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Excrements of Poultry as Manure.

It has been known at least from the times of the ancient Romans, that the excrements of domestic fowls, and birds in general, possess highly fertilizing properties. A thrifty farmer will, therefore, carefully preserve the dung of his poultry yard and pigeon cots, and apply it mixed with earthy matters, as a dressing for his cultivated crops. As the feces of birds are discharged through a single aperture, they possess the combined properties of both the solid and liquid excrements of other animals.

Poultry dung is one of the most powerful manures; and is, therefore, worthy of greater consideration than is generally bestowed upon its collection, especially as it so soon decomposes, and consequently loses so much ammonia; and it would lose a still greater quantity of that gas, did the excrements not dry quickly, and thus prevent a further decomposition of the urea. The strongest are those of pigeons and domestic fowls—a fact easily explained by the circumstance of their living chiefly upon grain, insects, and worms, while geese eat grass also. That we may lose none of the ammonia developed during the putrefaction of poultry dung, we should do well to strew the yard and house in which they are kept, with soil abundant in ammonia, for then the ammonia of the manure will be combined with the humid acid of the earth. The strewing of the ground with sand, dust, &c., as commonly practised, is in this point of view, of no use whatever.

The excrements of pigeons were carefully ex-

amined by Mr. Humphrey Davy, and Sprengel. Davy found in 100 parts by weight, 23 parts of substances, soluble in water, consisting of urea, urate of ammonia, common salt, and some others. According to the latter, pigeon-dung half-a-year old contained only 16 per cent of bodies soluble in water, consisting of very little urea, but of a large proportion of carbonate sulphate, and humate of ammonia, common salt, and sulphate of potash. The other 84 parts insoluble in water consisted of coarse siliceous sand, silica, phosphate of lime and magnesia, traces of alumina, and oxides of manganese and iron. The abundance of soluble substances explains the quick effect of pigeon dung, and also shows us once more the great value of mineral manure.

When the droppings of geese come in contact with the grass in pastures they destroy it in a short time, so that farmers do not readily allow geese to have access to pastures; not to mention that, when the herbage is rendered foul by the excrements of these poultry, it becomes loathsome to other animals. The speedy injury inflicted on plants by goose-dung is occasioned partly by the uric acid it contains, and partly by the ammonia which is so soon generated and developed on decomposition. When rain happens to fall, these caustic substances are diluted, and the grass grows the best in places where the excrements lay, as may be seen in any goose pasture.

As poultry dung is very rich in powerfully manuring matters, easily soluble in water, it should be applied only in very small quantities; and, in order to affect its due distribution