

# THE CAROLINA FARMER

A WEEKLY

FOR THE FARM &

FINESIDE

FARMERS, WRITE FOR YOUR PAPER.

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The FARMER has a large and growing circulation among the best class of farmers and planters of the South, especially in the two Carolinas.

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Post Office Money Orders may be obtained in all the cities, and in many of the largest towns. We consider them perfectly safe, and the best means of remitting fifty dollars or less.

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## Agricultural.

### "The Old Paths" in Agriculture.

Virgil recommended both the ashes of volcanoes and those of wood with shells, in his celebrated essays before the Christian era. \* Perhaps the superior quality of the potatoes of Bermuda is due to the fact that these volcanic ashes are there used as a manure, especially as the same potato, when planted in our soil, produces the most inferior variety. Virgil was not acquainted with the composition of these manures, nor their relation to the ashes of the plants that depend upon them specially, as "soil, plant food." Tradition or experience has indicated the use of the same volcanic ashes in Bermuda, without a knowledge of their composition, under the name of Puzzolana, (evidently of Italian origin,) composed of soluble silicates like Pumice stone which Virgil used as manure 2,000 years since. The ashes of the potato indicates the use of more soluble silica than any other plant, to form its haulm or vine and the tuber yields ashes that are more soluble than any other plant. By a sort of intuition, more likely than by accident, or more probably by observing the spontaneous development of certain plants in relation to ashes, and the fact

that the pine tree naturally follows the oak, (which yields much more potash; leaving, however, a sufficiency to support the pine, the ashes of which yield only one per cent,) we ultimately arrive at the rationale, coal is substituted for wood and the cheapest natural supplies of potash are substituted for ashes, especially as the artificial supply fails and becomes relatively worthless on account of its bulk, uncertainty with regard to its purity advances with the price.

Bones although a comparatively soluble salt of lime, are now admitted to be worth twice as much when only one tenth of their weight is rendered soluble in water, whereas, sand is insoluble in the strongest acids, however finely powdered, nevertheless, it dissolves in pure water in proportion as it is associated with alkaline bases, and in this respect it is the same, whether we call it pumicestone, as Virgil did, or Puzzolana, or wood ashes, or green sand or Jersey marl.

The characteristic of all ashes, is silicic acid or common sand, that is more soluble than that which constitutes ninety per cent of the finest clay in proportion as it is intimately associated with potash or some alkaline base.

If Virgil's experience in agriculture upon soil abounding in potash rocks indicated the use of ashes as a manure, and the subsequent experience in Europe that the removal of faggots from the vineyards ruins the crops unless the ashes are restored, even among the primitive rocks, how much more do we risk in labor and the use of other expensive fertilizers on our alluvial soils, unless we systematically restore with clover its peculiar food as the most economical preparation for the cereal crops, especially as Dr. Voelcker has so abundantly demonstrated to the satisfaction of all the intelligent agricultural editors in America and England, that even the best "super-phosphates" fail utterly in producing clover on some soil unless potash manures are also applied.

I understand that one of the most successful growers of choice wheat on the E. Shore of Maryland, attributed his success on a poor soil to leached ashes, which at that time were abundant in Baltimore. Now coal is substituted for wood, and soda or "concentrated lye," is made directly from sea salt, the refuse of which is worthless as a manure except sea plants, upon the same principle that coal is concentrated wood and the "concentrated lye" substituted for both the ashes of wood and sea plants. So also, we may have a concentrated substitute for wood ashes, yielding not only seven fold more potash, but more soluble phosphates and silicates, which can be diluted to any extent on the farm with lime, and thus reduplicate its value and double the area within which it is now restricted by freightage and hauling. While farmers receive three dollars for wheat, or even half that amount, they might pay 50 per cent margin, on fertilizers over the cost of crude material, but now that wheat is 25 per cent. below the cost of its production even in our Western States, and much more on seaboard, every neighborhood will manufacture its fertilizers, and means must be provided, whereby this will be practicable. The only alternatives are a resort to the old system of Cato and Virgil which have been endorsed by more than two millenniums, using ashes or some their of cheap substitutes, and depend on clover as a source of ammonia as suggested by Dr. Voelcker, or on the other hand diminish the relative cost of packages, freight, &c., &c., by doubling the usual per cent. of the essential elements in all fertilizers, as it can be easily demonstrated that 36 per cent. of soluble phosphate of lime at \$100 per ton, is cheaper than ten per cent. at \$50 per ton, and that the latter may be made for half the price extemporaneously by the farmer.

DAVID STEWART, M. D.  
Port Penn, Delaware, January 28, 1870.

