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By M. MACLEAN.

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AGRICULTURAL.

From the Southern Planter.

CULTURE OF SUGAR BEETS AND MANGEL WURTZEL.

A primary object with you, Mr. Editor, being to procure practical information for your readers, I take the liberty of sending you a northern agricultural paper, containing instructions for the "Culture of Sugar Beets and Mangel Wurtzel"—and, at the same time to suggest the expediency of referring to your files of northern and eastern agricultural journals, as a source of the most reliable information on the subject of root culture.

My own ignorance may mislead me—but I cannot and do not believe that there is one of your Virginia subscribers qualified by his own practical experience, to write upon this subject—unless, indeed, Mr. Corbin Warwick be of the number; his farm being the only one I have seen upon which a systematic course of root culture for stock feeding has been pursued for any length of time. I do not believe another farm can be found, which has yet afforded one bushel of roots per head, per winter, for the horned cattle upon it. But be this as it may—those of us who have no information to give, but, on the contrary, sorely feel the want of it—when we seek instruction from agricultural journals, require—not theoretical essays—not accounts of crops made and fed away by the firesides of gentlemen of leisure—but we want the results of actual experiments with various crops, and "all how and about it," so far as the contributors to agricultural journals have tried them.

For myself, I know it would be presumptuous to profess to give any thing original. Some gleanings, however, which I have picked up from the advice and experience of others, I will mention. I have cultivated the Ruta Baga turnip several years—the Mangel Wurtzel one year, and the Sugar Beet one—yet am by no means certain that crops of corn upon the same land would not have given more and better food, especially if ground in the cob. As to cultivation—following the published experience and practice of northern and eastern cultivators, I have always passed a roller over these crops immediately after sowing. The roller is also used after seeding out with clover and meadow grass, if the land be dry enough; and I think the practice a good one. The use of the coulter, especially in the culture of Ruta Baga, was recommended to me by a friend from the upper country, and has been successfully pursued ever since.

A means of protecting the turnip crop from the fly, by sprinkling tobacco trash over it, was suggested to me by one of my negroes (an old farm hand) some years ago, and another and a better one besides—to wit, Scot. And this reminds me of another piece of information probably [for I do not now remember] derived from the same humble source, which I have tried with equal success; pounded charcoal sprinkled over melon, cucumber, and other similar vines, when the dew is on, effectually protects them from the bug, which otherwise very often destroys them. All these things, however, are probably familiar to many of your readers, though they are new to me.

But, about the root crops. As every man is apt to form some opinion upon subjects of a practical character that arrest his attention, so, no doubt, many experienced farmers have formed opinions upon this; and for the general good, these opinions, especially where they have been tested by experiments, should be given to you.

It has occurred to me, [and I mention it only to elicit the opinions of practical men, not pretending to be one myself,] that where the system of agriculture, as in the Northern and Eastern States, is upon a smaller scale, and in many particulars necessarily different from ours, [the climate being so much less favorable than ours to the growth of Indian corn,] the field culture of roots may form an essential part of it. But here, in a corn, wheat, and tobacco growing country, where all the manure we can raise is required for those crops; where, among the corn, upon good land, we can raise large

supplies of cymilins for summer, and pumpkins for autumn and early winter feeding; it may be questionable whether Virginia farmers can well go farther in the root culture, than a good crop of Ruta Baga turnips, which keeps well through the winter, gives large returns, and requires cultivation at a season when it can most conveniently be afforded.

These, however, are only my own "notions," entitled, I freely admit, to very little consideration; but I shall be gratified if the expression of them has the effect of drawing out those who really are qualified to give their opinions and the results of their experiments through the Planter.

One word more. A writer in your last paper seems to think himself entitled to the reward of £20,000 offered by the British government for an antidote to the depredations of the turnip fly. I think my old man Dick has the better claim, and if there is to be competition for the prize, insist upon putting him in as competitor. Very respectfully,

A SUBSCRIBER.

The article to which we are referred by our correspondent, is the following, from the American Farmer:

As the culture of both these varieties of beets is precisely the same, we shall treat them both under one general head. And before we proceed to lay down our plan of treatment, we will say to our agricultural brethren, that if they consult their own interest, or give heed to the comfort of their milk cows, they will at once proceed to make arrangements for entering into the culture, though their first experiment may be made upon but a single acre. At three pounds to the acre, that quantity of ground will produce upwards of a thousand bushels, and when we say that we have seen beets, of either variety, weighing more than twenty pounds, we think we cannot be charged with exaggeration when we assume three lbs. as the average weight of an acreable product. With this brief introduction, we shall now proceed to give such directions as we believe will ensure a good crop.

