

Tanner's Bark as a Manure.

To the Editor of the *Agriculturist*.

SIR.—The pages of your Journal being ever open to give and receive all information pertaining to the advancement of Agriculture in this fine province, induces me to ask the opinion of the *Agriculturist* upon the following question:—Having an opportunity of procuring a large quantity of waste tanner's bark, which is the best way to convert it into an active manure? By answering the above in your next impression, you will confer a favor upon

Yours, &c.,
M. D.
St. Foy Road, County }
Quebec, May 24th, 1862. }

REMARKS.

Tanner's Bark occupies a very low position as a fertilizer. Having, however, once been the seat of life, and, therefore, organic, the ingredients of which it is composed, after the tanning principle has been extracted, must, when decomposed, possess in some degree a fertilising power. Something of course will depend on the varieties of wood that have been employed. The bark of the oak and other deciduous trees being preferable to that of the Fir tribe. It is difficult to bring tanner's waste into a rapid state of decomposition, and consequently undesirable to apply it to the land in a crude state. The most preferable mode of employing it is in compost, in connection with light earth and quick lime; the latter when thoroughly mixed in a liberal proportion to the whole bulk, say a tenth or fifteenth, will probably hasten decomposition, and bring the several ingredients of which the bark is made up into a state, in connection with water, for entering into the circulation of plants. Solid liquid manures may be and advantageously mixed with spent bark in a compost; but the use of lime is of the greatest advantage, in promoting the decay of woody fibre, and forms in itself a very valuable auxiliary to a manuring compost. We therefore recommend our correspondent, to use the bark at his command in the manner above described; allowing it plenty of time, and thoroughly mixing it together. In this way he may obtain a manure of moderate power, and make it profitable, provided the distance of transportation be not too great.

For the information of our respected correspondent and readers generally, we append an

analysis of Tanner's Bark made, we believe, with great care and accuracy a few years since by Mr. Lonck, of England.

Tanner's Bark.	In state in which it was analysed.	Dried at 212° Fah.
Water.....	44.61	
Organic Matters.....	48.91	68.58
Inorganic Matters.(Ash)	6.48	31.42
	100.00	100.00
Containing Nitrogen..	.069	.097
Equal to Ammonia....	.084	.118

In 100 parts of the inorganic portion (Ash) of this refuse, were found:—

Salica and sand.....	6.070
Phosphates of lime, magnesia, and iron, containing 1.81 of phosphoric acid...	5.230
Carbonate of lime.....	85.350
Supphate of lime.....	1.969
Magnesia.....	.215
Potash.....	1.230
Soda.....	traces.
	100.034

It will be observed from the above analysis that spent bark contains a large amount of water, which alone is a sufficient cause to prevent its being applied at any great distance from the locality where it is obtained. Fresh from the yards, it probably is still more completely saturated with water than the specimen analysed. As might have been expected, nearly all the nitrogenised compounds in the bark have been dissolved during the maceration in water, and only traces of nitrogenised matters are thus left in the organic portion of this waste; for which reason the value of this portion of tanner's bark is but trifling. Moreover, the composition of the ash shows that it principally consists of carbonate of lime and silica, substances of common occurrence, especially the latter, and therefore of little consequence; and that the amount of phosphoric acid and of potash, two valuable fertilising materials is, but very small.

Yet it has been well observed: "Tanner's waste may be used to advantage as a component part of compost heaps; or, partially dried by exposure to the air, it may be economically employed in some places as an absorber for liquid manure, or also for covering manure heaps, to prevent the loss of ammonia in them. Sufficiently dry, it may indeed be used with equal advantage for all purposes for which peat-mould is employed."