Dr. N. Hammond

EASTON GAZETTE.

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From Ure's Chemical Dictionary.

MANURES.

Animal and vegetable matters introduced into the soil, to accelerate vegetation, and increase the production of crops, have been used since the earliest periods of agriculture. But the manner in which manures act, the best manner of applying them, and their relative value and durability, were little understood, till the great chemist who gave new lustre to the whole science, turned his mind to this its darkest, but most important application. I conceive it will be doing a service to society, to aid the diffusion of light springing from the invaluable researches of Sir H. Davy, by inserting the following short abstract from his Agricultural Chemistry.

The pores in the fibres of the roots of plants are so small, that it is with difficulty they can be discovered by the microscope; it is not therefore probable, that solid substances can pass into them from the soil. He tried an experiment on this subject: some impalpable powdered charcoal procured by w s ing gun powder, and dissipating the sulphur by heat, was placed in a phial containing pure water, in which a plant of peppermint was growing; the roots of the plant were pretty generally in contact with the charcoal. The experiment was made in the beginning of May 1805; the growth of the plant was very vigorous during a fortnight, when it was taken out of the phial; the roots were cut through in different parts; but no carbonaceous matter could be discovered in them, nor were the smallest fibres blackened by charcoal, though this must have been the case had the charcoal been absorbed in a solid form.

No substance is more necessary to plants than carbonaceous matter; and if this cannot be introduced into the organs of the plants except in a state of solution, there is every reason to suppose that other substances less essential will be the same case.

He found by some experiments made in 1804, that plants introduced into strong fresh solutions of sugar mucilage, tanning principal, jelly, and other substances, died; but that plants lived in the same solutions after they had fermented. At that time he supposed that fermentation was necessary to prepare the food of plants; but he afterwards found, that the deleterious effect of the recent vegetable solutions was owing to their being too concentrated; in consequence of which the vegetable organs were probably clogged with solid matter, and the transpiration by the leaves prevented. In the beginning of June, in the next year, he used solutions of the same substances, but so much diluted, that there was about only one two-hundredth part of solid vegetable or animal matter in the solutions. Plants of mint grew luxuriously in all these solutions; but least so in that of the astringent matter. He watered some spots of grass in a garden with different solutions separately, and a spot with common water: the grass watered with the solutions of jelly, sugar and mucilage, grew most vigorously, and that watered with the solution of tanning principal grew better than that watered with common water.

Vegetable and animal substances deposited in the soil, as is shown by universal experience, are *consumed* during the process of vegetation; and they can only nourish the plant by affording solid matter capable of being dissolved by water, or gaseous substances capable of being absorbed by the fluids in the leaves of the vegetables; but such parts of them as are rendered gaseous, and that pass into the atmosphere, must produce a comparative small effect, for gasses soon become diffused through the mass of surrounding air. The great object in the application of manure, should be to make it afford as much soluble matter as possible to the roots of the plant; and that in a slow and gradual manner, so that it may be entirely consumed in forming its sap and organized parts. Whenever manures consist principally of matter soluble in water, it is evident that their fermentation or putrefaction should be prevented as much as possible; and the only cases in which the processes can be useful, are when the manures consists principally of vegetable or animal *fibre*. The circumstances necessary for the putrefaction of animal substances, are similar to those required for the fermentation of vegetable substances; a temperature above the freezing point, the presence of water, and the presence of oxygen, at least the first stage of the process.

To prevent manures from decomposing, they should be preserved dry, defended from the contact of air, and kept as cool as possible.

All *green succulent plants* contain saccharine or mucelaginous matter, with woody fibre, and readily ferment. They cannot, therefore, if intended for manure, be used too soon after their death.

Sea-weeds, consisting of different species of fuci, algæ, and confervæ, are much used as a manure on the sea coast of Britain and Ireland. This manure is transient in its effects, and does not last for more than a single crop, which is easily accounted for from the large quantity of water, or the elements of water it contains. It decays without producing heat when exposed to the atmosphere, and seems as it were to melt down and dissolve away.

The best farmers in the west of England use it as fresh as it can be procured; and the practical results of this mode of it are exactly conformable to the theory of its operation.

