EASTON GAZETTE.

WHERE THE PRESS IS FREE—"Literature well or ill-conducted, is the Great Engine by which all Popular States must ultimately be supported or overthrown RELIGION purifies the Heart and teaches us our Duty—Morality refines the Manners—Agriculture makes us Rich, and Politics provides for the enjoyment of all.

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AGRICULTURAL.

MANURE.

I am somewhat anxious concerning one branch of agriculture, viz; The manner of using manure. By what I can learn, it is a common practice with many farmers in our country, to haul out their manure in the fall of the year and drop it in one or more large heaps, for the purpose of moving it on to their broke-up ground in the spring—and many drop their manure in small heaps to spread just before ploughing in the next spring. From reason and experience, I am satisfied the better way is to spread the manure on the grassy ground in the fall. I aim to spread my manure early enough for the rains to wash the strength of it into the ground before the ground freezes up. I generally spread it as fast as I haul it, but am very careful to spread it before there comes a rain on it. I am not so fearful of losing the strength of manure in the air, as some of our agriculturists profest to be otherwise, I might be tempted to suppose that a considerable part of it was made in vain—if any manure was made in vain, it is that which people plough in something like a foot deep, in its full strength. This method may be comparable to a woman's making a kettle of hastypudding by boiling water, then stirring in her meal, then let it get cool, & then stirring in a common portion of salt, or some might think it would suit them better for her to hoist up her pudding and throw her salt under. Now I should not suppose this fresh pudding would be very palatable, neither should I think that if one was to descend low enough to come at some of this good salt, that a stately lump of it between his teeth would taste any better. Now is not the fault in the cook? The good woman had every ingredient, she should have dissolved her salt in the water, then the pudding would be seasoned, and would suit almost every one's taste.

I do not hold to burrying manure in its full strength, deep in the earth.

In the first place, it is obvious that manure in its natural state, or full strength produces no vegetation of consequence.

Secondly, when buried in the ground ten or twelve inches, it will remain nearly in an inert state.

Thirdly, at such a depth as it is often placed, it must be a very great rain to convey more moisture to it than it will retain.

Fourthly; if it should be drained, it will drain downward, and not up.

Fifthly: if the strength should all come out of it, the roots of corn or any other vegetables would receive but little nourishment from it, it being deeper than the warmth of the sun will reach to render it fertile.

Should any argue that they shall have the good of this manure another season—I should say it is a chance if some of it is not out of their reach. My method is, after spreading my manure in the fall, to plough my ground in the spring, turning in the manure under the furrows, which are about six inches deep, being richest at the bottom, will call down the roots of whatever is planted, deep enough to shield them from drought and not below the warmth of the sun. So that I esteem my method at least as much preferable to those before mentioned, as it would be, if I had a sum of money on hand, to let it out at interest in good hands for a season, instead of burying it, even if I must lose the value of one dollar in ten by rust. Also it is my opinion that an acre of ground may be ploughed six inches deep, with about two thirds of the cost that it can nine inches deep, and manured with two thirds the manure, and produce as good a crop.

A COMMON FARMER.

Worth Trying.—An experienced writer says that one bushel of flax-seed ground with eight bushels of oats, is better for horses than sixteen bushels of oats alone, and will effectually cure the botts. If this really be the case the mixture would be a much cheaper food for horses than oats by themselves, for, one bushel of flax seed would not generally, cost more than four bushels of oats, leaving a saving of four bushels in every sixteen. It is worth a trial.

GALLANTRY.—A sailor who had spent nearly all his days on the blue waters, and knew little of land gear, came ashore the other day, and in passing up street saw a little woman going along with a large muff before her. He stepped up very politely, and offered to carry it for her, as he was going the same way.

From the Gentleman's Magazine—Edited by William E. Burton, Esq.

NATIONAL HISTORY OF TEXAS.

