From The Farmers' Encyclopædia.

SALT.

There is, perhaps, no saline substance that exists to so great an extent in marine plants, and which has been used for so long a period and to such an extent for those growing in inland situations, as common salt. A substance which not only abounds in all plants growing on the sea-shore, but always exists in smaller proportions, in many of those growing in upland districts. Thus, Mr. G. Sinclair obtained from 1,450 grains of wheat chaff from Bedfordshire, ashes 50; common salt 2½: from 1,450 parts of the seed, ashes 10; common salt 1-6. But from the same crop, which had been dressed with 44 bushels of common salt per acre, he obtained from 1,450 parts of the chaff, ashes 40; common salt 4: and from 1,450 parts of the seed, ashes 10; common salt ¼.

Common salt is found generally in minute proportions in most cultivated soils. Davy detected in 400 grains of a good siliceous soil from a Tonbridge hop garden, nearly 8 parts of common salt.

Besides being in small proportions a direct food for plants, common salt also seems to perform several other services to vegetation, and the same remark probably applies to other salts; for instance, when applied to the soil in small proportions, it certainly promotes the putrefaction of its organic matters.

And again, salt in common with several others, appears to excite or stimulate the plant, when applied to it in proportions not too excessive; a fact first noticed by Doctor Priestley.

Another use of common and other salts to vegetation, is the preservation of the plant from injury by sudden transitions in the temperature of the atmosphere; salted soils only freeze in intense frosts. I have repeatedly witnessed in the case of culinary vegetables, such as cabbages, brocoli, &c., that while the produce of the unsalted portions of the ground were half killed by the frost, the salted portions have totally escaped. Many salts have also the property of retarding the evaporation of the moisture of the soil, others absorb it from the atmosphere, or are of the class of deliquescing salt: such are the common salt, chloride of calcium, chloride of magnesia, cubic petre, or nitrate of soda, &c., which, in consequence, when they are used as fertilizers, they increase this property, so valuable and so essential to all cultivated soils. Thus I found by some experiments upon a rich soil near Maldon in Essex, worth 42s. per acre, that 1000 parts dried at a temperature of 212°, absorbed in eighteen hours, by exposure to air saturated with moisture at a temperature of 62°, 25 parts. But 1000 parts of the same field which had been dressed with twelve bushels of marine salt per acre, under the same circumstances, gained 27 parts; and 1000 parts of the same soil, which had been dressed with six bushels per acre, gained 26 parts. The attraction of some saline substance for the moisture of the atmosphere is very considerable. I found that 1000 parts of refuse salt manure, dried at 212°, absorbed in three hours by exposure to air saturated with moisture at 60°, 49½ parts. 1000 parts of the sediment, or pan-scratch of the salt-makers, gained 10 parts; 1000 parts of Cheshire crushed rock salt, 10 parts; 1000 parts of gypsum, 9 parts. Chloride of calcium is so powerfully deliquescent, that it absorbs sufficient moisture from the air to dissolve in it, and form a solution. Doctor Marcet found that 288 grains in 124 days absorbed 684 grains of water. 288 grains of nitrate of lime, a salt found in some of the richest alluvial soils of the East, absorbs in 147 days 118 grains. Carbonate of potash, another saline fertilizer, also absorbs moisture. Now it is worthy of the farmers' notice, that chloride of calcium is the very salt which is produced in such abundance by the decomposition of common salt by lime, in the way so successfully recommended, first by the old German chemist Glauber, by Mr. Hollingshead, Mr. Bennett, and Sir Charles Barrell; for by the slow action carried on for three months by these substances on each other, this salt and soda are produced by the decomposition; and it is not improbable that when these salts are present in the juices of plants, that by this means the attractive powers of their leaves and roots for aqueous vapour may be increased. Davy alludes to these essential, yet too little understood powers of absorption possessed by vegetables, when he says —"In very intense heats, and when the soil is dry, the life of plants seems to be preserved by the absorbent power of their leaves; and it is a beautiful circumstance in the economy of nature, that aqueous vapour is most abundant in the atmosphere when it is most needed for the purposes of life, and that when other sources of its supply are cut off, this is most copious."

