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# THE ARATOR.



*Agriculture is the great art, which every Government ought to protect, every proprietor of lands to practice, and every inquirer into nature to improve.—JOHNSON.*

DEVOTED TO AGRICULTURE AND ITS KINDRED ARTS.

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## NORTH-CAROLINA ARATOR.

By THOS. J. LEMAY, Editor & Proprietor.

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For the Arator.

Mr. Editor: I am pleased with the suggestions of your correspondent "T." in the June number, on the subject of surface manuring and mulching or covering the surface with half rotted straw or litter. He has a just conception of the folly of scattering manure thinly, and leaving it on the surface to be wasted by the scorching sun and drenching rains, which will be the result unless put on an inch or two thick, so as to cover the earth deep enough to keep it moist and mellow. None of us can raise manure enough for this method. Our only plan of realizing the value of the limited quantities which we make, is to cover it with the plow. What is the reason our cowpens are poor unless the manure is turned under? and why is it so essential to the best effect of guano that it be put in pretty snugly beneath the surface? It is not pretended that other manures are as volatile and

wasteful as guano, but they all possess, more or less, the same fertilizing element, which is more gradually, but nevertheless with equal certainty, disengaged, and if there be no rootlet or soil to receive and appropriate its virtues, it takes its flight, like the ammonia of the guano, on the wings of the wind. The doctrine, that the moment manure is spread out, decomposition ceases, and with it the evolution of ammonia, may be theory, but it is not experience. These processes are thus unquestionably checked, but not arrested: The particles coming in contact with the moist earth, continue gradually to decay, and part from their ammonia, which, like sparks, is prone to fly upwards; imparting comparatively little benefit to the soil.

But this is not the case in mulching, or heavy surface covering with half rotted materials. This has a threefold beneficial effect: 1st. The thick mass of litter will retain sufficient moisture and stagnant air to cause it to rot and deposit its "residue of putrefaction" on the land, the dense covering on top fixing the ammonia as a part of that residue. "A Virginia Farmer," in the June number of the American Farmer ad-

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