

to reread "Maritime Enquirer's" letter in order to get the full force of Mr. Kidner's. We trust this is a point that will not be neglected.]

Country Entertainments.

No apology need be made for writing on anything that makes farm life more attractive. No more serious problem is before the farmers at the present time than how to keep the boys and girls on the farm. We do not expect to make all boys and girls reared in the country follow their father's occupation. This would not be desirable, as it would deprive us of some of our brightest professional and business men; but we should aim to make country life so attractive that many who are rushing to the cities to take their places in the already overcrowded ranks, would stay on the farm, and in the great army of producers help to increase our wealth by millions of dollars every year, instead of simply struggling for existence among the non-producers.

We are not by any means despising the means of entertainment within reach of our young people. All honor to our worthy farmers' wives who give such splendid parties to their neighbors; to the earnest school teachers who prepare enjoyable concerts; the promoters of Literary and Debating Societies, and the earnest workers who prepare Sunday-school entertainments. These all deserve our warmest praise. But the bright boys and girls deserve something more than these, and we are all agreed they deserve the best that the country can produce.

In most country districts the churches monopolize the entertainment business. In some places they do this work admirably, and able and cultured men devote themselves to giving good concerts. But in many districts there are so many struggling branches of different denominations, each with its old-time tea-meeting, with so small a constituency to draw from, that they are forced to employ all local talent.

We have talented singers and elocutionists among us that we are glad to hear, but to expect these to appear before practically the same audience at several entertainments in one neighborhood, is not fair to them. We are not belittling their talents in bringing in professionals; on the contrary, they are the persons who will enjoy the stranger's efforts most.

In the case of some districts, we hope that the union among our churches will soon be an accomplished fact. We know of county cross-roads in Halton County that have four struggling congregations, where they should have one strong, vigorous one. Probably we will soon be able to unite. How many and how great are the things we agree on, and how few and small are the things on which we disagree! But if at present we do not see our way clear to worship together, we should, as citizens, join together and procure the best talent that the country can afford, and give in each district a first-class entertainment at least once a month during the winter, and perhaps at longer intervals during the summer. We all remember the good times that we have had at tea-meetings; but surely these are a thing of the past. Women with a number of small children to look after and household cares, have not the opportunity to attend many entertainments, and it is not fair that they should be kept busy serving tea until about 9 o'clock, and then, tired and flustered, go to listen to the rag end of the programme. How much more pleasanter for them to come and sit quietly and hear a first-class programme, without the thought of another effort on the following day to clean up the church.

Most of our townships have good township halls. Some of these, with moderate expense, could be made very comfortable. Now, let five or ten representative young men from all townships form a committee to give entertainments when wanted.

A strong and popular committee would ensure patronage that would pay expenses. Let the surplus, if any, be used to purchase a library, or be given for some charitable purpose.

Splendid treats can be given at 25 cents a ticket, but remember that nothing is too good for boys and girls who work early and late, and if it is necessary to have 50-cent tickets, don't be mean enough to grudge the young people a treat. Some concert troupes that require a guarantee of \$100, and a percentage after that, we consider well worth the money, and one of the best investments that a community could make.

At present a young person from the country, conversing with a relative from the city, is at a disadvantage. The city cousin has heard the leading artists of the day, the other has not. One has as keen an appreciation of the beautiful as the other, and we should try and honor our great profession by giving our lads and lasses the very best that the country can produce.

JOHN D. MCGREGOR.

Halton Co.

Discrimination in Novel Reading.

The main fault to be found with many novel readers is that they do not read enough of other literature. They allow the novel to crowd out that solid reading which is an essential part of the food of a well-stored and properly-balanced mind. A farmer should read books and magazines that bring to him the best expert opinions and experience of thoroughly practical men who practice his craft. Besides, he should be informed upon the Government of his country, both local and national, for it will mean a deal of waste on his part if he should toil while others make his laws without either his knowledge or his consent. Further, he should be familiar with some branch of study outside of the pursuit by which he earns his bread. This study may be history, or poetry, or, better still, he should keep himself interested in nature-study, as illustrated by men like Burroughs. Walking is not recreation to a plowman, and if the farmer would keep his mental faculties alert, he will do well to have some line of study or reading that will give him real delight. If the farmer, or anyone else, will observe due proportion, he may fear nothing, but be infinitely the gainer, by reading an occasional novel.

The trouble with many people is that they read for amusement, rather than for instruction. They seldom ask if the novel they have on hand gives a true or a false view of life. Too many novels hold up for admiration the farmer's son or the mechanic's son who works hard and denies himself in order to procure the means of leaving the farm or the trade behind for politics, or for a profession. Other novels give pictures of society that are sectional and misleading. Other novels derive their interest from portraying deeds of crime or violence, or characters that are unwholesome, or perverted and unnatural. The unthinking reader allows himself to dwell upon these books till he finds himself fascinated therewith, and his interest in healthy literature wanes, and happy will he be if he escapes without being made unhappy at his old, wholesome way of living. More than one home has been broken up, and not a few have been made both criminal and wretched by reading novels giving false views and false ideals of life. Too much care cannot be taken to read only those books whose ideals are emphatically on the side of law and order. If parents and teachers were a little more careful to place in the hands of boys and girls beginning to read such books as "The Lady of the Lake," "Ivanhoe," "Robinson Crusoe," "Black Beauty," and "David Copperfield," many a blunder would be saved.

