



Life, Literature and Education.

Our New Debate.

It has been suggested by a reader of "The Farmer's Advocate" that our next debate be between the three Maritime Provinces, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P. E. I. on the one side, and Quebec and the Eastern States on the other, our readers in Ontario and elsewhere to vote on the final award. We are much pleased with this proposition, but the question to us is, "Upon what subject would these 'Easterners' like to debate?" We give it up. . . . And now, in order to best satisfy everybody, we have a plan:

Will all interested in this debate, in the above-named Provinces, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Quebec, also those in the Eastern States, kindly write us, JUST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, suggesting suitable topics. From these, then, we shall make a selection, and get the debate under way.

Now, kindly do not delay in this matter. We think the contest should be a very interesting one. Our Eastern friends have been a little remiss, so far, in taking part in "things," but we intend, if possible, to let them be so no longer. At least, if they do not respond, it will not be for want of invitation. So kindly send in your suggestions as soon as you can. We are anxious to find out the sort of mettle that is in all these seaboard and St. Lawrence people of ours.

F. A. and H. M. L. S.

As we fear we have scarcely given time enough for deciding the last debate, we have arranged to extend the time one week. Hence, if you send in your post card, marked "Affirmative" or "Negative," any time until April 7th, it will be all right, but kindly favor us with your decision as soon as possible.

In the meantime, we must apologize for the long delay in getting your pins. The fact was that the manufacturers have been moving into new quarters, and, in the confusion, the filling of our order was given up for a while. However, they are here now, and they are beauties.

Once more we may state the conditions on which you may obtain one if you choose:

1. As a first prize for an essay, in preference to a book.
2. By sending us one new subscriber to "The Farmer's Advocate," this method, of course, preferred, as we naturally wish to increase our circulation.
3. By sending us 60 cents in cash. The pins, by the way, are genuine rolled gold, enamelled, and really cost us more than this.

It is not absolutely necessary for you to have one in order to be a member of our Literary Society, neither is it absolutely necessary for you to be an active member of the Society in order to have one. Your interest and sympathy will prove a sufficient "open sesame," and we feel sure that when you see someone else's pin you will want one, too.

Answer to Maritime Enquirer.

My attention has been called to a letter in your issue of Feb. 22nd, from some one signing himself "Maritime Enquirer." In his very interesting communication, the writer touches a very important point in connection with the teaching of manual training, when he enquires whether the children are required merely to copy the teacher's work, or, on the contrary, whether their individuality is to be encouraged, and proper growth of thought thus engendered.

As one who has something to do with the spread of the manual-training movement in these Maritime Provinces, I should like to reply briefly to your correspondent.

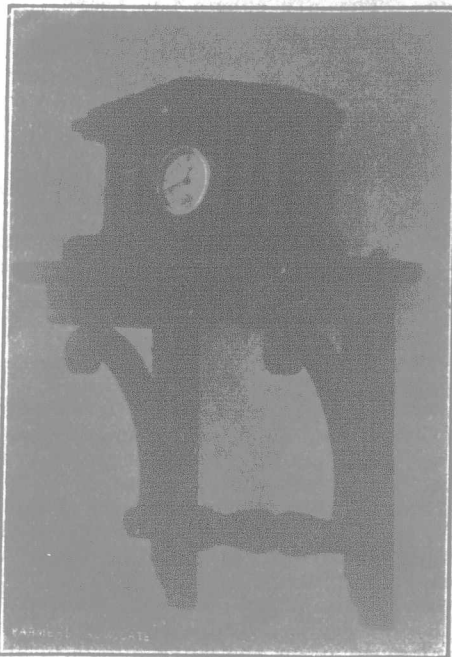
Your columns have often given evidence of your interest in the newer educational movements, so that I shall not weary your readers with a treatise on the subject, but I should like to say at once that the object of the subject—to use "Maritime Enquirer's" words—is "that in every way possible, individuality, growth, thought, must be encouraged."

But let us reflect. Five or six years ago manual training was almost unknown in Maritime Provinces, or, indeed, in Canada generally. In 1900 the model schools of Sir Wm. C. Macdonald were established to give the Canadian public the opportunity of judging the merits of the subject, and, backed up by the various education departments, its spread had since been rapid.

