—1st. in the form of common limestone, which consists of lime and carbonic acid; 2d. in the form of slacked lime, which is formed by heating 9 lbs. of water are thrown upon 25 lbs. of caustic lime, the lime swells, evolves great heat, and entering into combination with the water produces 37 lbs. of slacked lime. Lime is found in the soil in the state of carbonate of lime, its presence is indicated by effervescence when an acid is poured over it. In the carbonate state it possesses very powerful properties, causing the rapid decomposition of vegetable and animal substances.

PLANT.—Called by chemists Silica, composes a large proportion of the ash to grain growing plants; it is often in such quantities as to give strength to those parts which seem particularly to require additional aids. The wheat plant affords an admirable illustration of elegance in form united with wonderful strength. A column 576 feet high and 3 feet in diameter, bearing a weight upon its summit equal to that of the column itself, represents a multiple of a wheat plant four feet high and one-fourth of an inch in diameter. No selection of materials, or contrivance in building them together, would enable an artificial structure of these proportions, to resist the force exerted by a gentle breeze.

A good crop of Wheat, from one acre abstracts in the straw alone from 120 to 150 lbs. of Potash, 40 to 60 do of Soda, 40 to 60 do of Magnesia, and 12 to 18 lbs. of Flint.

Iron.—Iron is present in all fertile soils, and is also an invariable constituent of vegetables. It greatly increases the tenacity of clays when found in the soil in the state of black oxide or rust by exposure to air. The black oxide is soluble in water and prejudicial to vegetables; the red oxide is sparingly soluble, and a harmless or rather useful product. Iron is found in all the clay soils of Canada, in the form of the black magnetic oxide of iron; on the shores of Lake Ontario, Simcoe, Huron, St. Clair, &c. it occurs in large quantities, mixed with white and red sand—it may be separated by means of a magnet.

Chlorine.—This substance does not exist in a simple or pure state; it is always found in combination with other bodies; common salt is the great storehouse of chlorine. Salt is composed of a metal sodium in union chlorine. When used as a manure salt yields soda and chlorine to vegetables.

Lime is only found in sea plants, or those growing in the immediate neighborhood of salt water.

It will be observed that different kinds of cultivated vegetables, require for their due formation, different quantities of flint, lime, potash and soda. A variety of convenient and useful arrangements of vegetables, can be framed on the basis of their respective requirements. Thus we have as a very general and necessarily imperfect method of arrangement, the following: flint, potash and lime plants—

## PLANT, POTASH & SODA PLANTS, LIME PLANTS.

Wheat, Potatoes, Peas, Beans, Mangel Wurzel, Clover, Indian Corn, Tobacco, Potatoes, Barley, Oats, Rye, &c.

Hay partaking of the character of the three classes (Leibiz).

Other, and more exact modes of arrangement of these kinds of vegetables with reference to each other naturally suggest themselves, when the number under consideration is diminished; these will be introduced hereafter, under "Rotation of Crops."

The recent analysis of a soil—from the Territory of Ontario, in Lower Canada, by T. S. Hunt, Esq., Chemist and Mineralogist to the Provincial Geological Survey, "exhausted by having yielded crops of wheat for many successive years, without receiving any manure," gave the following results:

In 100,000 lbs. of the soil there were found 1 lb. of Potash, 1 lb. of Soda, 1 lb. of Magnesia, 1 lb. of Sulphuric Acid, 31 lbs. of Magnesia, 88 lbs. of Phosphoric Acid, 126 lbs. of Potash and Soda, 50 lbs. of Soluble Flint, 80 lbs. of Lime.

We have discovered an abundance of all the necessary or substances which plants require. The idea of deficiency therefore cannot obtain in this instance. The present barrenness of the soil is unquestionably due to the state in which some of these bodies exist at present. This view is confirmed by the remark of Mr. Hunt, that it supports nothing but a scanty growth of a short wire grass, which is regarded as indicative of an impoverished soil, and known as *Hydrochloa*.