WE have been surprised, while conversing about the affairs of Texas to find that few persons, even among the best informed, entertained a correct knownledge of the properties of this interesting country, or were more than partially acquainted with the particulars of its natural or political history; and yet, from its contiguity to the United States of America, Texas has received a larger share of our attention than any other province of the Mexican Republic. The great change that has lately taken place in its political institutions, and the immense tide of emigration that is daily flowing from every part of the Union to the banks of the Brazos, the Sabine, and the Colorado, has given the Americans an interest in the prosperity of the Texians, and created an anxiety to be familiar with every illustrative particular. We have therefore collected, from a variety of sources, a body of facts descriptive of the natural history of Texas, and beg to assure the reader that the strictest reliance may be placed upon their authenticity.

The extreme length of Texas is from one thousand to twelve hundred miles, and its average breadth three hundred and fifty miles: it is, therefore, a country about a third or perhaps a half larger than the island of Great Britain. Its extent of sea coast along the north and northwest shore of the Gulf, is about three hundred miles. One of the most striking features of its character is the number of rivers, great and small, which flow through it into the Gulf, and afford the means of extensive inland traffic by water. The principal rivers are the Brazos, Colorado, Trinidad, Guadulupe, Sabine, San Antonio, Rio de las Nueces, and Naches. The name of the Brazos (in the Spanish language, El Brazos de Dios—the arm of God) is figuratively significant of its character; it being placid and beneficent in repose—mighty and terrible in wrath. It affords the means of steamboat navigation for some hundreds of miles into the upper part of the province. As in the case of most of the other rivers, the Brazos empties itself into a large salt lake, or inlet of the sea, around which, to a vast extent, the land is charged with mineral salt, which may be gathered in abundance during the dry seasons. The river Trinidad, lying east from the Brazos, falls into a large salt-water lake or bay, called Galveston Bay, by which a good deal of commerce has hitherto been carried on with the upper country. The Nueces river bounds Texas on the west, separating it from the province of Coahuila. In Texas, the number of what are called second and third rate rivers is considerable, and among these we find the San Jacinta, which is navigable for thirty-five miles from Galveston Bay—the Navidad, a hundred miles in length, and also navigable for a part of its course—Buffalo Bayou; and some others of lesser importance.

A single glance at the map is sufficient to show the great advantages which Texas derives from its rivers and its local position. In an inland direction, its commerce may be extended many hundreds of miles, into the United States on the one side, and the Mexican States on the other. The intercourse along the shores of the Gulf is easy and safe. A day or two's sail will take you to the mouth of the Mississippi, and thence you may penetrate by water as far as Canada. At an additional day or two's sail from the Gulf, you have Vera Cruz, Havanna, and other West Indian markets. Nature would thus appear to have been prodigal in her favors to this finely situated territory, which may one day be the centre of a prodigious internal and external commerce.

All descriptions of the country coincide in stating its lower regions to be little else than a series of extensive flat plains or prairies, spread out as far as the eye can reach, and here and there interspersed with what is called a rolling country. The greater proportion of the land forms an immense inclined plane, the apex of which is the high land south of the Red River. From this summit, which is by no means high, the inclination is towards the south-east, and surprisingly uniform. The surface is beautifully undulating to within about sixty or seventy miles of the coast, where it becomes level. The whole tract is, without exception, free from marsh or lakes, even down to the inlets which skirt the coast. A geologist, on looking at the country, and examining its soil, would at once pronounce the level region to be alluvial; a mere collection of particles of earth washed down by the rivers from the great central districts of North America.

