

borhood, and the growing weakness of the Dakotas, were probably the causes which led them to discontinue their fortifications.

§ 9. FARMS AND FARMING.—From the base of the prairie-terrace described in § 2, the bottom lands of the Missouri extend to the east and to the west, up and down the river. In the neighborhood of the village, they are covered partly with forest-trees, willows, and low brush, but chiefly with the little fields or gardens of these tribes.

Five years ago, all the land cultivated around the village consisted of little patches, irregular in form and of various sizes, which were cleared out among the willows. The patches were sometimes separated from one another by trifling willow-fences; but the boundaries were more commonly made by leaving the weeds and willows uncult, or small strips of ground uncultivated, between the fields. Every woman in the village capable of working had her own piece of ground, which she cultivated with a hoe; but some of the more enterprising paid the traders in buffalo-robcs to plow their land. They raised the plants which nearly all the agricultural tribes of the temperate regions cultivated at the time of the discovery of America—corn, squashes, beans, and tobacco. They also improved the growth of the wild sunflower, the seeds of which they eat. Their system of tillage was rude. They knew nothing of the value of manuring the soil, changing the seed, or alternating the crops. Perhaps they had little need of such knowledge; for when the soil was worn out, they abandoned it; and there was no stint of land in the wilderness. Sometimes, after a few years of rest, they would resume the cultivation of a worn field that was quite near the village, for proximity lent some value to the land; but they had no regular system of fallowing. They often planted a dozen grains of corn or more to the hill, and did not hoe very thoroughly.

. Within the last few years, there has been an improvement in their farming. The bottom to the west of the village is still divided up and cultivated in the old way; but the bottom to the east and a part of the upland have been broken up by the Indian agency, fenced, and converted into a large field. A