

completely and accurately investigated, and consequently that a correct theory of agriculture could be easily exhibited. This, however, is by no means the case; and it is not a little singular that in this useful of all arts, the theory should be more defective than in almost any science with which we are acquainted. It is fortunate, however, for the human race, that in most cases, or at least in all important arts, they succeed better in practice than in speculation; and it has often happened in agriculture, that a man has cultivated the ground judiciously, while at the same time he has speculated erroneously concerning the mode of doing so. Various reasons render it more difficult to form a complete theory of agriculture, than of chemistry, mechanics, or other arts. In agriculture, experiments cannot be made in an instant, in an hour, or even a day or two. A whole season must pass away before a single experiment can be performed, and after all, as in other arts, the inquirer after truth may be misled by some unobserved circumstance.—Something quite foreign to the experiment itself arising out of the peculiar state of the soil, or of the train of seasons, may produce plentiful crops for a year or two, though in ordinary circumstances no such effect would follow, and the ingenious contriver of the experiment, who thought he had made an important discovery, may afterwards derive from it only disappointment, mortification and pecuniary loss. Human life is too short to admit of a very great variety of agricultural experiments to be performed by the same individual. After a few seasons he must leave his place to be occupied by a new inquirer, possessed probably of a different character, and of different views; and unfortunately it is not usual for farmers to publish, and thus to immortalize and to diffuse over whole nations the result of their private experience and reflections. Scattered over the face of great countries, and having little intercourse with foreigners, or even with each other, they know little of what is done by men engaged in the same profession, though at no great distance from them. In this way the benefit of local discoveries are not communicated to the world at large, nor is an opportunity afforded of eradicating local prejudices and erroneous practices. Perhaps no country on the face of the globe can exhibit a rural population possessing more general intelligence, and a more enterprising spirit, than the farmers of Upper Canada; but at the same time it must be admitted that a great proportion, even of them, are lamentably ignorant of both the theory and the correct practice of the noble art which they profess, and by which they are making such laudable and strenuous exertions to render themselves and their families rich, independent and powerful. In order to remedy this state of ignorance in this country, an Agricultural Society was formed, which was intended to be a lantern to the benighted; it is now in the thirteenth year of its existence, and I hesitate not to say that the most skeptical must admit that it has been productive of much and extensively diffused benefit. It has, however, been example without precept; it has exhibited what has been done what can be done, but it has not in all cases

pointed out *how* it has been done. The Directors have, from time to time, with the most unremitting and praise-worthy zeal, endeavored to make the Agricultural Society more generally useful. Among other plans, they made it a condition that any one obtaining a premium for any animal or article, should previous to the amount being paid him, publicly give an account of the means which had been used to produce such animal or article. But this plan was soon found to be impracticable—for to carry it into effect, would have required that the proceedings supplementary to the show should have been continued for a day or two, or probably three days; this was of course entirely out of the question. It has been ultimately resolved to establish a Farmers' Club, a sort of supplement to the Agricultural Society, the objects of which shall be "to take into consideration, and to afford opportunities for giving and receiving information on all matters connected with agriculture." It has unfortunately devolved upon me to attempt to set forth the advantages which may be derived from such an association. I say unfortunately, not because I am in the slightest degree averse to devoting my poor talents to any object which the Agricultural Society may deem useful, but because I am really afraid of my utter incompetency to place the Club in such a position before our agricultural community as its importance imperatively demands. One of the first and most obvious obstacles to the improvement of agriculture or any other art, consists in the ignorance of its practitioners, or in its being carried on by persons of an illiterate and unintelligent character, who are unable to take a comprehensive view of the principles of their profession, or who have not sufficient curiosity to enquire after the best modes of practice, or understanding to discern the value of any new practices that are explained to them. It ought never to be forgotten that the art of the farmer is an intricate and extensive one, and that one of the chief circumstances which has hitherto retarded its improvement has arisen, as already mentioned, from the secluded situations of the persons engaged in it. They are scattered over the face of the country instead of being congregated together, like other *artistes* in towns, so as to be enabled to derive aid from each other's experience. The Farmers' Club will, I firmly believe, have a tendency to remove these obstacles, as it will doubtless elicit and promote an excellent social spirit, will be the means of making farmers know and respect each other, and will afford favorable opportunities of agreeably spending a leisure hour in a rational and useful manner. It will I doubt not assist materially in doing away with the *excessive use of ardent spirits*—for persons attending its meetings will be required to conduct themselves in a sober, discreet, and respectful manner. It will teach farmers to think and act more accurately and systematically and observe more closely and correctly, in order to speak or write fluently on any given subject. Its influence on young farmers will be most important and beneficial. I must again repeat, that farmers in all ages and countries have laboured under the incalculable disadvantage of isolation, arising out of these