

### Montreal Mercantile Library Association.

We have read with some interest the Annual Report of this Association, which occupied two full columns of a late number of the *Montreal Courier*. The list of members are as follows:—Merchant Members, 108; Senior Clerk do. 202; Junior Clerk do. 89; Life do. 48; and Hon. do. 22; in all 469. The Library contains 3,934 volumes, and besides 300 periodicals. The services of competent scientific gentlemen are secured to deliver lectures in both the English and French languages; and in addition to the lectures, steps are about being taken for the formation of classes in various branches of learning.

We have only one object in presenting this subject to the notice of our agricultural readers, which is simply to shew them how it is that merchants happen to be a better informed and more influential class than the farmers. It is foreign to our nature to draw invidious comparisons, and we feel certain that we shall not be censured with this crime, in recording as our conscientious belief, that the agriculturists of Canada should be the most influential and best informed class of our citizens.

Every merchant of respectable standing subscribes to some half dozen leading commercial papers, and if he has a family, patronises the best literary works of the day, and besides, has his library stored with a stock of general reading, from which sources he obtains that knowledge which gives him power, riches, and influence, to a greater degree than the less aspiring farmers. In each of the large cities of this and other countries of Christendom, the merchants form themselves into associations similar to the one under notice in Montreal, and by this means have access to all that has been published, which would be likely to be of interest to them in their commercial operations. This laudable zeal to acquire knowledge, should in our opinion, be manifested by the farmer as well as by the merchant; and it is through this conviction alone, that we have been influenced to make so large a sacrifice, to convince, if possible, our brother farmers in Canada, that the course which they have been pursuing is derogatory to their true and best interests as agriculturists. We are obliged to confess that at least four out of five of the farmers of this Province have no desire to obtain a knowledge of the principles and influences which go-

vern their profession. Many have never seen a written work upon agriculture; and even if they were in possession of the most popular agricultural work published in language that they could read and understand, ten chances to one if they would open its lids from month's end to month's end. This is to us a sorry confession, but nevertheless we see the necessity of speaking out in language that cannot be misunderstood. The fertility of our soil cannot long continue, under the course of cultivation that is at present practiced in many Districts of Canada, and when our best lands become exhausted, and comparatively useless by improvident farming, it will then be too late to promulge any mode of improvement. We see the truth of this assertion verified in a large portion of the eastern division of this province, and probably a similar state of things exist in many sections of Western Canada. Worn-out lands may be resuscitated and made as productive as ever by scientific farming, but it is highly improbable that this would be done by those who impoverished their land through bad cultivation.

One great check upon agricultural improvement is, the low estimate which is placed upon the cause of education by those who are engaged in the cultivation of the soil; but as there are many exceptions to this rule, and as the junior farmers feel a more lively interest in storing their minds with useful knowledge than did their forefathers, there is good reason to take courage. If it were possible to influence the farmers, together with their sons and servants, to form themselves into such associations as the one under notice, the grand object of which to be the acquisition of a correct knowledge of the practice and science of agriculture, the result of such a change in public sentiment would add more to the true honour and greatness of the colony than all the other means of improvement put together. By way of illustration, suppose a township contained 400 farmers and others interested in the farmers' prosperity, and those 400 would organise themselves into an association, having for its object the dissemination of agricultural knowledge, each paying the annual fee of one dollar, which would give the gross sum of £100. This sum expended in the purchase of agricultural, horticultural, and mechanical works, such as should be adapted to the tastes of the farmers in the township, would procure in an average of years, about 200 volumes, and in ten years 2000 volumes. In