

experience and practice, *as derived from experienced and practical men themselves*, and not as given by those who profess to speak for them. That which has been done by a practical man, can best be explained by him in his own words and in his own language; the statements of many practical men can best be simplified and reduced to value by one having a familiar acquaintance with their mode of thought and expression; a wide field must be carefully examined before we can lay down special rules; the testimony of many men being competent to give testimony, in various places and at different times, must all be collected and compared before the most correct practice can be determined and decreed. That which is true of tradition or transmitted testimony, whether oral, by means of medals, manuscripts or any other kind of evidence, save that of revelation, is true as to the value of the lessons taught by experience. The same principles must be taught at all times, in all places, and by all men, otherwise they cannot be taken as a rule of action and of right, as directions to be followed or practice to be recommended.

The true theory of Agriculture then must depend upon a knowledge of the nature of crops grown for the wants of men; of the substances which enter into their composition; the sources whence obtained, the modifying circumstances to which they are subject by human art; the nature of the soil as to its mechanical and physical as well as its chemical composition.

These being known, then the testimony of practical men must be obtained, and from them must be learned the results of their observation; and then, and not till then, can a general and universal, and at the same time a local and special system be recommended.

To carry out these views, I shall therefore proceed to give, in the first place, a description of all the substances found in our crops, specifying those obtained from the air, those from the earth, and those common to both, and afterwards the nature of the soils as to their mechanical and chemical composition; the nature and composition of various manures or fertilizers, the best mode and proper places for their application, as furnished by the testimony of observant practical men, and a knowledge of the several properties of each as far as these have been ascertained.

I deem this of more consequence at the present time, as I have received very many applications for my former Reports, each containing only *a part* of the above matter; advertisements have appeared in the papers for them, and numerous applications have been made to me in person. But there is another and a strong reason: there has lately appeared a Report from a high source, commending itself to public belief by reason of the place from whence it emanates, containing so many errors on the subject