

highly developed agriculturally than any country of modern Europe up to twenty-five years ago. Peru and Mexico were agriculturally in a better condition, with more enlightened laws relating to agriculture before the days of Pizarro and Cortez, than they are now, though Mexico, under the present administration, is making wonderful progress. Coming closer home, there are thousands of farms in the New England states which are practically abandoned through depleted fertility of soil.

We have no great reason to be proud of our treatment of the soil in modern countries. We have never approached the economic wisdom of the biblical law which governed the Jews in their treatment of the land. Not long since I read that, in the time of the Incas, the breeding of the birds which produced guano, off the coast of South America, was strictly protected by law, while modern civilization has permitted the supply of this most valuable fertilizer to be seriously diminished by ruthless exploitation.

On the whole, the most successful efforts to preserve the fertility of their soils under the pressure of a great population have been made by China and Japan, countries which we are disposed to think can teach us nothing, but have everything to learn from us. As a matter of fact, China and Japan alone go the whole possible length in avoiding the waste of fertilizers and restoring to the soil everything that is taken from it. Speaking generally, and leaving Japan out of consideration in the words of a recent authority, "wherever in this world there is "a large population dependent for its livelihood upon soil which has "been cultivated for upwards of two centuries, there is extreme and "depressing poverty."

We are, in the practice of our best agriculturists, more fully abreast of the most advanced nations in agriculture than we are in the treatment of any other branch of natural resources, but our advanced agriculturists are far too few in number. The development of scientific agriculture is now being promoted among us by a large number of institutions supported by public and private funds. Experimental farms and agricultural colleges are rendering services of the highest value. The application of agricultural chemistry affords a vast field for constructive effort. In connection with these institutions such men as Dr. J. W. Robertson and Dr. W. Saunders, Director of Experimental Farms, have done a work the importance of which it is impossible to over-estimate.

Is there, therefore, nothing for us to do in this department? On the contrary, speak for a few minutes with any minister administering