N. B.—The most economical application of the unslacked ashes of wood, is in combination with caustic lime slacked so as to preserve both in a fine dusty powder as follows: spread the quick lime six or eight inches thick, throw upon the centre

of the layer of lime one or more buckets of water, and when slacked then dump a barrel of ashes thereon—now heap up the quick lime adding a bucket full of water for every bushel. When cold preserve it in a sharp heap under cover or in barrels filling each by a shovel full from the centre and sides of the pile alternately, and allowing one bushel of ashes to each barrel of slacked lime. For the destruction of all fungi, and especially rust in Wheat, a top dressing for clover, grass, or corn one bushel of lime thus combined, is worth any 10 bushels as a manure, and may thus not only economize time but eke out the usual scanty supply of wood ashes on the farm and double its efficiency.—See Geory, 347-350 and 358—D. S., in Planter and Farmer.

### Wheat and Chess.

In the Chicago Advance of Jan. 27th, A. S. Fuller is represented as having said that "as a scientist he should say that it is impossible for wheat to turn into chess, but as the farmer he feels like saying that he does not know." So it seems that this mooted question is no nearer being settled now than it was 50 or more years ago.—Of a hundred persons asked to give their opinions, probably as many would say yes as no to it, but I much doubt, if any one of them could give a reason satisfactory even to his own mind, why he gives one answer rather than the other, while some, with the writer quoted above, would frankly say, "The thing is impossible," or, "We don't know." As for myself, I decline to—but no matter to what—that I will keep to myself, or leave it to be inferred, if it can be, from the following curious fact.

A friend of mine, in Champaign county, Illinois, while harvesting his wheat, found a single head with chess in it. It seemed as if the wheat had made an effort—to express it—to turn into chess, and had but partially succeeded. It was such an anomaly, that he took it to the house and laid it away for safe keeping. He may, or may not, have it yet. There is no mistake about the fact. To be certain that what I saw was actually so, I took the head into my hands,—for it seemed to me it could hardly be possible—and turned it round and round, till all doubt was removed by seeing again both wheat and chess in it.—Of the latter there were seven seeds and only seven by actual count, standing on small stems beyond the general level of the head.—W. C. B., Iroquois Co., Ill., in Western Rural.

### Ashes for Fruit Trees.

The Editor of *The Horticulturist* says: "We have known quite a number of instances—indeed, so often as to make it quite a rule—that old orchards apparently dying out have been brought back again to fruitfulness by the liberal use of wood-ashes, also stirring the soil. Potash is the most important element in the successful growth of all kinds of fruit trees. An old gentleman told a club, not long ago, that he had known a man to make and preserve an orchard of apple trees in a flourishing and productive condition, originally placed on very poor ground, by sprinkling every year around each tree, to the circumference of the extent of its branches, half a bushel of ashes. We consider this a very important item."

### Protecting Sheep from Dogs.

A correspondent of the Scientific American says that his father, a prominent sheep raiser, finding that the "bell wether" was never attacked by dogs, conceived the idea that the use of bells would tend to frighten away the murderous canines. Accordingly he furnished fifteen or twenty sheep of a flock of a hundred with globular bells, the size of an ordinary teacup. Having seen it practiced for several years successfully our correspondent is certain of its value.

In various parts of the country clubs are said to be forming to oppose the income tax and to defeat candidates for Congress who favor its continuance.

## Miscellaneous.

### BRICK POMEROY ON THE WAR IN THE VALLEY.

#### How Winchester Changed Hands Four Times in One Day—The Home of Mr. Mason, &c.

The following is an extract from "Brick" Pomero's letter from Winchester, showing how often and suddenly that town changed hands during the war:

"One day it would be in possession of the Northern troops. The next day these would be driven out, and the Southerners hold the place. One day there were lively times at Winchester. The Confederate flag had floated for several days, and was floating at 4 o'clock in the morning. With the early sunrise came long lines of armed men on horseback. There was a yell—a surprise—down came the red and white, and at 7 o'clock up went the red, white and blue. Northern soldiers quartered themselves here and there as if to remain. Soon there was to be seen a line of horsemen coming from the foot of the mountains away off to the southeast. And soon another line of humanity was seen advancing towards the place from the northeast. Very soon after there was a shock of contending armies, and those who were finding quarters and places to rest after the victory of the morning hastened out more rapidly than they came. At 10 o'clock the soldiers in blue had left and the soldiers in gray took their places. The red, white and blue came down from the flag-staff over yonder, and again the breeze kissed the red and the white, as it floated in triumph where all might see.

