

# THE CANADIAN AGRICULTURIST,

## AND Transactions

OF THE  
BOARD OF AGRICULTURE OF UPPER CANADA.

VOL. V.

TORONTO, AUGUST, 1853.

NO. 8.

### TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON FARMERS' CLUB

The May meeting of this Club was held at Ball's Inn, Coldsprings, when a large number of leading farmers were in attendance. Among those present we observed Mr. Wright, the President, Mr. Riddell, the Secretary; Messrs. Richardson, W. Weller, M. Eagleson, W. Eagleson, G. Ley, J. Sutherland, D. Sidey, J. Mason, Mr. Perkins, Mr. H. Roddick, Mr. MacIntosh, &c., &c.

#### AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

Mr. RICHARDSON, on whom had devolved the opening of the discussion, apologized for not being prepared, as his time had been wholly taken up by his duties as Assessor. The President, however, had readily consented to supply the want, and he would therefore open the discussion.

The President, Mr. WRIGHT, said that he had not expected to be called upon to discharge the duty of opening the discussion. He had, however, consented, at the request of his friend, Mr. Richardson, and would do the best he could in the matter.

The subject that engaged the attention of the Club at its last meeting, and was to have further consideration to-day, is Agricultural Education, and is of that character that some people may suppose to be above the comprehension of farmers generally. I am afraid the supposition comes too near the truth; for, as a class, it must be confessed we have not kept pace with the mechanic, or indeed with any other profession. Science has offered her services in vain for fifty years; the principles laid down for the guidance of the *practical* farmer have been laughed at; book-farming has been scouted and denounced; and every attempt to improve our practice and brighten our prospects has been baffled by the obstinacy of those for whose special benefit the man of science has

laboured so assiduously,—nay, more, for whose special benefit a *new science has been brought to light.*

The supposed monopoly of practical knowledge by the unread agriculturist is purely imaginary—a creed invented by himself, the very opposite of truth. Almost every profession or calling now practised has had to wade through and defend itself from the same absurd supposition; and it may be safely asserted that in whatever art, theory, as such, is by habitual allusion dishonoured, the average of education is low, and the art itself in its infancy. The progress of an art must depend upon the sciences which govern it, and all accidents of natural circumstances are equally subordinate to natural laws, which it is the progress of science to unfold. The training to the practice of an art without instruction in its principles is not education, but simple apprenticeship. The theory of an art is nothing more, and should be nothing less, than a complete history of these principles so far as they are known, in a form the most convenient for acquirement. Before you trust a tool in the hands of a child, the mind is capable of receiving knowledge which it can never afterwards receive so easily or remember so attentively. The child that would be useless at the plough might be so employed that all the conditions of his future life would be raised and benefited. Knowledge is capital in the most compact and available form in which it can exist; it can never be lost by accident; it is its own security, and will not be squandered intentionally. There is an idea not uncommon among the less informed of the class to which we belong, as well as among other classes, that anything like book knowledge disqualifies the possessor for the ordinary concerns of life. No idea can be more thoroughly erroneous. It is true books cannot teach the use of books, but it is for this very reason that the knowledge they do contain should be laid in for digestion before the hurry of business life commences. If the child asks a