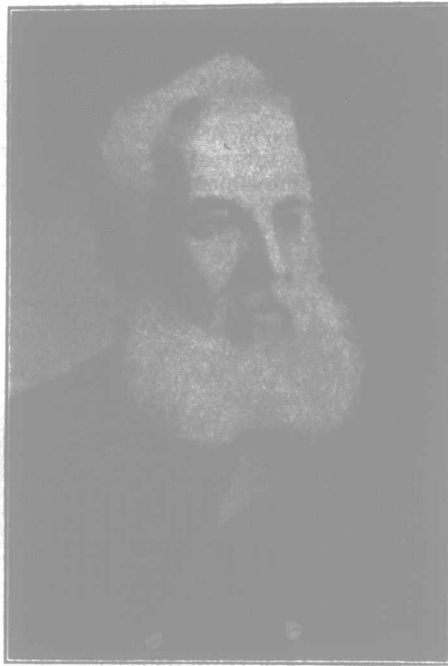
Further, a good method of testing a book is to read it to the family circle. What a pity that parents will spend money on making their children indifferent players or singers, while good social reading is so often neglected. The novel has its place in literature, but it is not the whole or the most valuable part of literature.

J. A.

Wentworth Co., Ont.

Brantford's Latest Undertaking.

In her present movement to memorialize the invention of the telephone, and thereby do honor to its inventor, Professor Alexander Graham Bell, the little City of Brantford, Ont., is setting an example that might, possibly, be well followed by a few other cities and districts in Canada, in respect to other celebrities or events. So far Canada has been, perhaps, a little remiss in marking spots of historic and other interest in a tangible way. The loss is, perhaps, a greater one than may appear on the surface, not only in an educative sense—the events, etc., for want of such emphasis, tending to drift out of the popular memory—



Prof. Alexander Graham Bell.

but, also, in the lack of that charm and distinctiveness which belongs to every town or district whose noblest records are thus placed so that "all who run may read." We all know how much the Continental cities would lose were they suddenly depleted of the multifarious monuments and statues, the historic buildings, etc., kept, as far as possible, intact, which lend to them, to-day, so distinct and unique a charm.

It is impossible that we in Canada can have in every town such monuments as the grand Gothic Cathedrals and historic castles of the Old World. We may, however, occasionally provide such memorials as may afford an educative stimulus to the children of the Dominion, and induce the stranger who comes within our gates to speak with distinctiveness of this city or that, not remember them all as an indiscriminate jumble of railway tracks, brick houses and manufacturers' chimneys. By all means let us, when practicable, have parks, each as different from all the others as may be, and monuments to the honor of our noblest citizens and noblest events.

Among those best worthy of such honor, it will be unequivocally conceded, is Professor Alexander Graham Bell.

Prof. Bell, it may be interesting to note, is a Scotchman, having been born in Edinburgh. In 1870, with his father's family, he came to Brantford, and, four years later, in the same city, he invented the telephone. His own account of the event, as given by himself at the

banquet recently given in his honor in Brantford, and recorded by the Courier, is as follows:

He first of all reached the conclusion that if a chunk of iron could be made to vibrate in front of a magnet, why should not similar oscillations be made to transmit the human voice? This problem he solved while conducting an experiment in a totally different direction. He was at that time interested in the formation of the human ear, and a certain professor had, in this regard, presented him with the ear of a dead man with which he could experiment. That ear was, in 1874, set up at Tutela Heights, and he formed a mouthpiece for speaking into it, and had a glass which would reflect the vibrations. As he spoke into the ear the tympanum caused the small bones to vibrate in a most wonderful manner. He then attached a piece of hay to one bone, and had a smoked glass in front. Then, when he spoke into the ear again, the vibrations caused the hay to draw the most beautiful curves on the glass. Then came the thought that if the human voice could agitate the tympanum of the ear so as to enable it to vibrate bones so much heavier than itself, why could not the human voice also be made to vibrate a thin piece of iron in front of a magnet, and so transmit the waves of sound.

He carried the idea with him to Boston, and there the first crude machine, by which he talked from room to room, was made. Returning to Brantford, however, he elaborated his invention, and it was there that the first successful longer-distance experiments were accomplished, over lines leading, first, from the barn to the stable, then from the city to Tutela Heights and Mt. Pleasant. In the latter instance, the inventor's uncle was to remain in the city, and, at a given time, recite Shakespearian verse to Prof. Bell, who was waiting five miles away. The Professor well remembers sitting in Mt. Pleasant, with his ear to the receiver, and his watch in his hand, waiting for the fateful moment. Suddenly he heard a preliminary cough, and then the words, "To be or not to be." Conclusively, it was to be, and before long, messages were flying over the lines to Paris, and thence forward, as speedily as might be, over the whole country, along a network of lines which now embraces almost every town and village in the Dominion. It was the privilege of one of the editors of "The Farmer's Advocate" to converse over the first telephone line a few days after the successful trial above referred to.

Dr. Bell is described as a man who presents "a magnificent spectacle, over six feet in height, with proportionate build, snow-white hair and beard, a massive head and intellectual face." He lives at present in Washington, D. C., where he is now carrying on experiments in aerial navigation. He believes that the success of the airship is now beyond question, and that we are just on the verge of an era in which such vessels will be made use of by every nation. Prof. Bell may not be the immediate one to solve the long-wrestled problem, but such an opinion from so noted a scientist is at least worth noting.

A Word for Us.

May I add a word of commendation to your paper? On account of the Gospel Spirit of your paper, it is worthy to be recommended to any Christian home, and will carry religious teachings to many homes where no church papers are taken.

Your up-to-dateness on important subjects make your paper uplifting in its influence, and it should be read by the farmer and his wife, and boys and girls, and by the hired girls, and the hired men, and then, if there is a family in the neighborhood too poor to take a paper, it should be passed on to them.

W. H. NORTON,

Westville, N. Y.