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TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON FARMERS' CLUB.

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES—THEIR BENEFITS.

At a meeting of the Township of Hamilton Farmer's Club held on Saturday the 3rd Feb. 1855. Charles Bourn Esq., President in the Chair.

The subject for discussion being "The advantages that Agricultural Societies have been to this Province." The opening address was delivered by John Wade, Esq., as follows :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN :

It is universally admitted that Agriculture has made more rapid strides in advancement the last fifty years, than it did in the previous five hundred. Various causes have contributed thereto; the principle cause however, has been Education, cultivated minds applying scientific knowledge to the plodding routine practices of our ancestors, discarding what was useless and superstitious and drawing in what was useful, and all that would in any way conduce to raise it from what it was universally considered, the lowest drudgery of life, only fit for clowns and serfs to pursue, to a liberal profession requiring as much enlightened skill and knowledge as any other calling.

Modern Agriculture is indebted to the liberal sciences, such as Geology, Chemistry, Physiology, and others, for much of the extraordinary progress it has made during the last quarter of a century (for it is little more than that time since attention has been turned to these things,) establishing it upon a certain basis, by putting cause before effect. Ancient Farmers knew that a certain routine of practice would produce certain results, but the causes were totally unknown and would have remained so, if Geology had not shewn how soils were formed, if Chemistry had not analysed them to shew what elements they contained, and in combination with Physiology, shewn the reason why food given to Animals produced certain effects, and why certain breeds of Animals, would return from a given amount of food much more than others.

But however Agriculture may be indebted to the Sciences for much of her rapid progress, much less

would have been attained, if the combining influence of Societies and Association had not been brought to bear upon it by making results known, breaking down prejudices and making men consent, however reluctantly, that they must either progress or retrograde.

Man by Nature is a gregarious animal, living and acting in communities, unable individually to accomplish but little more than many of the lower orders of creation, simply a subsistence, while in combination with his fellows, his powers are next to unlimited, both morally and physically. Necessity as well as inclination compels mutual protection, mutual instruction and all the blessings of social life proceed from it, and more than all, the great interests of religion can only be carried out, and enjoyed to perfection in the same way, as it is enjoined upon us in the Book of Life, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together; and on these premises I come to the conclusion, after giving the sciences due credit for all their contributions, that little in comparison would have been attained in Agricultural improvement, if the uniting and amalgamating power had not been contributed by Associations and Societies. Various measures have been employed by Agricultural Societies to obtain the desired results of improvement, the principle however, has been offering premiums in money or medals, or other awards of merit, sometimes by employing their funds in the purchase of superior stock; but in what ever way it is done the best results have always followed.

I am not prepared, neither would it be of much profit on this occasion, to enter statistically into the History of those Societies any farther than to state, I know of none earlier than the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, established about the beginning of the present Century. The Royal Society of Great Britain and Ireland is of much more recent establishment, but though some may have been in operation for 30 or 40 years their effects have only been felt in full force for the last 10 years, in Great Britain and Ireland, during which time they have spread universally, not only as Societies for awarding prizes, but clubs for discussing the various subjects connected with rural affairs, are in active operation in every part of the Kingdom.

Twenty-five years is as far back as any successful attempt to establish a Society can be traced in our Province. In our own County the first attempt was