When straw is made to ferment, it becomes a more manageable manure; but there is likewise, on the whole, a great loss of nutrative matter. More manure is perhaps supplied for a single crop; but the land is less improved than it would be, supposing the whole of the vegetable matter could be finely divided and mixed with the soil.

Manures from animal substances, in general require no chemical preparation to fit them for the soil.

The great object of the farmer is to blend them with the earthy constituents in a proper place of division, and to prevent their too rapid decomposition.

Fish forms a powerful manure, in whatever state it is applied; but it cannot be ploughed in too fresh, though the quantity should be limited. Mr. Young records an experiment, in which herrings spread over a field, and ploughed in for wheat, produced so rank a crop, that it was entirely laid before harvest.

Bones are much used as manure in the neighbourhood of London. After being broken, and boiled for grease, they are sold to the farmer. The more divided they are, the more powerful their effects. The expense of grinding them in a mill would probably be repaid by the increase of their fertilizing power.

During the putrefaction of urine the greater part of the soluble animal matter that it contains is destroyed; it should consequently be used as fresh as possible; but if not mixed with solid matter, it should be diluted with water, as when pure it contains too large a quantity of animal matter to form a proper fluid nourishment for absorption by the roots of plants.

Putrid urine abounds in ammoniacal salts: and though less active than fresh urine, is a very powerful manure.

Night-soil, it is well known, is a very powerful manure, and very liable to decompose.

The disagreeable smell of night-soil may be destroyed by mixing it with quicklime; and if exposed to the atmosphere in their layers strewed over with quicklime in fine weather, it speedily dries and is easy pulverized.

Soot, which is principally formed from the combustion of pit-coal or coal, generally contains likewise substances derived from animal matters. This is a very powerful manure.

It is well fitted to be used in the dry state, thrown into the ground with the seed, and requires no preparation. Lime should never be applied with animal manures, unless they are too rich, or for the purpose of preventing noxious affluvia. It is injurious when mixed with any common dung, and tends to render the extractive matter insoluble.

The death and decay of animal substances tend to resolve organized forms into chemical constituents; and the pernicious affluvia disengaged in the process, seem to point out the propriety of burying them in the soil, where they are fitted to become the food of vegetables. The fermentations and putrefactions of organized substances in the free atmosphere, are noxious processes; beneath the surface of the ground they are salutary operations. In this case the food of plants is prepared where it can be used; and that which would offend the senses and injure the health, if exposed, is converted by gradual processes into forms of beauty and of usefulness; the fœtid gas is rendered a constituent of the aroma of the flower, and what might be poison, becomes nourishing to animal and to man.

From the National Journal.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.

"By skeleton shapes her sails are furl'd,
And the hand that steers is not of this world."
[*Moore.*

—— It was Saturday night—The ship was hanging on the breeze, with a broad and steady sail; and while the passengers were enjoying the freshness of the air, on the quarter deck, the crew were regaling themselves with the extra allowance of grog which the hebdomadal custom of the sea afforded them. It was the sailors' saturnalia.

I know you have often dwelt with delight on the descriptions which poets have given of the beauties of a tropic night—Nay, as you are a poet yourself, Ned, I am not sure but you may have attempted to furnish a stanza or two on the subject yourself, tho' you were never more than two degrees north or south of Washington in your life. How consequential these travellers are? you will say.—Well, well, as I am no poet, I shall not add another description to the ten thousands which have already been given, but simply affirm that this particular night might have served for the model of the best of them.

As the crew was large for a merchantman, they formed more than one group, each of them appearing to have its favourite songster or story-teller. But observing at length that the whole company were gradually closing round an old Triton, who was the very counterpart of the famous Long Tom, of the schooner Ariel, my curiosity induced me to edge towards the circle, in order to hear something of a discourse which seemed thus powerfully to attract such rude listeners.

