

HORTICULTURAL AND AGRICULTURAL CLUB.

Mr. G. Leslie, at a recent meeting, read the following excellent and very useful paper:

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF ORCHARDS AND FRUIT TREES.

The subject I have the pleasure to introduce to the Club to-day, is orcharding and the management of fruit trees, a subject of great importance to the country at large; and I feel sensibly my own inability to treat it as it should be; however, I have endeavored to put a few facts together in a plain way to open up a discussion. The climate of Canada West is particularly well adapted to the culture of the more useful and substantial fruits, namely apples, pears, plums, cherries; and in some sections peaches are grown to great perfection. A number of us will remember what was the general condition of fruit culture twenty years ago. 'Tis true some among the more intelligent land owners had planted fruit trees at that early period, but common orchards then would hardly satisfy modern fruit-growers, and of the fruits then cultivated there was no higher claim than that they were grafted fruit, all sorts being comprehended under the two names natural and grafted.

The few scattered cherries consisted of sour kinds, commonly called Kentish, with sometimes a few scattered May Dukes and Ox Hearts. Our Plums consisted of common blue and yellow, with a few Egg and Green Gage. Few people had ever heard of the fine varieties that have been introduced within the last fourteen years, such as Bolmer's Washington, Jefferson, Quan's Purple, Imperial Gage, &c., &c. The only distinction then was wild Plums and tame Plums. Of Pears, there were none, and they are still scarce, and a great rarity in our markets. These remarks apply to the common practice only, for there were here and there worthy exceptions of individuals, who, in the face of great difficulties which have now happily disappeared, had collected many of the improved varieties which even now stand among our esteemed sorts; such for instance, among apples, as the Fameuse, Pomme Grise, Bourasse Baldwin, R. I. Greening, Early Harvest, &c., &c. Last year our fruit crop was rather a failure, but in the fall of 1855 I was very much pleased to see a few barrels of fine specimens of the following sorts grown in the neighborhood of Toronto, offered for sale in our market, namely:—Fall Pipin, *Æopos*, Spitzenburg, Yellow Bellflower, Baldwin, Roxbury Russet, St. Lawrence, Ribston Pippin, &c.; and from the number of trees planted in late years, we may expect to see in our market a few more of the best sorts for commerce and transportation. We have now arrived at an advanced stage of prosperity—we have means of conveying fruit and fruit trees from one end of the country to the other,—we have large nurseries in Canada and all over the United States, enabling a man to purchase, within a short distance or a thousand miles off, and we can depend on the accuracy of the names. With all these facilities we are still far behind what we ought to be with fruit culture. I have no doubt but good apples will be worth \$4 or \$5 per barrel in this country nine or ten years hence. I will give you my reasons for supposing so. Our towns and villages are growing with a rapidity never before known in any country; the people must have fruit, and where are they to get it? I venture to say, not in Canada. There are no persons within my knowledge who have gone into fruit culture as a business, and the produce of what few trees the farmers plant, will nearly be consumed by themselves. It is also a fact that north of Lakes Simcoe and Huron, very little fruit can be grown. These are some of my reasons for thinking that fruit will be dearer ten years hence. But there is another reason why we shall have a limited supply of fruit for some time to come, and that is the bad treatment trees receive after they are set out. I know in some of the older townships, in the Home District—orchards that have been set out twenty-five years ago, with some 50 or 100 trees, that do not produce enough for the families that own them, when they should have, at least, 100 barrels to sell. When travelling two weeks ago through the townships of Toronto, Trafalgar, Chinguacousy, Caledon, Mono, and Etobicoke, I was struck with amazement at not seeing a really well managed orchard; but in some half the trees had died out, others were broken down by cattle and sheep, and a few large old ones that might be renovated and improved, had tops as thick as a thorn bush, full of dead limbs, and their trunks covered with moss and rust. The most of these orchards that I saw were growing on flat land—soured up for want of draining, manuring and deep tillage. Now, I would say to the owners of such orchards, go to work—prune your trees properly—scrape the bark clean and smooth with a sharp hoe or