The appearance of the prairie lands is thus described by the author of the Visit to Texas:—"I was very much struck with the uniformity of the surface in the prairie, which I had often heard of so particularly, but never observed before. I had now run a mile or more over it, without meeting a single irregularity or obstacle, a stone, a pebble, a bush, or even a shrub. Scarcely a blade of grass seemed to rise above six inches in height. And thus this extensive plain, neglected by man, and tended only by the hand of nature, presented a surface as level as the most carefully rolled garden-walk, and was covered with a coat of green as uniform as smooth shaven lawn, or a vast sheet of a velvet. And this scene was not confined to a small vale or meadow, or bounded by a range of neighboring hills, but stretched off to a vast distance on almost every side, on the one hand seeming to melt into the Gulf of Mexico, and on the other to meet the horizon. There was nothing elevated or rough, for wild, to contrast with the flat surface of green; and after a few moments spent in contemplating the plain, finding it varied only by the distant groves which were seen towards the north, the mind feels a kind of surprise at finding that the senses are almost useless where there is so little to give them exercise. Such were some of my feelings at the first sight of a prairie." The same writer in travelling near Galveston Bay, remarks—"We had afterwards to pass over another beautiful prairie region, where our eyes were refreshed with the luxuriant scene presented on every side. The grass was nearly up to the horses' knees, and so thick and green, that it entirely concealed every trace of the black surface formed by the burning of the dry plants a few weeks preceding, and which was in some spots discernible when we passed this way before. In some places I observed patches covered with sensitive plants, and in others flowers were blooming in great variety, while we were usually the only living objects to be seen. We saw occasionally the fine cattle belonging to the farms, ranging over their extensive estates; but in the wide intervals between them, we seldom found any thing but the birds possessed of animal life. The cattle had already begun to show the effects of their improved pasturage, and were remarkably fat, sleek, and vigorous, ranging totally unrestrained over regions immensely disproportioned even to their great numbers, and grazing to their hearts content on herbage which grew tenfold faster than they could consume it. With my pocket compass to direct us, we now set off across the prairies, proceeding somewhat carelessly over the verdant and boundless lawn that spread before us, in some places apparently to the horizon. What acres, what miles, what leagues square of the most fertile land were now in sight without a human inhabitant!—And how easy would it be for a stranger to become bewildered in travelling over them! There was not a road to be traced, not even the slightest appearance of a path, or of a single footstep. If any passenger had taken that course before this season, the rank herbage had entirely obliterated every evidence of it. An unbroken surface of grass, intermingled here and there with beautiful flowers, extended on every side of us to a great distance: in some places bounded by a distant grove or range of trees, and in others stretched far between points and islands of woodland, till lost in the thickness of the air. These, however, were often shut out from the view by the thickness of the vapor, and there was nothing to vary the scene, more than is found in the midst of the ocean.

I had never been at all prepared for the indescribable beauty of a Texas prairie at this season of the year, which I now could not avoid admiring, even under such unpleasant circumstances. The wild flowers had greatly multiplied, so that they were often spread around us in the utmost profusion, and in wonderful variety. Some of those which are most cultivated in our northern gardens were here in full bloom and perfection, intermingled with many which I had never before seen, of different forms and colors. I should despair of giving my reader any adequate idea of the scenes which were thus so richly adorned, and through which we often passed for acres in extent, breaking for ourselves the only path perceptible on the whole prairie. Among the flowers were the largest and most delicate I had ever seen, with others the most gaudy. Among them were conspicious different species about six inches in diameter, presenting concentric zones of the brightest yellow, red and blue, in striking contrasts. In more than one instance, these fields of flowers were not only so gay and luxuriant as to seem like a vast garden richly stocked with the finest plants, and abandoned to a congenial soil, but extensive almost beyond limitation; for it was sometimes difficult to discover whether they stopped short of the horizon. It was singular also that patches were here and there overspread by mimosas, which, as our horses passed through them, drew up their leaves and dropped their branches whenever they were brushed by their feet; thus making a withered trace on the surface, which was but gradually obliterated as these timid plants regained their courage, raised their stems again, and expanded their withered leaves. The plants whose sensitiveness had thus been overcome, were rendered distinguishable to the eye from others, by the exposure they made of the lower side of their leaves when they folded them up; that side being of a much lighter hue than the upper. There was a phenomenon connected with this striking appearance, which I was at the time unable to account for, and could hardly credit: that was, the shrinking of the delicate plants a little in advance of us, before we had quite reached them. A friend who had witnessed the same thing, accounted for it by supposing that they received a shock through the long horizontal roots which connect them together.