The same soil when subjected to the action of water, the only manifest traces of sulphates of lime, magnesia, potash and soda; these being proportionately two pounds of sulphur in one million pounds of the water with which the soil was treated, while analysis showed that there was upwards of three thousand one hundred pounds of sulphur in one million pounds of the soil, in an insoluble state. No mention is made of phosphates soluble in water, therefore we may conclude that the quantity was too insignificant to be detected by ordinary means of analysis.

We have had under consideration a soil, which at one period was eminently fertile—having yielded successive crops of wheat for 20 years—at present, however, barren, and yet possessing in abundance, a supply of all the essential substances for thousands of crops of wheat, or any other vegetable which at the pleasure of the cultivator could be grown upon it. The present example affords a good illustration of the condition of soils which have been subjected to the action of an injudicious course of cropping. It becomes then, a question of much interest and moment to practical farmers, to ascertain the nature of those artifices they must employ in order to restore and reinvigorate the fertility of such depreciated soils.

The chief agent in effecting the solubility of the necessary quantity of mineral substances in Air. All the operations of the farmer are in the main directed to the introduction of air into the soil, and affording time for its influence to be exerted. He ploughs for the purpose of exposing fresh surfaces to air; he drains to admit air into its pores and crevices; he follows to give time for air to exert its powerful influence; he employs a rotation of crops for precisely the same object.

[To be continued.]

## ARRIVAL OF THE AFRICA.

LIVERPOOL MARKETS, Dec. 2nd.

Trade dull. Money 2 1/2. Consols 97 1/2. Corn 31s 3/4. Flour 23s 6d. Lard unaltered. Beef 6s 6d. Pork 50s to 55s. Mess 42s. Bacon 33s. Tobacco extremely firm.

The *Africa* arrived at New York on Sunday, Liverpool dates to the 7th.

The *Corvette* remains quiet. The large arrivals and shipments of wheat and flour from the continent preventing any improvement. Western Canal flour is quoted 19s 1/2; Philadelphia and Baltimore 23s. Indian corn 40s 6d per quarter for mixed; 31s 3/4 for yellow.

The *Hastings* arrived at Cowes on the evening of the 5th.

The news brought by the *Africa* is wholly favourable both politically and commercially.

All wars of a general continental war have been quite dispelled by a treaty concluded at Olmutz, between Austria and Prussia. The effect of this pacific settlement is exhibited in the rapid advance of European securities.

The Catholic question in England is still agitating the public mind and is also causing considerable uneasiness in Rome.

The news from France generally unimportant.

The affairs of Germany have been almost exclusively the topic of conversation. The bill granting a credit of 840,000 francs for calling out 40,000 troops necessitated by the state of affairs in Germany was postponed after an important discussion by 272 majority.

A visit of M. Guizot to the Ellysae has given rise to some talk in diplomatic circles.

## AUSTRIA.

VIENNA.—The imperial cabinet had notified Austria to the Almutz arrangement.

The difficulties between Austria and Prussia have been settled. The Conditions agreed upon at Almutz between Prince Schwartzberg and Baron Montstrouff are as follows:—Free concessions are to be held at Dresden, with as little delay as possible. The Federal Diet of Frankfurt meantime will take no further steps in the framing of a German Constitution or the settling of impending questions. The Elector of Hesse will endeavor to restore order to his own States, with the assistance of Austrian and Prussian and Russian Commissioners. Cases to have a small mixed garrison of Austrian and Prussian troops, until order be restored. Should the

## Elector not succeed, he is at liberty to invoke the help of either Prussia, Germany or Russia. Commissioners are likewise to be sent to the Duchies and Schleswig-Holstein, to induce the Stadholder to cease hostilities. In case of refusing, Austria to be allowed to use compulsion.

Early on the 4th inst. a Cabinet was held, presided over by the King, and a communication was sent to the Chamber, proroguing it to the 3rd of January.

There has been no change in the affairs of Hesse Cassel.

In Spain a Ministerial defalcation has taken place. The funds, however, were very little affected.