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon there was rallying, just back from where we are standing, a concentration of blue-clad men on foot and on horse. Then came a few thousand more Northern troops from the northwest. There was a yell, a charge, a fight, and away back to the waters of the Shenandoah were driven the Confederates. And down came the red and the white, and up went the national emblem, the flag of our country forever. Then there was rejoicing along the Northern lines. The wounded were cared for. Those who were hungry were taking food, and the victors thinking the war well-nigh over, when back to Winchester, like devils who had forgotten something, came the armies of gray which, but a few hours before had been flying to the east. They came as the waves come when navies are stranded; as the winds come when forest are rended. They came on foot and on horse—rough and rapid riding men, with that peculiar yell which Northern troops knew meant business. They came in this street, and they came up that—through gardens, over fences, through alleys, into and up streets, down streets, and across streets. Blood ran like water. Men who but an hour before were thinking of home, were lying all about here breathing their last. Back upon the hill where we stand, and back to the fields beyond, were again driven the troops from the North, leaving dead and dying in the streets of the place, and all about here. Then down came the stars and stripes, and up, with a yell and a shout, and a loud huzza of triumph, went the flag of the Confederacy, while the victors made ready for supper. And this was one day during the war at Winchester!

Eighty-seven times during the war did property change hands in this place. It was indeed the scene and in the track of contending armies. A few rods back of where we stand was a fort occupied by General Milroy, who, when he took possession thereof, gave it out as a public announcement that he should remain in possession here till hell froze over, the rebellion ended, and his army made rich from the plunder. One day the General wanted a place for headquarters, so he marched in upon the finest residence in the city. Thinking that to the victors belong the spoils, he boxed up the pianos, the books,

the pictures, the elegant bedsteads, chairs, sofas, and all the furniture he could lay his hands on, from gutter to cellar, and shipped the same to his home in the North or elsewhere, at the expense of the Government. It did not seem by this time that he intended to remain here till the pandemonium should become a skating-pond. Hardly had he dispatched the property thus confiscated to a distant home, when there came along a few regiments of gray. And, worst of all, they came in the night. Some of them crawled up behind, and reached the top of this little hill, just in front of us. A few more planted a battery with far-reaching guns on the spur of the mountains over to the left. A few more took quarters just behind the city, creeping up behind the fences, the houses, the hedges, and the trees, clear to the very pickets who were guarding Milroy, his fort, and his property. And then those who had taken these places remained very quiet—quiet as cats about to spring did they lie. Not a whisper—not a sound was heard. The fires and lights of the fort could be seen distinctly. Here and there a little fire marked where sentinels and pickets stood guarding those who slept, that they might not be surprised.

Up goes a rocket away up there to the right! A red, fiery, bursting rocket away up towards the clouds. In a minute by the watch up goes another from over beyond the town. And before the one high rising from the left hand died out, up went another from beyond that little hill just in front of us. So much for the accuracy of timekeepers, and the regularity of military movements when positions are to be taken.

And then there was a charge and a fight. The shells from those far reaching guns dropped down about the fort, into the fort, over it, and around it, bursting, and scattering death on all sides. And General Milroy went out before he expected to. He followed toward Harper's Ferry the pianos and furniture he had sent forward. And once more the gray coated battlers for their homes took possession of Winchester.

But the story of the fighting, the battles, and the changing of hands here would occupy page after page, so we will not endeavor to relate further. Just in front of us is a pile of bricks and stones thrown into a cellar; weeds growing here and there, marking the spot where once was the abode of wealth. This was "Selma," now a place of ruins. Looking down upon this pile of debris, rain-washed and storm-beaten, one would hardly imagine that but a few years ago here was the finest residence in this part of the country. That here stood a magnificent mansion where night after a night wealth and fashion did congregate; lamps illuminating parlor, drawing room, and library, as the wit, wealth, and worth of the place here assembled, enjoying themselves at whist parties, listening to music, or tripping their feet as do merry, light-hearted dancers.

You have all heard of Slidell and Mason, the Southern Senators, who went abroad during the early part of the war. Well, this is where Mason lived. When the Northern troops took possession and learned that this was Mason's house; that that was his ice-house; that his kitchen was just over there, and that his carriage-house was just over yonder, they made short work of "Selma." They entered into and took possession at once. What was worth stealing they stole. What was worth sending home they sent; and to take revenge upon Southern men they left not so much as one foot of wall upon the other. We found here a few old boots and old boot-soles, warped, twisted, and dried from exposure; pieces of glass, china ware, and a few necks and bottoms of champagne bottles; and kicking among the rubbish we found an old spoon, indicating, no matter who might have been here, Butler was not!

New York has an opium eater aged 104, who is in excellent health, goes to church regularly, and "can drink laudanum without feeling any ill effects."