

OUR TABLE.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMISTRY—BY JUSTUS LIEBIG—
TRANSLATED BY DR. LYON PLAYFAIR.

THE vast importance of the subject upon which this book is written, has secured for it the attention of the intelligent and enlightened inhabitants of England and America. The theories it propounds have been experimentally tested, with such results as to prove the thorough knowledge possessed by the author of the subject he has undertaken to elucidate. But not only have experiments hitherto untried proved the Professor's knowledge of his subject—it is now evident that he has clearly illustrated, accounted for, and explained many agricultural processes which have hitherto been conducted merely by imitation, or as an empiric administers his potions, without a knowledge of the reason why certain results will follow.

The better class of agriculturists in England—the observant, reflecting, and intelligent farmers—occupy almost universally the same ground with Mr. Liebig. True, they have reached it by very different paths; but the goals at which they aimed were precisely the same. And the theorist has not only explained what the experiments of the farmer had already shown, but he has also afforded him that knowledge of the operating causes, which alone can guide him with any degree of certainty, in their practical application, and guard against the probabilities of failure. The truth of the observation, “that every discovery, legitimately inferred, from observed facts, will sooner or later be found to coincide with the best practice, and to explain it,” is thus rendered evident.

Agriculture, in many parts of Canada, has hitherto been conducted in an unworkmanlike and unprofitable manner. It is only within a few years, and in the neighbourhood of towns, that the value of manures has begun to be understood. There are thousands throughout the country, at the present day, who have in their farm-yards mines of wealth, which have year after year been accumulating, and left to lose their substance by exposure to every species of weather—the extremes of heat and cold—without a single regret on the part of their owners. There is little wonder that the crops are in many instances too small to remunerate the workmen for the labour expended on them. It will always be so until the farmer applies the knowledge daily laid before him, (and which he ought to acquire,) to the cultivation of his fields, determined to do his best to deserve the mercies with which a bountiful Providence is able and willing to supply him, *if he will only adopt the means.*

Liebig's Agricultural Chemistry, to the enquiring Agriculturist, will be of eminent service. It would have been better for common every day use had the terms been more generally simplified, few of the uninitiated having a very perfect knowledge of the technicalities made use of by chemists in describing the ingredients of which the different varieties of soil are composed. To remedy this, however, a glossary is appended to some of the editions, and the really anxious and sincere enquirer will not be daunted by any trifling difficulty in the way of acquiring knowledge so essential to his prosperity.

THE LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME—BY THOMAS
BABINGTON MACAULAY.

THIS distinguished scholar has produced a new work under that title. Mr. Macaulay assumes that the lost ballad poetry of Rome was transformed into history by chroniclers, for want of more authentic materials. That this might happen at Rome, he asserts, for something very like it has happened in several countries, and among others, in our own. Hume's History exhibits proofs of the practice. He cited William of Malmesbury, as his authority for two tales introduced into his history, but he neglected to remark that William of Malmesbury gave distinct notice, that they rested on no better authority than that of ballads. It is certain, says Macaulay, that the oldest annals of the Commonwealth of Rome were compiled more than a century and a half after the destruction of the records, and these were entirely destroyed by the Gauls more than three hundred and sixty years after the date ordinarily assigned for the foundation of the city. Ballads, then, it would seem, were the source, and the only source, from which was drawn the history of Rome for a period of five hundred years. As the lost ballad poetry of Rome was transformed into history, Mr. Macaulay's present attempt has been to reverse the process, and transform some portions of early Roman history back into the poetry out of which they were made. He presents us, accordingly with the “Lays of Ancient Rome.” It is to be regretted that so refined a scholar as Macaulay, likewise a poet and philosopher, should ever have left the garden of literature to follow the game of politics. If his object be fame, to be remembered when the present generation and many succeeding generations shall have passed away, he should not relax his hold of literature. Politics may give a man power, but they seldom or never transmit a name of purity. We hope Macaulay has abandoned the game of politics for ever. His powerful intellect and delightful pen should be confined to those subjects which they are so well calculated to adorn.