## TURKEY.

The disturbance at Aleppo has been put down after a severe struggle, in which the Turks were victorious. 1800 rebels fell in the struggle at Aleppo. Not a single Christian fell in the terrible affair. All the property of the rebels will be devoted by the authorities to indemnify the Christians for their losses on the 14th and 15th October, and to re-build three churches, which were burned.

## INDIA.

The news from India by the overland mail is not important beyond some fighting in the dominions of the Nizam about some quarrel which the English resident is called to settle. Everything is tranquil. —Globe.

## THE AGRICULTURAL INTEREST OF ENGLAND.

[From Wilmer & Smith.]

The straw begins to move. Two noblemen, the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam, have been discussing to their tenants this work on the most important subject on which a landlord can offer an opinion, —namely a reduction of rent. The statement of the Yorkshire peer is worthy of the liberality of his house. "The time has arrived, he says, to make an equitable adjustment of rents, for it is certain that the price of wheat will fall, —low—probably, than the present price. In each of his farms he proposes to make an investigation, and on the result to base the rent. The tenantry assembled to hear this intimation were generally delighted with it, and gave vent to their feelings accordingly; but his lordship stated that there was no ground for applause or an expression of thanks. "That which I propose," said he, "is only an act of common justice inasmuch as the staple articles of your production have greatly fallen in value." It appears from the Earl of Fitzwilliam's statement that he came to a similar arrangement with his tenants seven years ago, when the Free Trade measures of the late Sir Robert Peel first began to tell on the farmer's pocket. His views of the relative position of landlord and tenant are both liberal and enlightened. He shows that rent was merely the proportion of the produce of the soil to which the landlord was entitled. On rich lands the yield was greater—so ought the rent to be. On poor lands the produce was smaller, and the amount of capital and skill employed must necessarily be greater—and the rent ought to be reduced accordingly. His lordship is not at all depending on his own at the present prospect of agriculture. He holds those who think that the land cannot be cultivated with profit in the present circumstances of the country, and as far as his aid can assist, the deserving tenant, he is ready to afford it. An energetic tenant, who will do more; a good landlord could not afford less.

The Duke of Portland is less hopeful; but he writes like a good farmer, and is evidently a liberal landlord. Manuring and the six-course of cropping is the principle he advocates. No forest land that will not, with out manure, after a fallow, produce two quarters of barley per acre, is, in his judgment, worth cultivating with manure. He is strongly opposed to the exhaustion of the soil by frequent cropping, and he advocates the rotation of crops on the part of the farmer even where the land is good, by raising grass, in order, at longer intervals, to get a greater crop in corn from the soil. Even under the four-course system, he shows that an estate of his own, in the North of England, has been exhausted in the course of eight years. Impressed with these principles he has adapted his rent to them, and gives to his tenants at the same time the benefit of the remission and of his own counsel and experience.

## From the Globe.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMON SCHOOLS IN UPPER CANADA FOR 1849.

To the Editor of the Globe.

Sir,—As you so readily published in your paper, during the months of July and August, last, two letters of mine on the "School Statistics" of the Rev. Dr. Ryerson, Editor of the *Standard*, and which I afterwards found to correspond with the tables of the Report of the Chief Superintendent of Common Schools for 1849, I feel assured, you will be pleased to learn that the effects of my remarks, though unnoticed at the time, are very apparent in the Annual Report of that officer for 1849.

I there endeavored to show that the numbers given by the Chief Superintendent, as the average for the years 1847 and 1848 were irreconcilable with the returns from the District of Niagara for these years, and totally at variance with the habit of attendance at schools that prevail in the Province. I therein showed, "that in order to produce his average for 1847 and 1848, it would require every child on his nominal list at each school, daily for 84 and 104 months," while his tables show that the average time of keeping schools open in these years, was only 8 and 9 months.

I was only taught to avoid equivocation or the slightest approach to mis-statements, even in trivial matters, as they lead to total want of confidence when discovered, and cannot be concealed without involving a reputation of the ends, or perhaps something worse—a maxim highly worthy of being inculcated on the rising generation, by a Chief Superintendent of Schools, who has so much at stake in regard to their welfare, and of which the School Reports for 1847 '48 and '49, are admirable examples; as well as of the value to be placed on such reports by the community.

