

to induce your honorable body to take steps for the proper inspection of an article varied in its composition, and valuable or otherwise according to the quantity of the several constituents upon which that value depends. The quantity of these constituents, moreover, the seller as a general rule does not know, and the purchaser cannot find out.

In the present article I shall avail myself of all the information which I can derive from reliable sources, being desirous of throwing as much light as possible on this interesting subject. I with great pleasure here make my acknowledgments to the celebrated Dr. Ure, F. R. S., of London, to whose pamphlet I have had access through the kindness of a friend, and to Prof. Way, Chemist, of the Royal Agricultural Society, who has published a very able and elaborate paper on the composition and money value of different specimens of guano, in the 10th volume of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society. I refer to this paper with the more pleasure as it confirms all the material points urged by me in my last report, and confirms, also, the necessity for the action which I then urged on your honorable body.

Guano has within the last few years, instead of being a mere object of scientific curiosity, become a great object of commercial enterprise, and of great interest to the agricultural community. Guano in the original language of Peru signifies dung, a word spelt by the Spaniards, huano. It has been employed in Peru from the remotest ages and given fertility to the barren sands along its coast. Hence the Peruvian proverb—"Huano, though no Saint, works many miracles." Severe penal laws protected the birds which deposited this manure during the government of the native Incas. Death was the penalty for landing on the Guano islands when the birds were breeding, and the same punishment was inflicted on those who might kill one at any time. Overseers were appointed to particular districts to see fair play in the distribution of this precious manure.

Baron Von Humboldt thus speaks of it in 1804: "The guano is deposited in layers of 50 or 60 feet thick upon the granite of many of the South Sea islands off the coast of Peru. During 300 years, the coast birds have deposited guano only a few lines in thickness. This shows how great must have been the numbers of birds and how long the time necessary to form the present beds. The strata have undergone many changes according to the length of time they have been deposited. *Here and there they are covered with silicious sand** and have thus been protected from the influence of the weather, but in other places they have lain open to the influence of the air, light and water, which have produced important changes upon them."

* How does this agree with the oft repeated statements of interested individuals who say it is all alike?