

AGRICULTURE

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Agriculture by William Somerville

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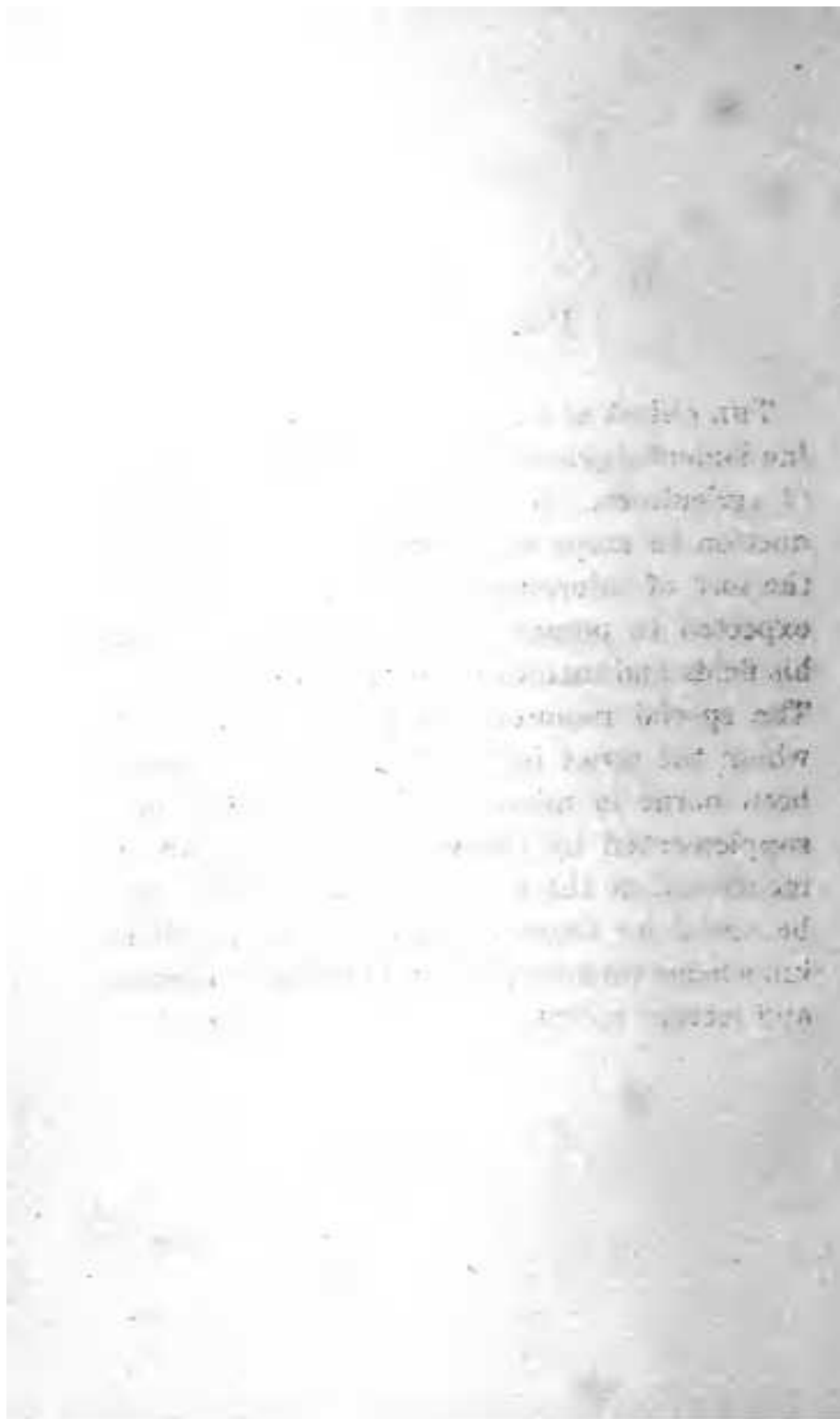
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PREFACE

THE object of this volume is to discuss the fundamental principles underlying the practice of agriculture. It is, in the main, an introduction to crops and cropping, and contains the sort of information that a farmer may be expected to possess who aims at cultivating his fields and manuring his crops intelligently. The special requirements of the readers for whom the series is intended have constantly been borne in mind; and it is hoped that, supplemented by the selection of the works mentioned at the end, the little volume may be useful for those who have to gather their knowledge without much aid from laboratories and lecture rooms.

W. S.



CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I THE FORMATION OF SOIL	9
II THE PROPERTIES OF SOIL	24
III THE MAIN TYPES OF SOIL	47
IV AMELIORATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF LAND .	73
V THE PRINCIPLES OF MANURING. THE NITRO- GENOUS MANURES	99
VI PHOSPHATIC, NITROGENOUS-PHOSPHATIC, AND POTASSIC MANURES	125
VII THE EFFECTIVE USE OF ARTIFICIAL MANURES	161
VIII FARMYARD MANURE	173
IX ROTATION OF CROPS	188
X SEED	219
BIBLIOGRAPHY	252
INDEX	254

— Europa? 10	1
— Amerika 11	11
— Japan 12	12
— Afrika 13	13
— Australien 14	14
— Südamerika 15	15
— Ozeanien 16	16
— Asien 17	17
— Nordamerika 18	18
— Südamerika 19	19
— Ozeanien 20	20
— Asien 21	21
— Nordamerika 22	22
— Südamerika 23	23
— Ozeanien 24	24
— Asien 25	25
— Nordamerika 26	26
— Südamerika 27	27
— Ozeanien 28	28
— Asien 29	29
— Nordamerika 30	30
— Südamerika 31	31
— Ozeanien 32	32

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CHAPTER I

THE FORMATION OF SOIL

IN approaching the study of agriculture one finds that the subject naturally arranges itself in a certain order, which can perhaps best be traced by working backwards. Live stock presuppose crops, and these imply considerations of tillage, tending, and harvesting. Before, however, a crop is sowed or planted, a farmer has given consideration to seed, manures, and the sequence of crops. Then, again, in many cases land cannot be cropped till it has undergone an ameliorative process, such as liming or draining; and finally we get back to the soil itself, with its varied properties and complex origin.

Beginning, therefore, with the soil, and working up to the crop, we may first of all look at what soil is and how it has been formed.