Before I proceed with my story, let me mention, that among the steerage passengers was a man whose appearance had excited great attention, and who was the object of much speculation, particularly to your humble servant. You know I once thought myself deep read in the mysteries of Lavater, and could undertake at a glance, to distinguish the difference between fretfulness, uneasiness of mind, trouble, sorrow, great grief and so on; but of deep-settled, concentrated despair, I had no idea, until I saw this unfortunate being. It was absolutely frightful; and for a long time I could not pass him without shuddering—But becoming more accustomed to his appearance my feelings of horror gave place to those of pity, and I often felt disposed to attempt to draw from him the causes of that agony which had thus prematurely wrinkled his forehead, (for he did not appear to be more than 45,) sunk his eye, and which was evidently swiftly drying up the springs of life. But I was ever restrained by the conviction that his was a sorrow for which I, alas, had no balm. There could be nothing to offer him this side of the grave.

This man was now leaning against the mast, and as the yellow moon light played on his pale and haggard features, I could not but fancy, as by fits his brow was more violently contracted, or as a deeper flush overspread his face, that I could see the snakes in his bosom, striking their fangs with envenomed fury to his heart—his attention was evidently abstracted from the scene, though he was within hearing of the speakers.

'Did nobody,' said one of them, 'know who they were?'

'Why some said one thing, and some said another,' continued the spokesman, 'but Tom says they be a parcel of Dutchmen, who murdered some English out there in the Islands, somewhere, a monstrous long time ago. I think Tom said 'twas at Amboyna. I was close in with the place once, when I was aboard the Pepper-Corn.' 'And how come you didn't see her?' asked a lad who was gazing on the old sailor's face with the most intense curiosity.

'Why, it is a woderment to me,' returned the narrator, 'that I didn't, for we had some as big devils along as ever put foot on a ratlin; but, then, Tom says she never comes 'cepting for some great body, as has bin selling his soul for the counters to some tune. Howsomever, if you can get a plain man along, that's beat his father or mother, or killed his wife, or murder'd one of his children—'

A half-smothered groan though it escaped the notice of the sailors, turned my attention to the wretched stranger, and I heard him convulsively mutter, *'then she may come to-night.'*

'If so be I might speak my mind, Jimmy Sykes,' said a sailor, getting up—for he had been lying on the deck, with his hands under his head—'—— my eyes, but I don't think 'tis good to be talking of sich things.'

But this opinion was overruled by the almost unanimous voice of the company that the old seaman should proceed. This he did in an under and subdued tone, which added not a little to its effect on his hearers.

'Tom says, it was about eight bells, and there was'nt as much wind agoing as wou'd blow a feather from the topgallant-yard—not a breath aloft or below—and as 'twas as hot as cotton in the cabin, they brought the Great Lord I told you about, and sat him on the quarter deck. Tom was at the wheel at the time, but as the ship was as easy as if she had bin in a dry dock, he had nothing to do; and so he took a squint at what was agoing on.—Two of his fellows help'd him up the companion-way, and Tom says he give such groans as he would never wish to hear agin. Well, there he set, as long and as lank as a half starved snake—his face as yellow as an orange, and his legs about the shape of a capstan-bar. The ship had several passengers, and they crowded round, bowing and scraping and hoping he was better; and that he would soon be in Old England, to enjoy his honours and his riches—and sich like things. But Tom says he only shook his head and groaned; and so it went on, they jawing to him 'bout the good things that he was going to have, and he groaning and moaning like a grounded whale; till one of the boys, who was laying in the mizin-top cried out *'a sail close aboard on the weather bow!'* Well, to be sure, Tom says, it put a great surprise on 'em all, to think how she could get there; for there had'nt been a cap full of wind going for the last two days.—Howsomever, every body run forward, to look out; but never a thing could they see. With that the Captain, who was a main passionate old feller, swore, fore and aft, he'd make the lubber smart for giving a false alarm, and disturbing the passengers; whereby he catch'd hold of the lad, with one hand, and the rope's end with the other—but, before he could lay on, the boy fell on his knees, and swore, that as he hoped to be saved, he seen a large ship, with every thing set from the trucks to the deck, coming bows on, with a flowing sail.' But that would'nt have saved his bacon, if somebody had'nt called out from the quarter-deck—'Hold your hand, Captain, who knows but she is the Flying Dutchman.' No sooner he hear'n that, but the Captain's teeth began to chatter—he dropt the boy and the rope; and said, says he, 'if it is The Flying Dutchman, it's all up with us.' So with that, Tom says, the Great Lord ax'd what he meant by that. Whereby the Captain up and tells him, as how, if a man sells his soul to the Devil in foreign parts, for gold and sich like, its odds as hes going home with it, if the Devil don't come for his own in the Flying Dutchman; in particular, if so be there's been any blood shed gone to the bargain. The Great Lord gived a sort of a start; but he made light of it, and said 'he believed sailors were the d——st fools in the world.' 'Aye, aye,' interrupted a weather-beaten Tarpauling, 'them landsmen are the most unbelieving-est people agoing; but I ax pardon—go on.' 'The whole ship,' proceeded the sailor, 'Tom says was as mute as a mouse; for his part, he says his hair stood up like hog's bristles, and he felt himself in a cold sweat from head to foot—for the men glided about like ghosts, as the saying is; and if any body ventured to speak, 'twas only in a whisper. Not a thing could they see—but they knew the Flying Dutchman was close aboard--sometimes on one quarter, and then on the other. Some heard groans—some heard the sails flap against the masts; and all smelt brimstone so strong, they might easy guess who was keeping their company. Tom says, the gentry on the quarter deck at first wanted to cut their jokes about her—but one of 'em, the same that called out to the Captain, told so many stories about sich like things, that they began to be as quiet as the sailors, and presently the Great Lord's face began to get as white as a sheet; the flesh on his bones—what little there was—seem'd to quiver; his eye-balls looked for all the world as if they was agoing to dart out of his head, as he cried out, 'She comes! She comes!'

