

WESTERN DISTRICT.

We notice, in a late number of the *Western Express*, a powerful appeal to the yeomen of that naturally fertile, and, in many respects, highly favoured district, by our Correspondent, Major R. Lachlan. The Major, in alluding to the scheme for reorganizing Agricultural Societies, which has been published by the Home District Agricultural Societies, states that he "should be wanting in duty, as the nominal President of the long dormant Agricultural Society of the district, were I to refrain from requesting a place in your next paper for the accompanying Circular Letter. I entertain a hope, 'forlorn' though it be, that the farmers of Essex may yet be roused from the discreditable, nay, disgraceful state of apathy, with which they regard a matter of such vital importance to themselves as the support of at least one Agricultural Society."

• We lately had the pleasure of an interview with an intelligent gentleman from the Western District, who, in the course of conversation, remarked that he thought it very strange that their district, possessing the richest soil and the mildest climate of any portion of the Province, and bounded and intersected with large navigable lakes and rivers, was, notwithstanding those superior natural advantages, considerably behind the other districts in wealth and artificial improvements, and, in fact, would scarcely compare with the Huron, Wellington, Simcoe, Colborne, and other Northern districts, in the advance which those districts have made in improvements.

We pointed out to our friend the present superior state of agriculture and civilization in Scotland, which only a few centuries ago was considered an inhospitable and comparatively barren country, and held forth, in bold contrast, the present backward state of agriculture and civilization in Italy—a country acknowledged to be the most lovely spot on the habitable globe.

Before the close of the interview, we convinced our friend that that portion of the population of the Western District who are blessed with wealth, and a liberal or even a common education, are highly culpable for the indifference which they have evinced, in employing proper means to bring their valuable country into more respectful notice, both at home and abroad.

We pointed out to him, that among the most efficient of those means were the establishment of respectable institutions of learning, agricultural and social improvement societies, whereby the people would become better acquainted with their noble profession, and the reporting and publishing every fact, experiment made in agriculture, or any and every information calculated to benefit themselves and that portion of the country where they reside, which would comprise most suitable and valuable matter for the two respectable journals, already well supported in the district.

We convinced our friend that "knowledge

is power," and that the only reason for the great advancement made in agricultural improvement in the northern and remote districts from markets, was that those districts were inhabited by a tolerably well educated and industrious class of European settlers.

We would, in conclusion, beg to recommend the proceedings of the Home District Society to the favourable notice of the farmers, not only of the Western, but of every district of the Province. We feel confident that the great bulk of the agricultural community would engage heartily in aiding and promoting the interests of their profession, if means, similar to those referred to, were properly adopted.

FIRST AGRICULTURAL MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP OF YORK AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, HELD AT ROSSES HOTEL, FEBRUARY 2.

The President, WM. GURDLESTONE, Esquire, in the Chair. Subject—MANAGEMENT OF LAND FOR FALL SOWN WHEAT.

Mr. ALEXANDER MILNE was previously appointed to open the discussion. He considered the wheat crop by far the most important crop cultivated in this country, and therefore any information on this subject must be valuable to the farmer. He had, for many years past, been a close reader of agricultural works, especially the magazines published in the neighbouring country. He had noticed that rapid strides in agriculture had been effected through the agency of those worthy periodicals and associations for encouraging agricultural improvements, and in no instance has those improvements been more apparent than have been effected through the introduction of clover culture. It is now acknowledged, on all hands, both in Europe and America, that the clover plant is the best possible food for wheat. Ground, properly cultivated and seeded down with clover, might be ploughed, the second year, in the latter part of August, and after the inverted sod had been allowed to settle a fortnight, it will then be in a fit state for depositing the seed. This is the practice of the best farmers in England and the United States, and heavier crops have been grown from this method, than from the common method of making naked summer fallow. It appears to be the most rational, economical, and by far the most profitable mode of treating land for the wheat crop. By using a liberal dressing of gypsum on the clover, a great proportion of the food for the plant is received from the atmosphere, and, besides, the roots of the clover strikes to a much greater depth than the ordinary crops that are cultivated, and from these sources much of the food that is most natural for the clover crop is received, without apparently injuring the fertility of the soil. Indeed the soil is benefited, inasmuch as it receives rest, and hence the loss sustained from the evaporation of gases, heavy drenching rains, and exposure to the midsummer heat are avoided, which are the greatest objections urged against summer fallows.

A heavy crop of clover will as thoroughly free the ground from all noxious weeds as a thorough summer fallowing operation. As this fact has been often proved in this country to the satisfaction of the best experimental and most skillful farmers in it, it will scarcely be necessary for me to dwell on this branch of this highly interesting and important subject. I would, however, beg the indulgence of this respectable assemblage of my fellow farmers a little farther, by pressing upon them the importance of making a few well-conducted

experiments in sowing wheat upon inverted clover ley, and by engaging more extensively in the clover culture. Six quarts of clover, and three quarts of Timothy seed to the acre is a pretty fair seeding, and, to secure a strong and healthy growth, about one bushel and a half of plaster per acre should be sown on the crop with which the seeds were sown.

[Here Mr. M. read a number of extracts from modern agricultural works to prove his position, among others some remarks in the *British American Cultivator*]

Rust on wheat is one of the most fatal diseases that the wheat crop is subject to in this country. By cultivating clover in rotation with the wheat crop, this calamity is, in a great measure, prevented. Rust is caused by the overflowing of the sap vessel, which is principally brought about by too rapid a growth of the plant at that stage of its growth when the berry is being formed, or when it is in its milky state. By the ordinary method of manuring summer fallows with raw barn-yard manure, the ground which, in very many cases, has naturally too much vegetable matter for maturing the wheat crop, is then overcharged with material that will ferment in the hot days of July, and thus force a rapid growth, which operates on the wheat crop precisely the same as the fungus is created by an excessive fermentation of a hot-bed; but when the second crop of clover is ploughed down, the tender clover and roots have passed through their several stages of fermentation before the end of the month of June, or in fact before the plants have commenced to stool, the gases arising from this fermentation, ameliorates and pulverises the soil, forces a strong and healthy growth to the plants, and pushes out strong and healthy leaves, and the roots strike deep and become proportionably strong from the effects of the newly made soil created from the decomposition of the young clover and the roots of the clover plants.

If the agriculturists would study into the causes and effects, as I have endeavoured to do for the past number of years, they would then be enabled to remove obstacles which at present appear almost insurmountable. I am fully convinced, that both chess and smut may be prevented in every instance, and that damage from rust may be avoided in nine cases out of ten. By sowing clean seed, and thorough culture, chess may be entirely prevented; and, to prevent smut, there are nearly as many cures as there are to the most common diseases which afflict the human body. The most efficient preventives, which have come under my observation, are allowing that portion of the crop intended for seed to stand until it is dead ripe, and by thrashing it immediately when taken into the barn. If this plan is honestly followed, smut may be entirely prevented. When any portion of the seed is impregnated with smut, washing it in salt, and drying it with fresh lime will lessen the probability of smut; but a far more certain plan is to wash the seed in a solution of blue vitriol. Sir Humphrey Davy tried 14 experiments, and those in which he used blue vitriol, lime water, salt and ley, there were not a single grain of smut to be seen; but, in all the others, there were more or less of the grain injured by this disease. Clover culture, deep ploughing and liming, are among the most certain preventives of rust, and probably none is more effective than deep ploughing, especially when the ground is composed of a strong calcareous earth.

I have only directed your attention to a few leading features of this highly interesting subject, and, in conclusion, would say that each individual present should endeavour to impress upon his neighbours the importance