Preparation of the Ground.

As soon as the ground is sufficiently dry for the purpose, it should be ploughed up with a strong team and heavy plough, as deep as possible. The ploughing completed, let the harrow reduce the clods by being passed over the ground lengthwise and cross-wise. The ground thus prepared should be permitted to remain until just before it is time for putting in the seed, when manure—well rooted is best—should be hauled on and evenly spread over the surface, at the rate of twenty double horse cartloads, say forty bushels each, to the acre. As spread, this manure should be ploughed in about three inches deep—As soon as this second ploughing is finished, the ground should be thoroughly harrowed to render the tith fine, after which the roller should be passed over it, when it will be in a condition for seeding, which operation should be performed as soon thereafter as possible, as it is all-important to put the seed into a fresh bed.

Time of Planting.

For a general crop, from the middle of April to the 20th of May, is the period when the seed should be sown, though good sized beets could be raised, in strong ground, at a much later period, say the last of May. We, however, recommend early planting.

Of the Soil.

The soil best adapted to the growth of beets, is a deep loam, or rich sand moderately dry.

Method of Planting.

If you have a drilling machine, (and if you have not one, we would advise you to get one,) all you will have to do is to put your seed in it, and after staking off your ground in rows two feet apart, to drill in your seed. But if you have no machine, then get a wide mouth bottle, or tin horn with the large end stopped, put your seed into one or the other, and after having a drill made an inch deep, go along the drill with your bottle, or horn, in hand, and drop the seed therefrom, about four inches apart, let a hand follow the dropper with a rake, and cover over the seed as dropped, reversing the rake and pressing down the furrow with its back.

In this way, two smart, active hands could put in an acre a day. With a machine four acres may be put in, in the same time with ease. The machine makes the furrow, drops the seed, covers them, and rolls the ground all at the same time. Mr. Page of this city has a drill which is highly recommended, a notice of which will be found in another column.

Preparation of the Seed, and quantity to the Acre.

Make a decoction of horse dung, in sufficient quantity to float the seed, into this put in the proportion of four ounces of saltpetre to each gallon. In this soak the seed from 24 to 48 hours, when they will be fit for drilling. As you take them out for that purpose, roll them in plaster; 2 lb. of seed to the acre is about the right quantity, though 1 lb. sowed with great care would answer.

After Culture.

After the beets come up and are three or four inches high, let careful hands go through them and thin them out, so as to

stand from eight to twelve inches apart in the rows. And as the beets generally come up double, one must be drawn out, otherwise they are liable to grow crooked, or lap over each other, and materially lessen the product. At the time this thinning is going on, the beets should have the ground stirred around them and between the rows, so as to loosen the earth, and cut up every vestige of weeds or grass.

If a small cultivator, 18 inches wide, were to be procured, to run between the rows, it would lessen the cost of culture wonderfully, as then the hoes would only have to stir the earth around and between the roots. The great object in cultivating these roots, is to keep the grass and weeds down until the leaves expand sufficiently to repress their growth. In a word, keep the earth loose and clean; but never hill. If the cultivator be passed three times through them, and the hoes weed between and around the roots that number of times effectually, the business of culture will be found to have been performed.

Pulling the Leaves.

Late in the summer, when pastures begin to decline, and afford but little succulent food to the milk cattle, the leaves of either of these beets will be found to furnish a most excellent resource, as they may be stripped of all their foliage except the crown leaves, without injury to the root, at least three times between that time and their being harvested. In stripping the leaves, they should be pinched off with the finger and thumb.

We have thus early called attention to this subject, in the hope that it may awaken a sufficient degree of enterprise to induce many to commence the culture, as we are certain that, if they but once make a beginning they will continue it.

EXPERIMENTS WITH BONE MANURE.

To the Editor of the Farmers' Register.

Parfraz county, Va., Dec. 10th, 1840. On reading the article headed "Extraaneous Manures," page 589, October number of the Farmers' Register, I am reminded of my promise to give you the results of my experiment with bone-dust, or more properly speaking, crushed bones, as a manure.

My first application of bone manure was on turnips, in 1833; the result, so far as relates to the first crop and the expense, is stated at page 152-3, vol. 7th of the Register. I have therefore only to add the results of two years' additional experience in the use and effect of bone manure in comparison with stable or other putrescent manures produced on a farm.