Through these vast and splendid regions coursed occasionally a few deer.—We saw several herds of six or eight through the day, and some much larger. Most of them were accompanied by fawns, smooth red, and beautifully spotted, as innocent and frisky as young lambs, and like them keeping close to their dams wherever they went. We found in this case, as in others, that we might sometimes approach pretty near to them when we came against the wind, but they would scent us a considerable distance from the leeward, and bound far away. We also saw several small droves of wild mustangs as we travelled on, which betrayed greater interest or curiosity towards us. They would start off at their slow gallop with their long manes and tails flying, while their thick fetlocks and foretops gave them a wild untutored aspect; and sweeping off in a semicircle to the right or left, scour over half a mile or a mile of the prairie, and then stop to survey us until we again approached them. After repeating this manœuvre several times, they generally changed their course and disappeared.—These little horses, though not ill formed, are destitute of the peculiar beauty and elegance which are attributed to certain wild species of larger size. They are also not very swift, but yet are very valuable to the inhabitants, and will doubtless long prove so.

These regions present no obstacle to the traveller in any direction, except where they are crossed by streams; their soil is also generally rich, and often of almost incalculable fertility. No forests are to be cleared away; and yet in many places, there is sufficient wood for the limited necessities created by the climate. How many attractions does this splendid country appear at first sight to offer to a settler from our cold and northern states! No rocky and barren ledges to lie waste for ever, no steep acclivities to be tilled or to be climbed over: no provision to be made for the housing of cattle? no raising, cutting, curing, removing, stowing, or feeding out of winter fodder; not even the construction of hay stacks, much less the erection of barns or stables for crops and stock. How difficult it is to a northerner to bear in mind the reality, that all these great features of soil, climate, and rural life in his own country, are here to be dispensed with! He naturally inquires, 'What then can remain for the industrious man to do?' The whole business of raising cattle is of course reduced, as it was in the land of Canaan, to the simple operation of letting them take care of themselves, eat, drink, and fatten on the rich pastures and under the genial climate, until the owner chooses to claim tribute of their flesh, hide, and horns.'

The rolling lands of Texas are described as not less beautiful than the level praries, with their flowers and islands, or groups of trees. The author of the History of Texas, D. B. Edward, rises into enthusiasm in describing his sensations on first beholding the undulating plains between the Red River, (a boundary with the United States on the north) and the Trinidad. 'Now, reader, your relater is lost for words to describe the landscape after crossing the river Trinidad: as no language can convey to the mind any thing adequate to the emotions felt by the visiter, in ascending this vast irregularly regular slope of immense undulated plains, which expand before the eye in graceful rolls, affording from the summits of their gentle swells a boundless prospect of verdure—blending in the distance, to the utmost extent of vision, with the blue of the horizon. Few spectacles surpass it in beauty and magnificence.—The boundless expanse and profound repose of these immense plains, excite emotions of sublimity akin to those which arise from a contemplation of the ocean, in its display of undulatory movements. Yea, a more grand and stupendous silence even broods over these regions, where often neither sound nor sight, foreign to the scene, disturbs the contemplation of the passing traveller.

These rolling prairies are generally divided by a broad declivous vale, through which meanders, in sweeping curves, one of those brooks, creeks, or branches, which enter the Trinidad or Brazos, Colorado; on which, as they approach these rivers, there is more or less of timber, relieving the eye, in unison with those fine airy groves of every shape, with which the prairie mounds are studded. These rows of timber and picturesque groves are called islands, from the striking resemblance they present to small tracts of land surrounded by water. Nothing can be more natural than the comparison, as the praries often assume the appearance of a lake both in surface and color: and in the remoter parts, the hue melts into that of distant water. And it requires no very great effort of the imagination, especially in certain states of the weather, and changes of the light, to fancy that such is the reality of the scene. Yea, so much has nature contributed to the illusory appearance of these groves, that they often present all the beauty of art; for the trees are of nearly equal size, and grow near together, without underwood, and present outlines perfectly well defined, and often surprisingly regular, some appearing to form exact circles or ovals, while others are nearly square or oblong, with scarcely a single tree projecting beyond; so that it is found difficult to divest one's-self of the impression that much of the land had been lately cleared, and these were the remains of the forest. Taking this interesting part of the province in all its bearings, I doubt whether another could be found like it on the continent—from its one mile encircled prairie, to those of twenty miles in extent.'

Extensive vallies of alluvial soil are found among the mountain ranges in the upper country, particularly upon the water-courses; and the scenery in these hilly districts is at once wild, sublime, and beautiful. They are also considered to be the most healthful and free from the numerous insects which plague the lower regions in the hottest part of the year.