In Table B. of the Report for 1849, in the columns intended for the averages, will be found,

## "Average attendance at each School of,"

in place of "Average attendance of Pupils," as in the District forms sent to the Superintendent's office; but in place of his own tables, containing under the head for 1847-'48, we now find, in 1849, the average attendance of pupils really given; and instead of the result of "47" and "41" as on the tables for 1848, we now have the numbers of 78,492 and 78,492, the very result I complained of in the tables being introduced by accident. In the last report, the heading and the numbers are at variance and if this be a blunder in the construction of the tables, it is a blunder in any counting house, and altogether pardonable as proceeding from a well-paid public officer. In the chief Superintendent's letter to His Excellency the Governor General, and attached to the report for 1849, in the 3rd section, we find, "That the total average attendance of pupils during the summer was 72,294; and during the winter, 78,555—a considerable increase over the average attendance of the preceding year."

In a similar letter, attached to the report of 1848, he says, "The average attendance of pupils for the summer of 1847 was 84,537; in the summer of 1848, 112,000. In the winter of 1847, the gross average attendance of pupils was 82,591; in the winter of 1848 it was 114,800."

Now, sir, let us compare the returns for 1848 and 1849, and find out the expense of his "considerable increase" in the latter year. In 1848, the average attendance of pupils for the summer was 84,537, and for the winter, 82,591. In 1849, it is 78,492, a decrease of 33,736; in the winter of 1849, it is 114,800, a decrease of 36,375; showing instead of his boasted "increase," a decrease in the year, of 38,065!

This decrease of 38,065 in the average attendance at our Common Schools, may be a very interesting matter to the public, who pay very little attention to the voluminous and costly reports of the Chief Superintendent; but it ought to be no matter of indifference to those who are called upon to support his system by the results of these tables.

How does he account for, or reconcile these statements just quoted from his reports? He would swell the tide! This would have scarcely the credit of the public, and the effect of his array of figures is effectually preventing them from seeing too narrowly the result he so confidently declares.

In the report for 1849—Statistical Abstract, No. 3, will be found a return of the summer and winter averages for 1848 and 1849, the first being given as 72,420 and 77,711, equal to a yearly average of 75,065; and the latter, 72,294, and 78,466, equal to an annual average of 75,335; and in the columns for the year 1847, in place of the figures for 1848 and 1849, the corresponding figures for the summer and winter of 1847, are given as 84,537 and 82,591, equal to the yearly average of 83,564; and for 1848, 112,000 and 114,800, equal to the yearly average of 113,400; just 8,065 less than he makes it for 1849, all of which is effected without a remark that anything has taken place, since, in the former year, his previous reports and tables for 1847 and 1848, as well as his self-aiding articles in the *Journal* (and elsewhere) have no report entered for the year 1849, and he had done those of 1848. A late writer in the *Montreal Pilot* attempted to defend the character of the Schools in Lower Canada against a comparison with our Superintendent's tables for 1847 and 1848.

He seemed aware of the fallacy of these reports, but he characterized as "Pious Fraud" the information he pretends to have extracted from them.

I will leave the writer and the Rev. Superintendent to settle the connection between piety and fraud, and will only add that the present average of the schools in the Province, as they are, and the annual average resulting from them, are still a fraud on the public, as they are not borne out by the tables themselves.

It is not surprising that the Chief Superintendent had the schools been kept open for 12 months, but that they were only kept for 9 months, consequently about 2 must be deducted from the averages to correspond to the tables; the true averages for the year being 46,533, instead of 75,335, as by his returns.

The General Abstract Table, No. 4, in the report for 1849, is a curiosity in its way. He evidently had in his mind, for the year before him when he constructed it; but instead of availing himself of the two columns of that report, which would have effectually checked the fraud, he has taken the figures from the information he pretends to have extracted from them.

The number of children of school age, by the census return was 109,331; by the school returns for 1849, it is 145,195, an increase of 35,864—a difference of only 50,