

It is true that science was cultivated during what is usually styled the dark ages, but it was confined mainly to the cloister and to very few of the laity. The treatises of the learned in those times were written in Latin, and even the papers of the Royal Society of England were written and published in that language until a recent period, and of course inaccessible to the mass of the people.

The savants of former days appeared to study science for the sake of science, but the practical tendencies of the present age demand their aid for the purpose of advancing the various branches of industry now pursued.

Agriculture, (without which all other arts would fail for want of food and raiment for the people,) has required and received the aid of science to a great extent, and must continue to be benefited thereby so long as agriculture shall be necessary to man.

We have sometimes been told that the farmer requires little knowledge more than a common school education; that he has only to learn how to plant, sow and gather his crops, sell the surplus.

An unenlightened farmer may, it is true, raise crops, but he cannot compete successfully with a neighbor well versed in principles of science so constantly brought into play in agricultural affairs, although he may be more successful in saving his gains.

Whilst expressing these views, I cannot do better than to quote from the London Agricultural Magazine of Nov. 1859, the following remarks of Mr. J. J. Mechi, the well-known English farmer. Mr. M. was a successful London merchant, accustomed to making his business *pay*, and from what we read of him, continues to practice the same remunerative system as a farmer. Speaking of the advantages of correct knowledge for the farmer, he says:

“To dissipate error and become converted to truth, it is necessary to know the causes that produce certain effects either for good or evil. My own mind has been greatly enlightened, my convictions strengthened and my doubts removed by much agricultural reading, and by a slight knowledge of agricultural chemistry.” (He then, after giving a list of his agricultural books, adds,)

“I consider Liebig the Sir Isaac Newton of agricultural chemistry and progression. There is no greater barrier to agricultural advancement than want of knowledge and its natural overweening self-sufficiency.”

If this be correct teaching to the English farmer, who is usually the tenant of the wealthy land owner, how much more applicable to the agriculturalist of Maryland, who in most cases owns the soil he cultivates, and which he desires to transmit unimpaired to his children.