In order to ascertain, with as much precision as I could, the requisite quantity of bone per acre, as well as to be precise in its application and comparison with other manures, I laid off an acre of ground which I designed for turnips, and divided it into eighty-one equal parts by cross furrows at the proper distance. Upon two-thirds of the ground thus laid off, a good two-horse cart load of stable or farm yard manure was dropped in each square, which of course was manuring at the good rate of 81 loads per acre. To other parts of the ground, crushed bones from the Roxbury (Mass.) mills were applied at the rate of 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, and 81 bushels to the acre, pure as they came to me, without adulteration or admixture of any kind. On the residue of the acre, a compost, consisting of the summer scrapings of the cow yard, without straw or litter of any kind, with only 8 per cent. of bone, was applied at the rate of 13 loads, of 25 bushels each, per acre. The ground had previously been well ploughed early in the spring, and a dressing of good fresh lime had been applied on the first harrowing. The farm-yard manure was regularly distributed in as fast as spread; having previously, as well as every other part of the ground, received a good dressing of plaster of Paris. The bone manure and compost were harrowed in with a heavy two-horse harrow, and the ground so rested until the appearance of rain, the 8th of August, when, immediately preceding a shower, the seed was sown and well harrowed in. The rain which fell was not a soaking one, but a transient summer-shower, much of which ran off, especially from that portion of the ground to which the bone manure had been applied; the part manured from the farm-yard, presented a rather more uneven surface, one consequently more favorable for the reception and retention of rain, which fact was well established by an examination of the ground the next morning, when I found that the moisture had penetrated at least two inches deeper in the one case than in the other, and which circumstance gave to that portion of the ground manured from the farm-yard a very decided advantage over the bone manure for the first two weeks, or until ample rain supplied sufficient moisture. The ground upon which this experiment was made is high and dry, and was, at the time, exceedingly poor stiff clay land, upon which I had, in vain, two years in succession, tried to produce black-eyed peas.

The growth of turnips on such parts of the land as had received not less than 60 bushels of crushed bone, was quite equal in the end to the best growth when the farm-manure was used at the rate of 81 cart loads to the acre; whilst the growth on all smaller allowances of bone, was inferior, and most so where the least quantity was used. But on that portion of the ground which was dressed with the bone compost, as above stated, the growth throughout was decidedly superior to any other part, and the product, at maturity, was at least one-third more than was produced on an equal quantity of the ground manured from the stables. The succeeding year, 1839, the entire acre was planted with sugar beets, and every part treated precisely alike, viz.: the seed drilled and covered by hand with a light compost from baskets; the crop, owing to an unfavorable season and neglect of early weeding, was nothing extraordinary, though decidedly best where the bone manure had been applied. The beet crop was followed this year, (1840,) by Italian spring wheat. The growth of straw was most splendid, but like our winter sown wheat and rye, this season, was almost ruined by the rust; but in this, the third crop in two years from our manuring, the superiority of the bone manure was more apparent than ever, and as before, on that portion of the ground to which the compost was applied was greatly superior to every other part, and even on those parts of the ground where the smaller portions of bone had been applied, the straw was as heavy as it was on the ground which had received manure from the farm at the rate of 81 loads per acre. The wheat stubble was not grazed after harvest, and although the season was very dry, the volunteer red-clover and crab-grass, following a spring crop, was so rank as to make it exceedingly difficult to turn it under, with a first rate two-horse plough, with the usual appendage of a heavy chain! Thus affording incontestable proof of the, as yet, undiminished effect of the bone manure under most severe cropping.

Of the compost above described, I applied, at the rate of 100 bushels per acre, to a poor piece of newly mowed meadow, (in 1833;) the succeeding crop was more than doubled by the application; and the crop of the present year (1840) was still better than the last, and from the after-growth this year, I have little doubt of further and progressive improvement for several years to come, as the coarser particles of the bone are not yet entirely decomposed. A piece of wheat on which a like proportion of the bone compost was applied, and harrowed in with the seed, was greatly benefited by the application; and the clover which followed the wheat was 100 per cent. better than that on either side of the bone compost belt, which ran through the field, although the other parts of the field were similarly treated, excepting only the addition of not more than at the rate of 24 bushels of bone manure to the acre. The conclusions, then, to which my mind is brought by the foregoing experiments are,

First, That when applied at the rate of from 50 to 80 bushels per acre, on the exhausted lands of Virginia, one bushel of crushed bone is more than equal to one cart load of 25 bushels of good farm-yard manure, in its effect upon the first crop. Secondly, That the effect of bone manure is more durable than that of any putrescent manure usually produced on a farm. Thirdly, That when applied on land which is in good heart, the effect is much more powerful than it is on very poor land. Fourthly, That when combined with manure and applied in the form of compost, the effect, both instant and remote, far exceeds any other application of the components when separated with which I am acquainted or ever witnessed. And lastly, If stable manure has to be purchased or even hauled more than half a mile from your stables, bone manure at fifty cents per bushel, the price it cost me delivered on the farm, is the cheapest manure of the two. Yours,

THOMAS AP C. JONES.