The various natural productions of Texas of course depend on the nature of the climate and soil. The climate of Texas is completely tropical in character, but greatly mitigated by the absence of swamps and thick matted woods, which render some hot countries intolerable during certain seasons of the year. The dryness and openness of the lands give purity to the atmosphere, and cause breezy draughts of wind from the sea, which temper the heats. When the breezes cease, which they do every afternoon, the air becomes hot and close, and consequently produces exceeding languor. The general average temperature is stated to be from seventy-three to eighty-three degrees, but it is often as high as one hundred and three. So powerful and continued a heat, acting on a soil unsurpassed in richness, naturally produces the most luxuriant vegetation. The grass grows so high, and thick, and so rapidly, after being cropped, that it is hardly possible to keep it down by placing any number of cattle upon it.—The number of wild flowers, roots, and shrubs, is very considerable. Among the flowers, we find roses of different varieties; the Mayflower, the wild pink, the red and yellow lilies, the jessamine, cowslip, golden rod, heart's-ease, hollyhock; among the roots, the angelica, the sarsaparilla, ginseng, beorice, mandrake, wild potato, ground nut, snakeroot, wild parsnip, onion, garlic, white and black hellebore; shrubs, several kinds of tea plants, and indigo; also the nopal or prickley-pear. This is the vegetable which is fed on by the insect which yields the cochineal dye, and here it grows to a height of ten or twelve feet. This plant produces an immense quantity of fruit, and furnishes food for vast herds of cattle and wild horses. The fruit is nutritious and choice, and on one occasion it saved a whole army from famine. It is found in inexhaustible abundance.

The woods of Texas are very scattered, and are remarkable for growing in patches and stripes of individual kinds. The live oak is one of the largest and most valuable trees. It grows to an enormous size, some trees measuring sixteen feet in circumference, and keeping this size more than thirty feet from the ground, before they spread out their enormous branches. Larger trees than this, however, are not uncommon; some of them measuring even twenty-one feet in circumference. Besides the live oak, there are the white-oak the red-oak, the fir and pine, the hickory, the walnut, the ash, the elm, the cypress, the linden, the hemlock, the yellow pine, the spruce pine, the locust, the muskit, the cotton-wood, the wild cherry, the pecan, the sycamore, the hackburry, the mulbury, and the buttonwood, besides many other kinds which might be mentioned; also, smaller trees or shrubs, as the laurel, the sumac, the juniper, the sassafras, the willow, the large elder, the dwarf elder, the poisonous elder, the shrub oak, the winter-green, the witch hazel, the myrtle wax-tree, the wild plum, the prickley-ash, the shin-wood, the spoon-wood, the mooseswood, the feverbush, the sweet fern, the rasberry, the wortleberry, the blackberry, the cranbarry, and the choakberry.

Canes or reeds grow to a large extent near the margins of rivers in Texas.—Tracts of this remarkable plant are called cane-brakes, and these are so singular in appearance that we shall quote a description of them. 'The main cane-brakes of the province are between the Brazos and the Colorado, on what is termed Cany Creek, or Bayou, which *never* overflows, and where the cane-brakes are from four to twelve miles in breadth, with but few trees to be seen among them through the whole length of this creek, seventy miles. These canes, or reeds, are known in the Northern States as fishing-rods, where they often sell at a high price. To pass through one of these cane-brakes, by one of those narrow paths commenced while they were young, and which is kept open through the year, by the frequent passing and repassing of men on horses, is a novelty seldom to be met with in any country but that of the lower Texas. Consider yourself entering one of these singular avenues, arched overhead, & with the view of the sky shut out, for the space of a mile or so, with an impenetrable wall of reeds on each side of you, to the height of twenty feet or more, and these reeds so slender, that, having no support directly over the path, they must droop a little inward; and so meet and intermingle their tops as to form a complete evergreen bower. The sight of a large tract covered with so rank a growth, of an annual plant, which rises to such a height decays, and is renewed every twelvemonth, affords a striking impression of the fertility of the soil.'

