

illustration by a plainer and more direct road : for the mechanic arts have been as sluggish in their progress as the ornamental ; and among those none has taken a longer period in growing up to maturity than that of agriculture. Though it sprang up in the very infancy of civilization, and has been more or less cultivated in every age and country, it is still very far from perfection ; and in it there are questions of great moment, both speculative and practical, which have not been, and which perhaps cannot in the present condition of human knowledge, be satisfactorily solved.

Tillage and cultivation have not only had to surmount the obstacles which are common to all the other pursuits of life, but they are encompassed with extraordinary difficulties, and are kept back and checked by some peculiar causes of retardation. Thus, if any remarkable discovery were to take place in architecture, in shipbuilding, in steam navigation, in road making, or in any of the common manufactures, these in a short time would diffuse themselves over the world, and be adopted by all nations ; but very different hitherto has been the reception given to the real improvements which have originated in husbandry. Here prejudices of a most unyielding temper are arrayed against the progress of melioration ; and nothing has been found more impracticable than to change or abolish any practices which have once taken root in a country. Husbandmen of all others are tenacious of what has been transmitted by their forefathers. The methods of cropping—the structure of the implements—the species of the cattle—which have come down to them impressed with the seal of antiquity, are regarded with a sort of sacred reverence ; and it has always been an extremely hard task to clear the way for any innovation. This adherence to existing forms has rendered the inventions of one country not easily transferable to another, and has caused, in different States, almost as wide a dissimilarity in the systems of agriculture, as in the plans and maxims of government. Hence the Roman plough, which had but one handle and no mould board, and which on these accounts was faulty in the construction, maintained its ground from the origin of the republic till the final extinction of the empire in the middle of the fifteenth century—a period of nearly two thousand two hundred years. And since too the introduction of summer fallow into Scotland was of no earlier date than the reign of Queen Anne, although it had long before existed in the South of Britain, in the