PIG OIL AND WHALE OIL.

Two lamps of same size and pattern, were filled and trimmed precisely alike, one with lard oil, which cost 75 cents per gallon, and the other with sperm oil, which cost 87 1/2 cents per gallon. The lard oil burned out in seven hours; the sperm oil lasted eleven and a quarter hours.

CORNSTALK SUGAR.—We have received from Mr. Webb, of Wilmington, (Del.) whose experiments in making maize sugar have been so widely published, a sample of his sugar. It is of a very light color, and of delicious flavor, but of finer grain than the best New Orleans sugar, and not so well crystallized. A gentleman in this neighborhood intends to cultivate an acre of Indian corn for sugar this year, and he says he will convince the West that 1,000 pounds can be produced from an acre.—Louisville Journal.

REPORT OF THE POST MASTER GENERAL, POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, December 31, 1842.

To the President of the United States—

SIR: In presenting to your consideration a report of the condition and operations of the Post Office Department for the year preceding the 30th of June, 1842, it affords me pleasure to say its condition has been improved, and the service has been attended with more than ordinary success, whether considered in reference to the management of its financial concerns, or the regularity and extent of its operations.

A public service, which requires the agency of 13,733 postmasters and clerks, 2,343 contractors and their agents; covering, during the year, 34,835,991 miles of transportation, and extending almost to the door of every citizen, must encounter difficulties, and be subjected to occasional irregularities, not only from the neglect of some of its numerous agents, but from physical causes, not in the power of this Department to overcome.

When the vast machinery of the General Post Office, the minuteness of its details, and the character of the majority of the roads over which the mail is transported, are contemplated, there should be more of astonishment at the general regularity of the service, than of surprise and discontent at occasional failures. Absolute certainty and unbroken regularity in the arrival and departure of the mails, at all times, cannot and ought not to be expected. And it is with pleasure I bear testimony, on this occasion to the general zeal and fidelity of those employed in this branch of the public service.

The whole amount of mail transportation for the year ending June 30th, 1841, was 34,835,991 miles, at a contract cost of \$3,159,375. The whole amount of transportation for the year ending June 30th, 1842, was 34,835,991 miles, at a contract cost of \$3,087,796.

The amount of expenditure of the department, for the year ending June, 1842, was estimated, in my report of December last, at \$4,490,000. The revenue to be derived from postage, &c. in the same report, was estimated at \$4,380,000. The amount estimated for the expenditure did not include the sums due by the department prior to the 31st March, 1841.—Thus exhibiting a probable liability of \$110,000 beyond its estimated current receipts of that year.

During the expenditures within the income of the Department was a duty demanded at my hands by a regard for the observance of the principle upon which I desire to conduct the administration of the General Post Office, viz: that while the Department should not be regarded as a source of revenue to the Government, it must not become an annual charge upon the public treasury.

To effect this object, great labor and minute attention have been bestowed by all concerned.

A revision of post-roads and post-offices, necessary to a reduction of unprofitable routes, and the discontinuance of unproductive and useless post offices, and the substitution of others at more important points better suited to the public wants; the institution of a system for the preservation and safety of the public property, and the reduction of useless expenditures, was a task requiring no ordinary portion of labor and time, and its performance could not fail often to subject the head of the Department to censure and criticism from those who did not feel the necessity of the measures adopted. The effect has been salutary to the public service, as well in reference to its income, as to its usefulness and cost. I refer you to the reports of the 1st and 3d assistant postmasters general, which will give more in detail the effect which has been produced by the measures adopted.

Useless and unproductive routes have been discontinued; while others, more convenient, less expensive and more productive, have been substituted. In many instances, where the nature and size of the mail did not demand the higher grade of service, the less expensive modes of transportation have been employed. This may be more satisfactorily illustrated by a reference to the service in the North-western and Southeastern Districts, comprising the States of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana, and the territories of Wisconsin and Iowa, prior to the 1st July, 1842, and the service under the recent lettings.

