

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON FARMERS' CLUB.

To the Editor of the Canadian Agriculturist :

Sir,—I enclose you a report of the proceedings of the Township of Hamilton Farmers' Club (prepared for the Cobourg *Star*) on the important subject of Agricultural Education. Though I would be very glad to see a school or institution established, connected with an Experimental farm, (a model farm would be of very little use,) for the education of farmers, as such an institution, however, could only be available to our wealthier farmers,—and as the great body of farmers must always depend on our common schools, I think every endeavor ought to be made to engraft agriculture permanently into them, and make it part and parcel of our excellent common school system. Let the first principles of practical Agriculture and Agricultural chemistry be taught therein. The great point is to get started, to prepare competent teachers, and provide proper Books and apparatus, and to demonstrate experimentally the practicability of the thing. I hope the day will soon arrive when every school will have the necessary apparatus, and every teacher of youth will know, and be able to teach, something of the important sciences of Agriculture and chemistry.

WALTER RIDDELL,

Cobourg April 9, 1853.

Secretary.

At a meeting of the Township of Hamilton Farmer's Club, held at McIntosh's Inn, Cold Springs, on Saturday, March 26th, 1853. In the absence of both the President and Vice President, Mr. David Sidey was called to the Chair.

PRESENT.—Messrs. A. J. Burnham, Masson, Sidey, Forsyth, Newton, Steel, Roddick, W. Eagleson, M. Eagleson, Watt, Weir, Sleep, Bourn, Ainslie, Black, Johnston, Ball, McIntosh, Richards, Campbell, Richardson, Sutherland, Griggs, Wade, and a number of others.

The minutes of last meeting were read, and Mr. J. Wade read the following Essay on Agricultural education.

At no age of the world has the subject of education engrossed the attention of the community more than the present. All classes of men from the Prince to the Peasant, are alive to the grand principle that the instruction and training of the rising generation, is the most valued legacy that the present race can confer upon the future. Still, while all agree on the necessity of education, much difference of opinion prevails in the way of its accomplishment.

I have no intention of meddling with that part of the controversy, of how the matter is to be put in practice; whether by endowments in the shape of public grants; free schools supported by taxation on property, or on the voluntary princi-

ple, that is, the Teacher depending on his qualifications to obtain the support of such Parents as choose to employ him.

My intention at present is simply to speak of the different descriptions of education, the varied classes of society require. The school education of the present day, is almost wholly mental or intellectual, and while it may be very well adapted to some classes of society, something more is required for others. For instance, while the professional man and the merchant require little more than a continuation of the intellectual training pursued at school to fit them to play their part, the farmer and mechanic must have their physical or muscular power trained in addition to the mental, and this physical education is not simply confined to the operations of manual skill, but extends to the training of the muscular powers to sustain the necessary amount of endurance required of them.

We observe in the perfect and beautiful arrangement of our great Creator, the adaption of mankind to fill the varied operations allotted to each to perform; and are often struck with wonder, when we see what an active mind can accomplish, when properly trained and directed; and also what is accomplished by the physical powers in the various mechanical and agricultural processes, and this ought most certainly to stimulate and encourage us to perform the part allotted to us, under the system a wise Providence has ordained.

A prejudice existed, and does still in a measure exist in the minds of the old school of farmers, that a high order of education was not necessary for a farmer of his class; that to be able to read, write, and keep his accounts was all that the farmer required to learn at school; and this feeling has been encouraged by the fact, that the great bulk of our successful agriculturists, so far as property making is concerned, are of that stamp, and if nothing more was required of him than to add farm to farm, and accumulate wealth in any other way this would be well enough.

But before a want is sought to be supplied, that want must be felt; and before any desire will be attained, it must have presented itself in an attitude sufficiently imperative to demand its accomplishment; and the principal cause of the desire of education amongst the farmers and mechanics has arisen from seeing themselves superceded in the race of life by the educated class, and having to submit even the representation of their own peculiar interests to men, not before themselves either in circumstances or in intellect, but simply from being possessed of that mental training imperatively necessary at this age of the world, to command even the chance of being attended to; and, although, it may be mortifying to acknowledge such a state of things to be the case; yet it is quite necessary to feel it before anything will be done to remedy the evil, and nothing but the feeling of being obliged to submit the representation of the peculiar interests of the agricultural classes, to men of other classes, will surmount the prejudices of the old school farmer against a high education, and pave the way to some system adapted to his peculiar wants.