'Well, to be sure, the whole ship was throw'd into a most terrible combustion. The women passengers scream'd, and fainted like mad; the men look'd this way and that way—they could'nt help but look out, tho' they expected for sartin to see the Devil and his Imps. Tom says, he, for his part, could'nt get his glims off the Great Lord. For all he was so weak just before, that two of his lucky boys was obligated to bring him on deck, he started up as brisk as if he had never an ailment. Tom could'nt make out what he said; only, he says, he went on just for all the world as he seen a player feller once, clinching his fists, and thumping his head, and hallowing out about murder'd innocence, and dross, and vipers, and all kind of nonsense. Tom says, all the time he kept a saying, she came nearer and nearer; at last, he bellows out,—'Not for the universe'—not for ten thousand mines of gold—Oh, God! see how the paly fires gleam along the ropes—Hear how the rotten cordage creeks; how murkey how black, the mildew drops from the torn sails—Hah, preserve me, Heaven; how the port-holes open—Don't you see the Hell-flames, how they are raging within her foul and dreadful hulk!' Then, starting back, (Tom says 'twas awful,) he bawls out, 'Bring up my caskets—bring all my gold, my jewels—save not a diamond—Quick, quick, throw them over. Villains, make haste. The crew—the dreadful crew, I see them, I see them—see how they giber, and sign, and beckon, and laugh. Their boat is launched,' he cried,—'Tis here; oh! save me, save me—Where shall I hide? She is full of murdered Indians, deceived and ruined friends, abandoned children. By Heaven I will not—No, though I hide at the bottom of the ocean —' He run from place to place—seized first on one, then on another, begging them to hide him; and at last, screaming out that they were coming on board, he ran to the after-gangway, and jumped into the sea.

'The passengers did what they could to get out the boat, for the crew dars'nt lend any hand; but 'twas too late. Tom says, he heard him shriek once or twice, but he seed nothing, only the ripples which the splash he made, glancing, as they spread, far and far in the moon beam.'

'But the ship! the ship!' cried several voices at once.

'Not a soul aboard,' replied the old sailor, 'seen her, Tom says, 'cept the lad and the Great Lord.'

The silence of disappointment which followed the conclusion of the seaman's tale, was broken by the melancholy stranger. 'If,' said he the perpetrator of a crime, which earth and heaven abhors, can produce the appearance of that awful bark, your curiosity, simple men, shall be gratified. *This night you shall see her.'*

The effect which this assertion produced, on minds so much inclined to the marvellous, may be easily imagined; and the expectancy of some horrid scene might be traced in every sun-burnt face. For my own part, the voice was so hollow, so unearthly, & so every way thrilling, that had I not for so many weeks marked the incurable distress, the evident state of misery, where 'joy has no balm, and affliction no sting,' in this poor wretch, I should have thought it was only a well-acted piece of deception; and that Cooper himself could not have given the sentence more effect. But, alas, there was that in his eyes which cannot be counterfeited, the horrid glare of settled, black, and remediless despair.

