

## Coal Ashes—a Remedy for the Potato Rot.

The following interesting letter was recently read before the Brooklyn Natural History Society, on the subject of the potato disease, as it is the result of *experiment* we would suggest to our agricultural readers a particular attention to the subject. If *coal ashes* should prove a successful remedy for the potato rot, a market will be opened for a vast quantity of what is now, in our towns and cities, entirely useless.

HARTFORD, November 2, 1846.

*To the Society of Nat. History, Brooklyn, N. Y.*  
GENTLEMEN,—The last time that I had the honor of attending your meeting, I promised to give you the result of my experiments in the cultivation of the potato. I have finished my crop, and will now give you the result.

About the first of April last I prepared two acres of ground for an early crop. A part of the field was a strong sandy loam; the other part, a strong clay soil. About one half I manured in the hill with good, rich, barn yard manure. The potatoes grew finely.

I commenced digging them about the first of July; and finer potatoes I never saw. In the course of ten or fifteen days I found them very badly affected with the rot;—so much so, that I gave up digging them, thinking it better to let them rot in the ground than to dig them and lose all my labor; for the disease was so prevalent here that potatoes would not sell at any price. I let them remain till last month, and on digging them, I found at least three quarters of the entire crop were completely decayed.

Half of the other part of the field I manured in the hill with coal ashes, putting about half a shovelfull to the hill.

I found on digging at different times through the summer, that there was no rotten potatoes to be found where the coal ashes were.

To see how it would work, I let them remain till after I had gathered the other part of the field; and to my great astonishment, on digging them, I must say that I never saw finer potatoes than these were: there were no rotten ones among them: they were all sound and very large, yielding at the rate of two hundred bushels to the acre; the rest of the field not yielding more than forty.

The next rows on each side of the coal ashes were badly rotted, while those planted with coal ashes were of the very best.

I prepared another field of about two acres for

a late crop. The soil was a black strong loam with here and there a patch of gravel. I plan a part of the field the last of May, but did not finish planting till the first week in June, owing to a long rain. Not having manure convenient and having dry wood ashes enough for about half of the field, I put a handfull of the ashes to each hill until all the ashes were used up. On the other part of the field I used plaster,—about half a handfull to the hill.

The result was, that where I used ashes, more than three-fourths of the entire crop were rotten, and where the plaster was, there were no rotten ones.

The potatoes were very small, owing to the extreme wet weather when planted. Some of those planted with plaster that were on higher ground—for instance, these on the ridge, where the furrows were turned together;—were very small and large.

Now, whether it is in the soil, the atmosphere, or manure, I am not chemist enough to determine, but this I do know; that where I used coal ashes I had potatoes of the first quality, and where I used manure, they were of the worst quality.

I have made diligent inquiry among my neighbors, and find that whenever the manure came in contact with the potatoes, they invariably rotted, but where they were planted, without manure, or where the manure was spread and ploughed in, they invariably had good crops.

I have, therefore, come to this conclusion; that strong manure, in contact with the potato, is a *poison*.

I believe that if the ground is well prepared and the manure well ploughed in, so that it does not come in contact with the potatoes, we should have far better crops.

If the above information will be of any benefit to the public, I shall be satisfied in contributing this small mite to their use.

I remain, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

W. BRADLOW.

—*Far. & Mech.*

*To drive Rats from your premises.*—Buy a pound of chloride of lime, and scatter it dry in every rat-hole and place that they visit, in the cellar and other parts of the house, in and under the cellar-wall, and they will soon leave you. Don't put it on very near any articles of iron provisions.