

TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON FARMERS' CLUB.

THE ADAPTATION OF IMPROVED BREEDS OF CATTLE TO CANADA.

REPORTED FOR THE 'CONTOUR STAR.'

At a meeting of the Township of Hamilton Farmers' Club, held at Smith's Inn Court House, on Saturday May, 29th, 1852.

Patrick Rose Wright, Esq., in the Chair.

Present Messrs. J. Wade, Black, Bourn, Bennett, Alcorn, Masson, J. Underwood, Pratt, Newton, Sutherland, Brown, Smith, and Eagleson.

Mr. J. Wade, read the following essay :

Although the subject for discussion on the present occasion, may in some measure appear to be a work of supererogation, viz : to attempt to prove that which so many of the most intelligent and experienced Agriculturists of the age, hold to be an established truth.

Yet, while others may be found, who from not having been favored with opportunities of observation, and comparison necessary to form correct conclusions on this matter, it may still be found quite worthy of consideration. And when we reflect that our Province, was fifty years ago, little more than a wilderness; and that many of our practical farmers were brought up under the unfavorable circumstances consequent upon settling a new country, without having the privilege of seeing the improved systems which were in progress in other countries, much allowance can therefore be made for the prejudices they may very naturally have imbibed. But while we can cheerfully excuse prejudices arising in this way; there is another kind, far from being entitled to any such indulgence. And as the principle object in writing this paper, is to combat prejudices arising from any cause, it becomes necessary to trace them to their foundation. In the first place, as the word itself implies; judging without evidence: we shall soon find that the objection to improved breeds of Cattle or to any other kind of advancement, nearly always proceeds from parties who have never given the matter a fair trial. It sometimes proceeds from the enemies of advancement generally; but oftener from a feeling of envy, cherished by such as are always behind in improvement, against their more energetic and enterprising contemporaries. And it is both amusing and also annoying to hear the absurd charges brought against the progressive party. Attributing the praiseworthy endeavors of the friends of improvements to better themselves and families, to motives of pride, ostentation, and a wish to outshine their neighbours. And a rather eccentric neighbor of mine once vented his disapproval by denouncing *aristocracy* in Cattle, averring it to be quite bad enough among the human species without being carried to inferior animals. This kind of prejudice is often found where least expected; as for instance in the remarks about Stock made by the author of the prize essay, Mr. Hutton, to whom the Gold Medal was awarded by the directors of the Johnstown A. S., and which is published in the January No. of the Agriculturist. After admiring the methodical arrangement,

the practical and philosophical ideas, clothed in chaste and beautiful language with which the essay abounds, I was quite astonished when I came to the paragraph headed "One word about Stock," to find him so far astray even from the principles he set out upon. He takes for his motto the World renowned assertion of the celebrated Dr. Johnston, "He that causes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before is a benefactor of his country." He then states "the changes which the power and susceptibility of cultivation are able to effect on the vegetable as well as on the animal kingdoms, are truly wonderful." And after proving to a demonstration what has been effected in the improvement of grain, roots &c. in that department of Agriculture, he seems quite to forget that the present improved breeds of Cattle are the results of a similar process of advancement, carried out on the same principles in the department of Stock. He then goes on to charge "individuals and societies with inconsistency and absurdity, in incurring expense in procuring improved Cattle, without providing the necessary keep." I can assure him if such is the case in his region it is not so generally, for all the breeders of improved stock, within the circle of my acquaintance are good keepers, and the man who would go to the expense of procuring improved Stock, without intending to keep them properly must be a fool; quite as much so as the man who would incur the expense of preparing his land for a crop, and then sow foul or inferior seed. And it would be quite as reasonable to expect a good return from such a course of action, as profit from cattle of any kind, without proper food and attention. The enemies of advancement commonly shelter themselves under the name of Conservatives. There is you are well aware, what is called a Conservative state of things, and also a progressive state. The first says "let well alone" and the other says what was well yesterday, is not the same to-day; the first argues it to be unsafe to proceed further, while the other says there is no limit to advancement. The two parties stand in my opinion, in the relative position that the drawing and the holding back parts of a set of harness hold to each other. In order to enable the horse to proceed up hill, and even on the level surface, it is necessary to furnish the drawing part, but as it often happens he has to go down hill, it is quite as imperative to provide for that emergency, consequently the breeching is provided. This in the way of illustration of course admits a check upon the advance party, to be quite necessary, and it is only when carried to the extreme that it becomes injurious. These preliminary remarks are only intended to show some of the causes of opposition to improvement, and I now proceed to the subject for this day's discussion, viz., "The adaptedness of the improved breeds of Horned Cattle or neat Stock to the wants of this Province."

Without meaning anything offensive, I might say by way of parody, on Mr. Hutton's motto: The man that causes two pounds of beef to be produced under the same circumstances, where only one was produced before, is as much a public benefactor, as the one who causes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before. And