

Dr. Robb's Dissertation, that I have left myself but brief space for what is the essential part of it. I must not, however, dismiss it thus abruptly; and I have, therefore, to entreat your patience for a few minutes more, while I shortly review the remarks of the learned Doctor on "Agriculture considered as an Art."

Agriculture, or the best method of rendering land productive, is unquestionably of the highest importance to the happiness, and even the very existence, of the human race. You have heard it said, that "the man who makes two blades of grass or two stalks of corn to grow where only one grew before, is a public benefactor." And the saying is well founded. He adds to the comfort and diminishes the sufferings of millions of his fellow men.

There is no doubt that the first attempts to cultivate the soil would be of a very rude and inartificial kind. A very slight stirring up of the surface, by the help of implements clumsy in form and inconvenient in use, was all that would be attempted. And where the soil was of average productiveness, and the population scanty, this, for a time, would be all that was required. But even the richest virgin soils would, in the course of time, and by continual cropping, become exhausted. One of two things, therefore, became indispensable;—either to break up new lands, or to restore the productive powers of the old. The former would, for some time, be adopted; but as this would not always be practicable, the latter would be forced upon men as a matter of necessity. It would soon be observed that certain substances increased the fertility of land, and thus nature's own voice would direct them to employ these and similar substances, when needful. Chemistry, by showing the constituent parts of plants, and the food by which they were nourished, greatly increased the number, and improved the quality, of manures. To that of the farm yard, accordingly, have been added lime, marl, crushed bones; and, more recently, oceans have been traversed to convey the fertilizing guano, to nourish the grain and roots that are required to feed the swarming millions, in the more northern regions of our globe.