

THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE LOWER PROVINCE,
 CONSIDERED.
 WITH A VIEW TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF A BETTER SYSTEM.

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To this chief cause of the exhausted state of the lands, may we not add, that, during the above period, a great proportion of the argil, aceous or clayey parts, of the soil, has been washed off by the rains? A certain proportion of clay is also absolutely requisite, to form soils of the first quality; but clay is held in partial solution by water, whilst sand, the other constituent of the soils, is not, and, in the long course of *two hundred years*, a great proportion of the clays of the cultivated uplands, must have been taken up, and carried off by the rains; and this is a *second cause* of their gradual deterioration.

In the lower parts of the Parish of St. Foy's wheat is, (in some Seasons,) produced in three to four times more quantity than on the lands above, in this Parish, tho' both should be equally well manured. The lands above bearing a greater proportion of sand, the rains are not well retained by them, but pass thro'. It is not so with well clayed lands: clay is known to retain moisture, and to absorb it from the atmosphere, in nigh double the proportion that sand does, as has been proved by the very accurate, and fine experiments of Professor Leslie. And it is confirmed by the superior yield of all lands, having a sufficient proportion of clay in their composition, and it has been proved, according to an experienced French Chemist, that the best proportions of a fertile earth for corn, are three eights of clay, two eights of sand, and three eights of the fragments of hard stone.

These, then, appear to be the leading causes of the lands of the Province having fallen off so greatly from their original powers of production, and became defective of those they might be made to attain.

First, the wearing them out by continual corn crops without being sufficiently manured by the past and present practice of leaving them *en friche*.

Secondly, by a deficiency in extirpating the weeds from the lands, and, in not sowing that quantity of seed which, were they properly nourished these lands would bring to maturity.

Thirdly, either an original defect exists in regard to the due proportion of clay in the lands below Quebec, and about twenty leagues above it. This deficiency has grown, by the best of the soil being washed away by the rains, at least off the highest lands. It is of no consequence, which of these causes occasions this deficiency; it is clear that it exists, and any mode that could be devised for restoring this *important* ingredient of the best soils, would render a very *important* service to most of this Province,