The fruits of Texas are the grape, mulberry, apple, plum, cherry, sweet gum, peach, butter nut, walnut, hazel-nut, pecan-nut, and many others. The grapes, for variety and delicacy, rival those of Italy and Portugal, and might be rendered equally advantageous in commerce. 'There cannot be the least doubt, (says our authority,) that the day is not far distant when there will be vineyards in Texas equal to any in Switzerland, France, or Italy, for the quality of their wines and fruits. Those products of industry will indeed be as easily attainable by the inhabitants, and almost as cheap, as the honey, which is at present, and will continue to be collected by the busy bee from myriads of flowers, and by them deposited in the bosom of every hollow tree; so that cutting down (for there is very little searching required) is all that is wanting, in order to procure that delicate and luscious repast! The wax thus obtained is not only valuable to the farmer, by hardening his beeve tallow candles, but as an article of commerce it commands a high price. It often happens, therefore, that the bee-hunters, at a distance from habitations, will throw away the honey and save only the wax. In addition to all these rewards of industry, through the instrumentality of wood, there is another, which has of late years drawn the attention of a number of American agriculturalists; to wit, the culture of the mulberry, a tree to be found very plentiful in Texas, and by means of which silk-worms might be reared to any extent.' The abundance of natural nuts is another feature in the productiveness of the country. 'Pecan-nut gathering is, and will continue as long as people continue to live in sea-coast cities, a source of no ordinary emolument to the Texas farmer—if not every year, at least every second year, as they fall then from the trees by handfuls, and are in general of a very superior quality indeed. These command a constant market, not only in seaports of the eastern and western coasts, but in those of Europe also; producing at an average to the first collector, from one to two dollars per bushel. So numerous are the native pecan-trees, in the upper parts of the country, that it requires nothing but their preservation to insure a continual emolument, independent of those the farmers plant around their dwellings, as one of the few ornaments which they could lopt, combining both pleasure and profit. It requires no uncommon exertion, for a family consisting of half a dozen children, say from the age of six years and upwards, to provide themselves during the space of six weeks in the fall, with a hundred and fifty bushels of that pleasant and valuable fruit, to say nothing of the walnuts, and the other marketable nuts of every kind, already spoken of.'

Both the climate and soil of Texas adapt it for the production of cotton, sugar from the cane, and coffee. As yet, little has been done to bring these valuable capabilities into operation; but so far as attempts have been made, they have been most successful. 'Sugar, coffee, and cotton (says Mr. Edward,) can be raised cheaper than in the United States, or in the West Indies, but owing to the civil troubles not enough is now raised for home consumption.' The author of the Visit to Texas thus speaks of the appearance of a cotton and cattle-ruining estate: —'The fine estate which we were to visit, presented a beautiful appearance as we approached it. A large part is appropriated to grazing, and left unenclosed, with the exception of a single tract, as a vast pasture-ground for the cattle of the owner. The enclosure, though it seemed to bear a small proportion to the whole estate, embraces not less than two hundred acres, and is secured by a substantial fence of twelve rails. It contains the garden, with a noble cotton field, which, the year before, had yielded a crop that sold for five thousand dollars. Even after it had been removed, one of our companions, who was from Alabama, declared there was still as good a crop on the ground as they commonly gathered in his own state. Beyond the enclosed ground lay the boundless prarie, varigated with its numerous islands of trees, and spotted with a scattered herd of six hundred cattle, all belonging to our host.—They all appeared well fed, active, and vigorous, and spend their lives through winter and summer in the open air. Of course, no housing is necessary in such a climate, and no provision of food for them is to be made, in a country where there is perpetual green.

The greater part of the Texian territory, having only lately emerged from a state of nature, still possesses a number of those wild animals which are found in almost all countries when first visited by civilized man. Bears, wolves, wild hogs, wild horses, and foxes, are occasionally seen; the cougar, or tiger, is only to be found in the most remote and higher parts of the country. The opossum and the raccoon are still somewhat troublesome to the goodwife of the house, who prides herself in the goodly number of her geese turkeys, and chickens. The inferior animals of the country are neither very numerous nor troublesome, and occasionally one may start through occadormouse, or perhaps at times see a skunk, a weazel, or a mink. As for rats