

EAST OXFORD FARMERS' ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of the Canadian Agriculturist.

SIR,—I have been requested as the Secretary of this Association to transmit the report of the proceedings of the last meeting for insertion in your journal. The following address was delivered by the President, Geo. Alexander, Esq., on opening the meeting:—

"He felt that it was not necessary that he should again dwell upon the benefits likely to result from the practical working of this Association, but would at once proceed to the consideration of the first subject named for discussion at this meeting. The prefatory remarks which he proposed making would doubtless be very imperfect, and open to criticism. H. (Mr. Alexander) would desire to say that he felt deeply his inability to lead a movement of this interesting and important character, and must beg of them to look upon him as coming here more for the purpose of deriving benefit himself, of profiting by their experience, than with any idea of his being able to impart information on agricultural matters, to them, the practical farmers of the land. He might occasionally venture to quote from works of scientific research, facts which have been given as the result of investigation and experiment; but such were not always to be relied upon, and it would be well for them to observe caution in adopting any theory of husbandry which was not fully borne out by their own experience and judgment. It is designed by public discussion to endeavour to explode everything which is erroneous and unprofitable in our present system, and to introduce whatever is found to be an improvement.

"The stock which is raised upon the farm constitutes in all countries a very valuable part of the produce. It is a never-failing source of return and wealth to the farmer, if due care and attention is paid to the feeding and general management of the same. It is therefore, essential that they should possess the fullest information upon this subject. It is gratifying to observe the general desire now manifested to obtain the improved breeds of every kind of stock. This augurs much for the future prosperity of the country; for as the farmers succeed in getting better stock, so will they take the more interest in affording them the proper care and shelter. If he were asked what constituted the most pleasing landscape to the farmer, he would reply: to see grazing upon our pastures thorough bred Leicesters and South Downs (and the first cross between these produce splendid stock.) If the County Societies are worked as they may be, with energy and judgment, and with the great assistance received annually from the Government, many of us may live to see introduced into this district an abundance of the noble stock of the Devon, Durham, and the Hereford. The last named are gaining in public estimation. But whatever stock the farmer possesses they must be properly cared for. While regular feeding is enjoined, we cannot dwell too much on the necessity for proper shelter from the cutting north-west winds, and deep snow storms of our severe winter.

"He (Mr. Alexander) would desire to comment upon a very prevailing but erroneous impression which exists with regard to young stock, that it is sufficient if they can only be got through the winter in any way; be-towing the best hay, grain and shelter upon the working and fattening animals. These last are not generally better cared for than they should be, while the young stock is much neglected,

and great loss and injury is sustained in this respect. It is a reasonable to suppose that while a colt is growing, its muscles developing, and its bones forming, that the frame and physical constitution of the animal must depend upon the feeding and shelter during this stage of development. How many horses do we see that have no bottom or constitution? How much degenerate and miserable looking stock of every kind are to be found in every country? The same remarks are applicable to man. Bring up a child with proper care and food, until the constitution is properly formed and he will have health; when he has attained to manhood, he will be better able to sustain hardship and toil. This principle pervades the whole of nature; an illustration may be given from the vegetable kingdom. Fruit trees planted and grown in well cultivated soil acquire a more healthy and rapid growth, and attain to a much greater size than those which are neglected; this extraordinary difference of result has probably been experienced by all present in the management of their orchards.

"He (Mr. Alexander) knew that he would be met at all hands with the reply that our winters are so long and severe, that the farmers generally cannot do proper justice to all their stock. This brought him to the consideration of the manner in which the fodder generally should be secured, and to the subject of the economy of feeding; but before coming to these points, he would again dwell on the great advantages of having the farm yard facing to the south, and so constructed to afford shelter from the drifting storms and cutting winds; for it is an incontrovertible fact, that less nourishment is necessary where the proper warmth of the body is kept up. Numberless experiments have been tried to establish this point, one of which he would quote from Prof. Johnson's lectures: twenty sheep were kept in the open field, and twenty others of nearly equal weight kept under a comfortable shed, they were fed alike for the three winter months, having each per day 1 lb linseed cake 1 lb barley, with a little hay and salt, and as many turnips as they wished to eat. The sheep in the field consumed all the barley and oilcake and about 19 lbs of turnips each per day, so long as the trial lasted, and increased in the whole 512 lbs; those under the shed consumed at first as much food as the others, but after the third week they ate 2 lbs each of turnips less per day, and in the ninth week 2 lbs less again, or only 15 lbs per day. Of the linseed cake they also ate about 1/3rd less than the other lot, and yet increased in weight 790 lbs or 278 lbs more than the others; this too with nearly 200 lbs less of oilcake and about 2 tons less of turnips."

"The time and manner of securing the different kinds of fodder, are very material points to be considered. After grass has attained to the full size and height, it loses by delay in cutting, and becomes soon transformed into dry indigestible, woody fibre. The same occurs to the straw of the different grains and corn stalks. Most good farmers coincide respecting the early cutting of all the grains on account of the great additional value of the straw as an article of fodder. Some writers press the early cutting of the grains for other reasons. Norton maintains that wheat cut many days before it is ripe, not only weighs heavier, but measures more, that it is better in quality producing a larger proportion of fine flour to the bushel. He (Mr. Alexander) should like to hear the opinions of those present upon this important point. We had to determine the earliest moment at which it is safe to harvest the different crops for the preservation of the grain. The great value of pease straw cut early, in wintering sheep was well known; and he was of opinion that Indian Corn might be grown more extensively with advantage in this Western