The whole number of miles of mail service in these districts annually was 11,005,865, costing annually the sum of \$1,102,945 prior to the 1st July last.—The recent contracts require the transportation of the mail in each year, 11,424,128 miles, at a cost of \$957,769—thus giving in fact, 418,263 miles more of service, for \$144,277 less expense. And I do not hazard much when I assert that this saving has been made while the service itself has been, in the aggregate, greatly improved.

The heretofore heavy expenditure of mail bags and locks has been greatly reduced. Entertaining the opinion that by a proper system of preservation, and a just responsibility imposed upon public agents, the number of mail bags on hand was equal to the wants of the service, and

would be sufficient to meet its demands for several years, I have, in effect, ordered their manufacture to cease.

By the report of the third assistant, it will be seen that the expenditure for mail bags was, in the year 1837, \$56,702 28
In 1838, 38,737 36
In 1839, 36,082 46
In 1840, 35,337 23
From 1st April, 1841, to 1st April, 1842, the amount expended was but \$13,566-30.

From 1st April, 1842, to 1st Oct., 1842—6 months—\$7,640 59. A large proportion of which was for mail bags manufactured prior to 1841.

It is important, in every branch of the public service, to impress upon those in its employment the necessity of taking care of, and preserving the public property.—This is best done, by the adoption of an appropriate system, and holding to a just responsibility those charged with administrative duties; and, when they prove themselves faithless or negligent, to appoint others in their places.

The good effects of this rule are strictly illustrated, not only in the item of expenditure just enumerated, but they are manifested throughout the results of the entire year's service.

It will be seen, by reference to my report of December last, that the amount received from postage on letters and newspapers, and fines, for the year, commencing 1st July, 1840, and ending 30th June, 1841, was stated to be \$1,379,317 78.

The amount arising from the same sources for the year ending 30th June, 1842, is \$1,546,246 13. Thus showing an increase of the revenue of the Department, of \$166,928 35, over the revenue of the preceding year.

This increase has not been the result of an increase of mail matter, I am persuaded, but has arisen from a more systematic and vigilant execution of the law.

The gross expenditures of the Department for the year ending 30th June, 1842, so far as they have been audited and paid, are \$1,027,716 62—exceeding the amount derived from postage, during the same year, \$31,470 49.

It will be remembered that by the act approved the 9th September, 1841, there was appropriated, "to enable the Post Office Department to meet its engagements and pay its debts," the sum of \$482,657.

Of this sum there has been expended, during the last fiscal year, the sum of \$392,664 51, in satisfaction of demands against the Department, prior to the month of April, 1841. The report of the Chief Clerk upon this subject, No. 1, will exhibit more in detail the application of this fund.

There remained unexpended of this appropriation on 30th June, 1842, \$89,992-49, to meet such other demands as may be established to be due prior to 31st March, 1841.

The sum of \$392,664 51 constitutes no part of the \$4,546,246 13, given above as the revenue for the last year derivable from postage and fines. It does, however, constitute part of the \$4,927,716 62, the gross expenditure for that year, and, if deducted, will show the gross expenditure for ordinary current service, to be \$4,235,052 11.

This would present an apparent balance, or an excess of revenue, over expenditure of \$311,194 02.

As it is highly probable that there are yet claims unsatisfied, not having been presented for payment, and claims which were due prior to that time, and which, if presented, would have been audited and paid within the year, and which have been paid since 30th June, 1841, and consequently will be charged in the expenditures for the current year, it is not intended to convey the idea that this \$311,194 02 is a surplus on hand, but it is a fact from which I am authorized to state that the income of the Department has been equal to its current expenditures during the year ending in June; and it induces me to hope that, unless the burdens of the service shall be too greatly augmented by the additional rates created by the act of the last session of Congress, the Department will, in future, be enabled to sustain itself. I cannot anticipate, however, any great extension of the service, beyond its present limits and amount, unless Congress shall, in some mode, relieve the department from the heavy annual demands made upon its income by rail road transportation, and protect it by appropriate legislation, against the inroads upon it by private expresses and rival mail establishments.

It affords me great satisfaction to report to your Excellency, that every legal demand by the contractors, properly vouched, upon the Department, for services rendered since I have had the honor of superintending its operations, has been promptly paid.

Justice to contractors requires that, as soon as they have performed the service, they should be paid. To enable the Department to do this, punctuality on the part of postmasters in the payment of the balance due from them at the end of each quarter, is all important.

In every instance where there has been a failure on the part of such postmasters to meet the drafts of the General Post Office, I have felt it a duty not to be omitted to relieve such from the burden of official duty. The knowledge of the existence of this rule has banished default from the department.