"Young gentleman," said he, advancing towards me, with an air that illy accorded with his squalled and miserable appearance —'crush'd and whither'd as I am, I have not been altogether insensible to the commiseration expressed in your looks. *This night will end my sufferings here.* It has come on me in the fearful visions of the night; it has glared on me in the open blaze of day. Do not interrupt me,' said he, observing I was about to speak—"I have much to say, and my minutes are numbered. This spirit, which is now fainting within me, was once light and buoyant with the anticipation of all that life could give. These sunken, blood-shot eyes, once beamed with the expression of love and joy, and every gentle every noble feeling. This form, this wrecked, this ruined form, once gave delight and animation to many an ardent friend. Now, then, behold me!—Behold the victim of dissipation! Let the awful warning strike deep into your bosom, and then let the blasting sight be hid for ever—*Let it be consigned to those to whom I have sold it.* I was the happy husband of an adored wife"—He spoke so short and thick that I scarcely could hear or understand him—"I was the happy father of eight lovely children. I had every blessing sinful man could enjoy, but I did not know it. I left my happiness at *home*, and sought it where it was not to be found—*abroad.* My affairs were neglected, and went to ruin. The sad, the uncomplaining looks of my family, instead of awakening me to repentance and reform stung me to madness.—In moments of frenzy, I would start from their presence—return to them in a state which even now I cannot name, and then bitterly reproach them for the want of that affection of which my own misconduct deprived me. My eldest son"—

He had gradually approached one of the main shrouds, and, as he pronounced the last words, I saw him convulsively seize on them to prevent his falling—

"My eldest son," he repeated, "was an officer in the army, and had been absent for many months; he returned to witness the misery, the degradation, the ruin of his father, the bitter, the unavailing sorrows of his heart-broken mother. My poor family, long abandoned to hopeless despondency, had ceased to oppose even the most tender remonstances to my now ungoverned passions. My son had witnessed nothing of my changed disposition; for, previous to his departure, I had been the most affectionate of parents. He was not only my child, but my friend—my companion. Shocked beyond expression, with every feeling of his soul outraged by the first exhibition of my unkind treatment of his beloved mother, he frankly declared that he could not bear it, and that it must not be repeated. Worked up to frenzy by the consciousness of the degradation which he witnessed, the furies of hell seemed to rage in my breast, and in that moment of distracting madness, I struck to the earth—my son—my own once beloved, cherished, idolized son—*I murdered him!*"

The passengers, as well as the crew, had collected round the miserable man, and an undefined feeling of horror, which had been creeping over us all, was greatly augmented by this fearful confession. He witnessed its effect, and thus proceeded—

"Slight was the personal injury which the blow inflicted, but the shock, the dreadful shock, combined as it was with the heart-rending change he witnessed in his once happy home, overcame his mild, his affectionate nature—He sunk under it, his health rapidly declined; for from that hour he never held up his head. Yes—yes, he died—died in a month from that day; and I still live, or rather breathe—for, as there is a life beyond the grave, so there is a death this side of it.

You will suppose, that I sought to steep anew my senses in forgetfulness; but not so; —even that wretched resource was denied. I know not that I ever thought of it; the blackness of despair had seized me; and of earthly hope, of comfort, there was none. My wife soon followed her murdered son. See me, she could not; but she sent me her forgiveness. My children—hold, my brain, hold out a few moments, and then let welcome madness come—my children were taken by a relation; and thus I stood like the tree, on which the fire of heaven had fallen,—riven—stripped—and blasted—I lingered for days around the seat of my lost joys. I stalked along the alleys and walks in our little garden, where, arm in arm, I had so often wandered with a beloved and confiding wife;—it was a lovely season, about the middle of April; I watched the opening buds upon her favorite shrubs and trees, and in the gentle hum of the insects, or the soft swell of the breeze among their branches, I could hear the voices of those that were gone. The cherished flower-knots of my little girls, notwithstanding their neglect, were beginning to put forth their sweets and their beauties, and I remembered

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