

Agriculturist and Canadian Journal.

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AGRICULTURAL MEETINGS.

Mr. Buckland, having been requested to deliver a short Lecture at the late meeting of the Agricultural Society for this District, addressed the following letter to the President, Mr. E. W. Thompson. Severe illness prevented Mr. B. from attending; and in consequence of the absence also of the President from the meeting in the evening, no action was taken upon the suggestions given; but the usual toasts and drinking were the "order," not "of the day," but of the night. We should very much like to see a more rational and beneficial practice introduced at our District Agricultural Meetings; and we believe there are many other sincere friends of improvement, in every thing that pertains to farmers and farming, who agree with us, that more rational, and infinitely more useful exercises could be adopted on these occasions. We were highly gratified with the proceedings of a meeting at Buffalo, on the evening of one of the days of the State Fair. Professor Norton, of Yale College, delivered a Lecture, to a large and intelligent audience; after which a discussion was started, and engaged in by several parties; questions were asked, and answered; experiments were detailed, of a most interesting character; and the meeting altogether was one of the most instructive and entertaining that we ever attended. There were some speakers who were all for *practice*, and had no confidence in science: there were others who very soon showed the advantage of science, and whatever else could throw light upon the subject of farming, and render the operations of the farmer easier and better. A mere scientific farmer can hardly be called a farmer at all. Just as the Professor of Natural Philosophy in a College would make a poor fist if called upon to *construct* a steam-engine, or *work* a locomotive, though he might perfectly understand the *principles* on which both must be done, and may have been the tutor of those who afterwards became most distinguished as practical mechanics and engineers. But who would think it a disadvantage to the practical engineer that he understood well the theory of his profession—the principles and laws which govern those natural agents with which he had to deal? Science, without practical knowledge, is the head without the body; and the converse is also nearly as true, that practice without science (which is impossible; for all practice in farming that is worth anything is based upon science, though the individual practitioner may be ignorant of the connection or dependence) is the body without the head. At all events, if this be too bold a simile, it is the body and head with the *eyes* put out. This question—the connection between science and practice in agriculture; a question which lies at the very threshold of all improvement in the cultivation of the soil—was ably and earnestly discussed by the speakers at the meeting alluded to. Every person present seemed deeply interested; and although some of the arguments were illogical, and against the feeling of the audience, yet all were pleased and instructed. A fellow visitor, the Hon. Captain Irving, remarked to us, that he did not regret coming all the way to Buffalo, if it were only to attend this meeting.

Now, why cannot such meetings and discussions be held among us? It is not that we are so far advanced in improvement that nothing is left us to discuss: nor is it because there are not among our Agriculturists men of education, of talents, of experience. As to education, in the ordinary sense of the word, that is not required. Every farmer, of common shrewdness and observation, has facts to communicate, and opinions to give on

nearly all subjects connected with his business, which may, when sifted, and compared with or opposed to the facts and opinions of other farmers, lead to most important conclusions. Why, we ask again, is not this useful "practice" more frequently resorted to on the occasion of Agricultural Meetings? We leave it for the active and influential men belonging to the District and other Societies to answer.

E. W. Thompson, Esq.,

President of the Home District Agricultural Society.

DEAR SIR,—Having consented to deliver an address before the meeting of members of the Home District Society, which is to take place tomorrow, I exceedingly regret to inform you of my inability to fulfil this engagement, in consequence of indisposition. I will, however, put a few thoughts on paper, which may serve, perhaps, to suggest something interesting or useful to the meeting.

It appears to me that our Agricultural Societies already possess an organization that is capable of new applications, and might be yet made more conducive to the agricultural interests of this country. What seems to be wanting is more active co-operation among the great body of our farmers, conducted on a systematic plan, with a view to a common end.

The information that is needed can only be obtained at the hands of practical men, and must be the result of comparing a large number of agricultural experiments, not made in gardens, but in fields, under the usual system of farm culture; comprising every variety of soil, and extending over all the better settled districts of the Province. How easy would it be for a considerable number of the most enterprising farmers to furnish the secretaries of their respective societies with particulars of their yearly agricultural experience in reference to particular topics, at their fall meetings.

With a view to show the practical application of these hints, I will briefly mention a few topics, in respect to which, much that is interesting and useful would be speedily elicited.

1. The cultivation of Wheat.—Stating the character of the soil and situation; previous course of cropping; preparation of the land; manured or not; state of drainage, artificial or natural. If the crop be diseased, note when first attacked, the state of the plants and of the weather, with careful subsequent observations. The result or amount of crop should, in all cases when practicable, be strictly ascertained by weight or measure.

All the other cultivated grains and root crops might be observed and reported on in a similar manner. It would be scarcely possible, after comparing a large number of well observed facts in relation to the causes which determine the amount and quality of crops, without arriving at length at conclusions which would be of the greatest value to the practical farmer. It is only after this manner of instituting experiments, observing and comparing facts, that our art has already so astonishingly advanced in the best cultivated portions of the world.

2. Depth in ploughing is a subject admitting of easy experiments, varying from four or five to ten or twelve inches. The introduction of the *subsoil* plough, when convenient, would invest the experiments with still greater interest. Portions of fields might easily be ploughed at different depths, or where that would be objectionable, separate fields might be selected, carefully noting the qualities of the soil, state of drainage, &c.

These experiments would throw some light on the question how far exhausted lands can be reclaimed by deep ploughing? It is well known that on such lands the subsoil frequently contains a considerable quantity of the inorganic constituents of plants, buried a few inches only below the line of previous cultivation.

3. Draining is a means of agricultural improvement that is effecting wonders in almost every portion of the British islands. To what extent is it applicable to this country? How far would mere *surface* drainage, by furrows, &c., be found sufficient? In what cases are deep, open ditches preferable to covered drains? What depth should drains be usually made; and the best materials for forming them; and the total cost per rod? What effects have been observed on crops after draining? These and many other analogous inquiries might be readily answered by such as have had some experience in this important branch of agricultural improvement.

4. Original observations by practical men on the breeding, rearing, and management of stock; together with reports on