

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL ADDRESS.

At the annual meeting of the Association, held at Grimsby, in the county of Lincoln, on the 28th and 29th of September, 1887, the president, Alex. McD. Allan, Esq., of Goderich, delivered the following address :

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MEMBERS OF THE ONTARIO FRUIT GROWERS' ASSOCIATION :—
Probably no point in this Province could have been so appropriately chosen for our annual gathering as this beautiful village of Grimsby, embedded in the midst of the fruit Eden of Ontario.

A few amongst us, whose heads have grown hoary under a weight of years, can look back to the early days when this great Niagara district, as well as the rest of our Province, was largely a forest, broken only by occasional small clearings and rough roadways leading to small villages of seldom more than a dozen cottages each. Society, as understood now-a-days, had no place in our country then, and yet these old pioneers assure us that those were among their happiest days. Along with the hardest of daily toil they held converse with nature and all her charms. Neighbours were dear to each other, they consulted together in everything ; their feelings and interests were the same ; a universal friendship prevailed.

" There *is* a pleasure in the pathless woods,
" There *is* a rapture by the lonely shore,
" There is society where none intrudes,
" By the deep sea, and music in its roar—
" We love not man the less, but nature more
" In these our interviews."

And yet now-a-days we frequently hear of those whose great desire is to leave the farm and seek the town or city in quest of so-called society. The question is often asked, " Why do young men leave the farm ?" Looking at this question from a horticultural standpoint, I am satisfied that, amongst other replies, it may be answered that early training has much to do with it. If boys were trained to give a reason for every piece of work done ; to know something of the science of tilling the soil, the " whys " and " wherefores " of everything connected with agriculture and horticulture, and above all, to create in the youthful mind a desire to search more deeply into nature and its great works, we would hear less of this desire to keep aloof from the industry of agriculture. Interest each child in some plant or flower, and as he or she grows older that interest will grow, and the desire will become keener to search more deeply into nature's great fields. There is nothing that will make so marked an impression for good, for tender, refined feeling in our children as to lead them into a study of the works of our great Creator in the forest as well as the fruitful fields, orchards and gardens. These early lessons are remembered through life, for the interest is kindled in school days when habits are forming. The school house as well as the school yard should contain a sort of