

to pay for common air-slaked lime and sand, at the same rate as he pays for gypsum.

I must not be understood as charging the traders in this article with adulterating it. No such thing is necessary to my purpose. A great difference exists in the rock from which the gypsum is ground; and if there was none, still it is possible for it to be adulterated, and the State should take the same precaution to guard its citizens from loss from this source, as it does in other articles of which the people at large are good judges, frequently as good judges as the inspector himself. As the gypsum, (sulphate of lime,) is that which every one seeks to buy when purchasing a thing under that name, the State should so order its inspection, that each barrel should show how much of this substance was in it, so that its price might thereby be regulated. No reasonable seller should object to such regulations; and every buyer ought to insist upon them. By them, the owner of a good article would get the value of his good commodity, and he who wished to buy, would not be deceived in the purchase of that which might be of little worth. While it would deprive the seller of no right, it would give great benefits to the buyer. The seller would get the value of his article,—the buyer the worth of his money. The fact is familiar to all who use plaster, that it acts much more favorably in some years than others. This has been attributed exclusively to the seasons, but very often the difference is owing to a difference in the article used.

The smallest per cent. of gypsum in specimens which I have examined, was 51.40; the highest was 96.60 per cent., a difference of more than eighty per cent. If full one-half of that sold was of an average quality, a fair way of judging, then a large per cent. of the money spent for gypsum is thrown away.

Since my last Report I have seen frequent advertisements of dealers in this article stating that their stock had been selected by careful analyses. This being done has undoubtedly given the purchaser a better article than ever before sold. The inspection should show this to be the fact. Their great importance demands serious consideration.

I have examined many specimens of plaster during the past year, and find the average of it to be about ten per cent. better than that examined in previous years. This alone saves to the state more than *it pays* for the maintenance of the office which I hold. The stricter the scrutiny into it, the better will be the article sold.

The necessity of legislative action on the inspection of guano and plaster is sufficiently manifest from the facts which I have given.