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AGRICULTURAL READING AND THE DIFFUSION OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION.

THE disinclination which is so generally manifested by our Farmers to avail themselves of the means of information within their reach, is one of the greatest impediments to the progress of agriculture in the Provinces. Improvements must be based upon science, and amelioration cannot take place advantageously, unless Farmers understand the principles of agriculture as well as the practices in it. This knowledge can only be acquired by reading, or hearing the researches and experiments of philosophical agriculturists and practical husbandmen. Other countries have reaped a rich harvest from the scientific labours of eminent men, and the names of Davy, Leibig, and a host of others, will descend through successive generations, and will be held in grateful remembrance by every intelligent agricultural enquirer. The generality of our Farmers have yet to learn that agriculture is a science, that the process of vegetation is regulated by laws and promoted by agents, which when known by husbandmen to the extent of the present discoveries in them, would give not only an increased interest in cultivating the soil, but an increased return for the labour upon it. Agricultural chemists have made most important discoveries in this science; and although it cannot be presumed that every farmer can comprehend the technical language in which those discoveries are described, nevertheless all can be benefited by the results of them—as for example: the practical farmer finds by experience that some soils cannot be rendered productive even by the most

copious supplies of manure; he spreads it bountifully over his land—tills the soil—sows his seed, waits the appointed time, and reaps disappointment; he is ignorant of the cause of it. The philosophical agriculturist can explain the difficulty—he has ascertained that the fertility of soils is dependent upon the presence of certain salts in them, and that when these have been exhausted by continued croppings, or when they were not originally present in them, manures, although they may have been abundantly employed, yet if they did not restore, or give these salts to the soil, would fail to render it productive. A farmer, speaking of manures, recently observed that his crop of wheat was a failure, although from the rank luxuriance of the blade in the early part of the season he anticipated a great return—he was unable to account for its failure: Agricultural chemistry has detected the cause: the soil contained silicate of potash, and the other principles requisite for the growth of the straw, but it was deficient in the phosphate of lime, the principle requisite for the production of the grain. Experience after many failures and trials may ultimately discover that some manures are superior to others on such soils, but science can direct the practical farmer to an immediate corrective, namely, to those manures which contain the phosphate of lime, and bone dust is one of the most powerful of them. Not long since a very respectable farmer observed that he had experienced most decided benefit from the use of fish as a manure, and that he had reaped a very abundant crop of wheat from the soil over which it had been spread—the old gentle-