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Circular: Patent Chemical Manures: Feeding Stuffs, Etc.



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Introduction Referring to Various Discussions, &c. On Manures, Integrity, Skill, and Capital - the True Elements of Success

James Rutherford

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SPRING CIRCULAR, 1864.

LAWES' MANURES.

FEEDING STUFFS, &c.

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22, EDEN-QUAY, DUBLIN.

IN attempting to put a few sentences together in the form of a Manure Circular, at the opening of another season, the thought—as a kind of preliminary inquiry—arises, can anything new or interesting be stated regarding an article so well known to have been most extensively used throughout the United Kingdom during the last twenty-three years? It is but stating a simple fact, which will hardly be questioned by any one in the trade, that notwithstanding greatly-increased competition, every year shows a steady increase in the demand for LAWES' Manures. From various statistical returns, the total annual consumption of Phosphatic Manures is now tolerably well known, and the proportion which Mr. LAWES turns out yearly from his Factories places him not only ahead of all competitors in point of extent, but gives him a very large per-centage of the sum total. Nor will this appear so startling, when the reader is informed that Agencies are established, through which LAWES' Manures are supplied to almost every county in Ireland, England, and Scotland. Many facts could be mentioned to show how fairly this

enviable position has been attained. The Manure with which Mr. LAWES' name has been so long identified, has never changed its name, character, or composition; it has passed through every legitimate test, whether analytical or practical, with increased reputation, and a stronger hold on the public confidence. *Quack advertisements, cooked experiments, and the testimonial mania* have been alike studiously avoided; nor on its behalf has there ever been an effort made to influence the columns of Agricultural Journals, which, when so influenced, by whom or for whomsoever, instead of being reliable sources of instruction and information, and the independent organs of public opinion, are corrupt, and not to be depended on, even when publishing opinions honestly expressed.

Year after year LAWES' Manure has been placed in the hands of several of the leading Chemists of the day, the samples for analysis being always taken by the Chemists themselves, and from a bulk of several thousand tons. Every analysis thus made has been published, and has invariably shown that the Manure is perfectly uniform in quality—that it contains a high per-centage of those constituents which give value to a phosphatic manure, and (what is of very great importance to the farmer), that the condition of these constituents has always been found to be such as renders them most readily available as food for the growing plant.

The Analyses for 1864, by Professors APJOHN and CAMERON, of Dublin, will be found at page 6; and comparing these with Reports and Analyses by the same gentlemen for the two previous years (see p. 7), the reader will find confirmatory evidence of the accuracy of the foregoing remarks.

Under the auspices of different Agricultural Societies, extraordinary discussions on the subject of artificial manures have taken place during the past year, especially in England and Scotland, and it is at least questionable how far either agricultural interests or the progress of scientific investigation have been promoted by the apparent partizanship and violently conflicting opinions of Chemists regarding particular manures, on the one hand; or the unscrupulous tenacity with which an indefensible and anomalous position is maintained by certain manure vendors on the other hand. No wonder if the farmer, amid the misty productions periodically poured forth—sometimes chemical, sometimes editorial, and sometimes mercantile—finds it hard to discover anything that will clearly indicate the safe path, and finally takes refuge in the wholesome conclusion, that he may be safer in basing his practice in the selection and application of manures, on the correctly-ascertained results of his own matured experience.

So far as the Press is concerned, in connexion with the subject of manures, if our agricultural mediums wish to retain the respect and confidence of both buyer and seller, opinions expressed, and advice tendered, should be based alone upon practical experience and a thorough knowledge of the subject, not upon pecuniary advantage accruing from the profits of trading in any particular article of commerce. Suppose the case of a farmer in the provinces inquiring of a public officer, appointed in the metropolis for the purpose of giving information, as to the most approved construction of cart and harness, and discovering after acting on the information received, that though the public official had no pecuniary interest in the sale of the harness, he had a handsome commission on the price paid for the cart; the farmer may or may not be satisfied with his investment, but in either case, has he not reasonable grounds for concluding that the officer referred to is not a proper authority in such a case, and that even with the best intentions, his interested position is incompatible with that perfect impartiality which the public are entitled to receive at his hands. But further, should it happen that the said officer is interested in the profits of some periodical, through the columns of which the carts referred to are thereby unduly puffed, to the detriment of other honest traders, who make equally good implements, his position is still more anomalous and his motives more liable to suspicion; nor has he any reason to be surprised, if he finds himself denounced by every member of the craft, and by no inconsiderable portion of the general public.

The leaders of various political parties in the State, may, by different means and apparently opposite courses, be alike instrumental in successfully legislating for the promotion of the public weal, and evidence of political honesty and sincerity should protect their different lines of policy from being condemned, or their motives impugned; but there is nothing analogous in the case of, nor can the same beneficial results ever flow from the course pursued by, the manufacturers and agents connected with certain Manures, which, if not largely used, are at least extensively puffed in the present day; and the arrogant assumptions, as well as the position claimed by such parties, on behalf of their particular nostrum, can only expose them to the keenest criticism and severest censure of such of their competitors as wish to be fairly dealt by, and to the well founded suspicions of the Agricultural Community whom they wish to become their patrons.

Integrity, Skill, and Capital,—these are the great elements of success in every branch of trade, and exceptions but serve to

prove the rule. Firms of long experience and established reputation, will no doubt command public confidence and patronage, far beyond that accorded to younger aspirants of perhaps equal merit, but with a few such exceptional circumstances, so far at least as the manufacture of manures is concerned, there is nothing in the nature of things which can possibly give to any one article the pre-eminence unwarrantably attributed to some; no monopoly exists as regards any of the various ingredients employed; the sources whence these ingredients can be best procured are well enough known to all in the trade; there is nothing very mysterious in the mode of apportioning the constituents of a chemical manure, so as to produce a certain agricultural value and analytical result; a particular mode of preparation is not now, as at one period, protected by patent, in the hands of a single manufacturer: it therefore follows, that if there exist on the part of manufacturers that Integrity which ever points to honesty as the best policy; that Skill which ensures the process of manufacture being completed without risk of failure as to the desired result, and the Capital which enables its possessor to buy and sell on the most favourable terms; we have that desirable combination which will not only command success both for principals and agents, but will be greatly conducive to the advancement of Agriculture, which, apart from all mere trading interests, is of such vast importance to the country at large; and there would be a comparative absence of those unseemly bickerings which have been of late so common on both sides of the Channel.

The Manure Manufacturer or Agent, whose special business it is to push the sales of the article with which his name is identified, while he may be daily questioned as to its character and value, occupies but slender footing, and merits little confidence, if he can only effect his purpose by, either negatively professing ignorance of—or positively, possessing only the knowledge which seems to warrant him in deprecating—all other competitors, many of whom it may be safely assumed, continue as in time past, to serve the public faithfully and well. A discreet and earnest advocacy on behalf of one's own goods is in no way incompatible with the respect which each owes to his neighbour, and though sometimes success is achieved by pursuing a less commendable course, yet as a rule, it is otherwise, nor need it be further enforced, that this is but in keeping with the indestructible principles of right and wrong.

It is much to be regretted that in connexion with the trade, there should exist circumstances fitted to call forth these somewhat critical observations; the circumstances referred to are every where the subject of discussion and remark, and need not therefore be more particularly alluded to.