Horticultural Phenomenon. — Mrs. Child, editor of the Anti-Slavery Standard, gives the following account of a remarkable rose bush in the vicinity of Boston:— "A large and very healthy barberry bush stood in the midst of a piece of ground, which a gentleman had appropriated to a flower garden. The gardener, unwilling to lose such a vigourous growth, and being minded to try an experiment, cut it off not far above the root, and grafted a slip of white roses into it. It grew rapidly, and became a thriving bush; and what was very singular though leaves and flowers remained in shape like a rose, the colour changed from white to that delicate straw colour which characterizes the barberry blossom. The arrangement of the bush, too, changed its character; the branches, instead of shooting out straight like a rose, assumed the drooping, curving line of the barberry."

Prevention of Accidents by Fire.— A correspondent of The Courier recommends that after apparel, bed furniture, &c., is washed, it be rinsed in water in which a small quantity of saltpetre has been dissolved. This, he says, improves the appearance of the article, and should it come in contact with the fire, prevents its bursting into flame, so that the fire may be extinguished with ease.—*Selected*

The neatest way to separate wax from honey-comb, is to tie the comb up in a linen or woollen bag; place it in a kettle of cold water, and hang it over the fire. As the water heats, the wax melts and rises to the surface, while all the impurities remain in the bag. It is well to put a few pebbles in the bag to keep it from floating.—*Ib.*

Common salt eight parts, saltpetre one part, well mixed together and applied to the surface of the ground connected with the trunk of the peach tree, will, it is said, destroy all worms and grubs, and promote the thrift of the tree.—*Ib.*

The following is from a correspondent of *The Albany Cultivator*:—

Keeping Eggs.—Having tried many ways of preserving eggs I have found the following to be the easiest, cheapest, surest, and best. Take your crock, keg, or barrel, according to the quantity you have, cover the bottom with half an inch of fine salt, and set your eggs close together on the *small end*; be very particular to put the *small end down*, for if put in any other position they will not keep as well, and the yolk will adhere to the shell; sprinkle them over with salt so as to fill the interstices, and then put in another layer of eggs and cover with salt, and so on till your vessel is filled. Cover it tight and put it where it will not freeze, and the eggs will keep perfectly fresh and good any desirable length of time. My family has kept them in this manner three years, and found them all as good as when laid down. I believe we have never had a bad egg since we commenced preserving them in this manner, and found them always as good as when laid down.

The trouble is comparatively nothing, for when we have a dozen or so more than we wish to use, we put them in the cask and sprinkle them over with salt; and when at any future time we wish to take them out, they are accessible and the salt is uninjured. But, mark! the eggs should be put down before they become stale, say within a week or ten days after they are laid.

Every man by this process may have eggs as plenty in winter as summer; and farmers who make a business of selling their eggs, may easily calculate the profits of preserving them in summer and selling them in winter. Eggs, where I live, sell frequently in summer at eight cents, and in winter as high as thirty-seven and a half cents per dozen. In view of these various considerations, it must be evident that no investment that a farmer can make, will be productive of so great a profit as a few dollars in domestic fowls. They will cost, probably in no case, more than fifty cents each per year for their food; the trouble of taking care of them is fully counterbalanced by the pleasure they give; and they will, or may be made to, produce each on an average, from 200 to 250 eggs besides an occasional brood of chickens.

A Cure for Consumption. — Mr. Adam Mott gives the following statement in *The Maine Farmer*:—

"A friend of mine, who resides in Industry, in this State, told me that his wife was sick of what the doctor called Consumption. She was visited by five physicians, who gave her over. She was very sick—was unable to sit up—had a very severe cough—and grew no better, "but rather worse"—she failed very fast. She recollected that she had before received benefit from the use of St. John's wort; her husband procured some of it, it was steeped, and she made it her constant drink. For four or five days there appeared to be but little alteration; but after this she grew better very fast, her health was so much improved, that in the course of six or eight weeks she was able to resume her customary occupations—she commenced weaving, and wove about 40 yards of cloth. During this time she made constant use of St. John's wort tea. What had been done may again be done. It helped her—it may help others.

The tea may be made as you would make peppermint or any herb tea to drink — by merely steeping the herb in water. The herb may be gathered any time after it is