

TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON FARMERS' CLUB.

FARM YARD MANURE.

At the meeting of the Township of Hamilton Farmers' Club, held at Dickson's Inn Court House, on Saturday, December 31st, 1853. Mr. John Masson in the chair.

Present—Messrs. P. R. Wright, J. Wade, D. Black, G. Black, Ingerstol, Beatty, Pratt, Brown, Roddick, Sutherland, Bennett, Forsyth, &c., &c., &c.

The subject for discussion, viz., "The Management and Application of Farmyard Manure," was introduced to the meeting by P. R. Wright, Esq., as follows:

At a meeting such as this, composed almost entirely of practical farmers, it would be useless to allude to the importance of the subject on which I am privileged to make a few introductory remarks, and chiefly with the view of directing your attention to certain points profitable for consideration and discussion. We have all more or less practical experience, therefore the conversation may be expected to be general, and consequently my remarks shall be as brief as possible. The term manure was at one time chiefly confined to the excrements of animals, either mixed or unmixed with the straw of cultivated plants, but it has now attained a much wider signification, and includes every substance of an animal, vegetable, or mineral origin, which, when applied to the soil, has the effect of increasing its fertility. In practical agriculture manures are divided into two classes, natural, and artificial, the former derived from the soil itself in the various forms of the straw of cereals and grasses, roots, grains and so on, all of which being consumed by cattle of some kind or other, in fields, stalls, or straw-yards, yield that much prized substance, familiarly known as farm yard manure, the management and application of which, we meet this day to consider. The management of manure may be said, without exaggeration, to be the most important department of farm practice; and unfortunately one on which there is greater need for improvement than on any other, and notwithstanding the fact that the proper management of the dung heaps has been explained, and enforced by the teachings of agricultural chemistry for the last ten years; the practical application of the lessons remains yet to be a great measure to be made. Farm yard manure still continues to be carried out from rain-soaked straw yards to the fields, and there deposited in heaps exposed to rain, wind, and sun, for weeks or months, without an attempt to stay the waste that must evidently arise from exposure, and very many farmers whose practice in other matters is unexceptionable, are strangely blinded to the great loss sustained by exposed manure heaps. On nine-tenths of the farms in Canada, even in districts where good manage-

ment generally obtains, there is a fearful waste of food producing material, and to this state of things badly constructed homesteads have greatly contributed, and even now in the construction of new buildings we seldom or ever see any attention paid to, or provision made, for the preservation of liquid manure, or for protecting the straw yard from being deluged every now and then by rain poured into it from the surrounding roofs. I would except, however, certain cases, when with wonderful ingenuity and engineering skill a site has been chosen on the highest peak of the farm, that the owner may enjoy the felicity of a dry straw yard! A loss of manure is equivalent to a diminution of produce, and this again by lowering the profits of farming necessarily depreciates the value of land; and in the construction of new buildings or repairing old ones, abundant provision ought to be made for the complete preservation and protection of manure—all manure ought to be made under cover, either in stalls, boxes, or sheds, if in the former it must be removed daily, which entails the necessity of a shed for its protection, if in the second it may be allowed to accumulate for some time, and by the latter mode it may be allowed to remain, until required for laying on the land, provided the roof of the shed will allow its being so accumulated. How is it we invariably find box feeding or stall feeding of some kind or other accompanied by bulky crops of grain, roots, and clover? Just because the manure so made is richer and more abundant than on those farms where the creek, ditch, or pond, receives the drainage of the strawyard—few who have not studied this subject are aware of the enormous quantity of fertilizing materials that accompanies the little black stream which oozes from the yard where no tank is provided to draw off the surplus liquid. The general practice of throwing the manure from the stable into the yard, in one point may not be objectionable, as loose cattle are fond of picking stable litter and thrive well on the refuse fodder; but the advantage thus gained would be greatly enhanced if the dung were placed under cover, and the expense of erecting sheds for this purpose would be amply repaid in a few years by the superior condition of the cattle, and the improvement of the manure. Where timber is both cheap and abundant it is astonishing to see the number of farms, where the only shelter to be found is the precarious and doubtful one, the lythe side of a zigzag fence. Having condemned the practice of laying down the manure in the field, I may be permitted to suggest a more rational plan. Choose the least exposed portion of the field (consistent with a due regard to economy of time) for forming the heap, give it solidity sufficient to prevent violent fermentation, which to a certain degree is necessary, that the vitality of noxious seeds may be destroyed, cover the whole pile with earth six inches thick, and it is then in the safest state circumstances will permit. Having said thus much on the manufacture and management of manure, the next point for consideration is the principle which should govern its application, and first generally; It may be regarded as an axiom which holds good everywhere, and in all cases,