The beginnings of the art of agronomy were probably coincident with the beginnings of the human race. The science of agronomy, however, is comparatively young and has made a wonderfully rapid growth in the last two decades. This is especially true with reference to the number of men officially concerned in it, as was most clearly shown by Mr. M. A. Carleton in his able presidential address at the meeting of this Society two years ago. The recent rapid development of the science and corresponding increase in the number of workers has had a profound influence on the terminology of agronomy. The definition and limitation of the terms used has been more largely a matter of individual interpretation and preference than is usually the case. As a natural result there exists more or less laxity in use and confusion in meaning of many agronomic terms. Similar conditions exist in other recently expanded subjects, as ecology and serum-therapy, and perhaps in aeronautics also.

Confusion in the use of technical terms in agronomy has arisen from two specific sources. First, the science is expanding so rapidly that old terms have been stretched to cover new or broadened uses. Second, new words and phrases have made their appearance in our agronomic literature from time to time, often without other definition than that afforded by their context. From their very nature, the dictionaries cannot keep abreast of this movement and there has been no general or authoritative textbook to serve either as a guide in approved usage or as the proverbial "horrible example" to be avoided. Agronomists have been too busy conducting experiments and recording results in the language at hand to give thought to a clearing house for these verbal obligations.

It was the original intention of the writer to discuss both the terminology and the nomenclature of agronomy. By terminology is meant the whole gamut of technical words like "crops," "fertility," "tillage," etc., used in this science. Nomenclature is understood to include the names, both scientific and popular, which are applied to plant and soil types. This last may well form the subject of a separate paper. For the present we are concerned only with the terminology of our science.

I sincerely hope that no one will think that I approach this subject in any pharasaic spirit. Far from it! Rather would I, if I speak of