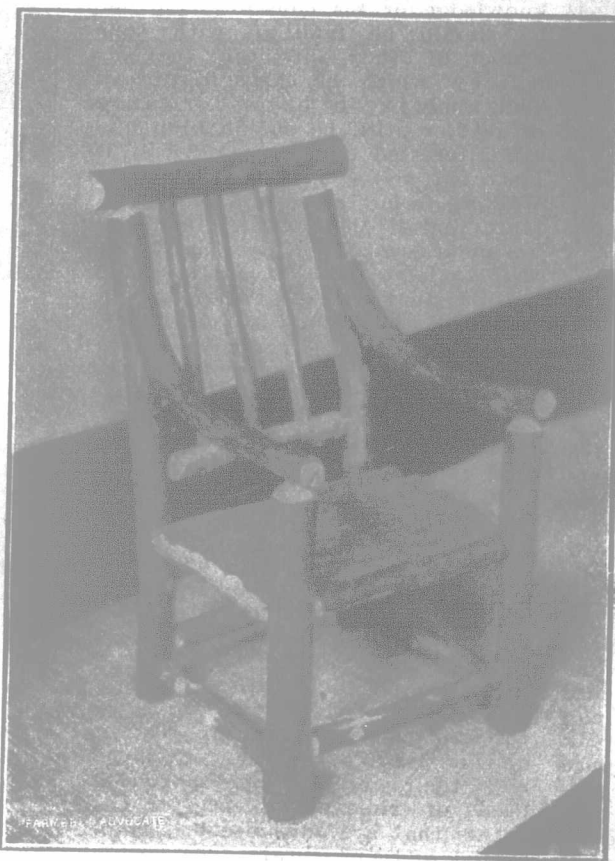
In manual training, however, as in every other branch of education, the teacher is the chief factor. It is a matter of common knowledge that, with little or no system, the teachers of the schools of two or three generations ago obtained excellent results in the men and women of sterling character turned out by them. It is also a matter of daily comment that, with all the modern appliances and systems, many teachers are failing to satisfy the public in the matter of character building and thoroughness in pupils.

I think, then, that something of this sort may be observed in our manual training just now. Our teachers are all young, and have had very little experience. Some of them were attracted to Manual Training because of its novelty; others from the fact that it offers rather better salaries than the regular school work. Their preparation for the special work of the Manual-training Instructor was all too brief; but, brief as it was, the writer and others had and are having considerable difficulty in persuading teachers and educational authorities that such periods as are now given to training (6 to 9 months) are necessary.

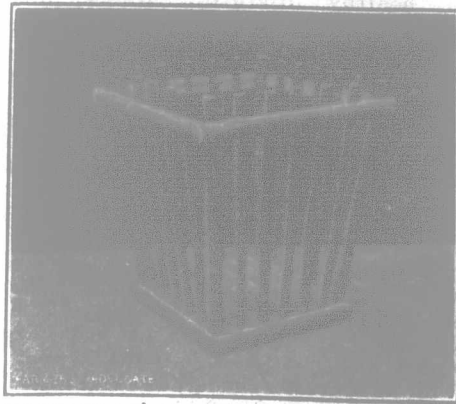
Some of these teachers have followed the too-common habit of considering that at the completion of their training course no further study was necessary. Equipped with their brief experience, their work is



CLOCK SHELF. Original design by pupil in N. B. school.



CHAIR. Designed by pupil in New Brunswick school.



WASTE-PAPER BASKET. Original design by pupil in N. B. school.

bound to lack spirit, and more than liable to degenerate into mere instructions as to the making of some stereotyped set of "models" or exercises.

But others have deemed their training as but an introduction to the whole broad field of art and craftsmanship, and are daily absorbing, from all sorts of sources, more of the true spirit of the teacher and worker. Such instructors—and there are several in my own district—delight the heart of a superintendent, who finds little occasion in their case to worry about "courses" or "models." These teachers are going with their children, investigating, experimenting, doing. The writer has schools now under his supervision where the actual course laid down consists of a few articles and exercises giving the child the command of a few essential operations, and even these preliminary pieces of work are varied, according to the capability and taste of the pupil. Later, the whole wide range of woodcraft will offer suggestions which the pupil will bring to the teacher, and

with the latter's advice and guidance, all sorts of things may be successfully wrought.

But I am trespassing unduly on your space, and must close. I hope, however, that so keen and sympathetic an observer of the manual-training movement as "Maritime Enquirer" appears to be, will find, in some schools at least, the true spirit. The subject is quite young yet, and suffering, perhaps, from the fervid praises of its friends, and from the weakness of its exponents. But its principles are true, and its end the acquisition of power—power over the external world, master over self.

"Maritime Enquirer" has given us such excellent quotations from Ruskin that I also should like to offer one in conclusion. In his "Seven Lamps of Architecture," Ruskin says of the lamp of life, "That things in other respects alike, as in their substance or uses, or outward forms, are noble or ignoble in proportion to the fullness of the life which either they themselves enjoy, or of whose action they bear the evidence, as sea sands are made beautiful by their bearing the seal of the motion of the waters."

And this is especially true of all subjects which bear upon them the impress of the highest order of creature life—that is to say, of the mind of man—they become noble or ignoble, in proportion to the amount of the energy of that mind which has visibly been employed upon them.

Yours faithfully,

T. B. KIDNER.

Director of Manual Training for New Brunswick.

[We would advise all our readers to save their "Farmer's Advocates," so that in each case in which a reply appears several issues later than the letter replied to, the two may be read, the one in conjunction with the other. In the present case, for instance, it is absolutely necessary