

wrong place, or there was something wrong with the auger." The whole matter may be summed up briefly: Have something to say. Say it at the right time, so as to be heard and understood, and as briefly as possible.

O. C.

THE OLD-FASHIONED DEBATING CLUB.

In a comparatively recent issue of this periodical, a writer lamented the absence of the ability to speak in public in rural communities. He pointed out forcibly the disadvantage under which a farmer labors when circumstances compel him to enter the lists of politics, when he frequently stands dumbfounded before opponents of lesser intellectual calibre, because of this disadvantage, the irrefutable logic of his brain refusing to take a convincing utterance. And it was strongly suggested in this timely plea, that the members of a rural section of a Province ally themselves with debating societies, etc.—a very valuable piece of advice, pithily expressed.

It is not necessary to ask what has become of the farmer's gift of oratory, but what has happened to the old-fashioned debating club, at which our fathers threshed out international, national, political and social problems with an effusive zeal that would, at times, have confounded the university savant. In some parts of the Dominion it no longer exists; in others it still survives, as the rendezvous of a few old cronies, who nightly rethrust old hackneyed subjects with the same old hackneyed arguments. In French Canada such a condition is not so very greatly to be regretted, for the habitant is naturally a man of ready speech, though not always gifted with political logic; but with the British-Canadian the case is far different; our public speakers being largely the result of culture and voluntary environment.

The debating society is apparently about to become extinct, and why? Not because of the hackneyed subjects, but because of the prolix and ridiculously absurd arguments for the affirmative, and the equally threadbare reply. A thousand novels have been written with the same old plot, the same old setting, and the same old end, but with their character delineations so powerfully original, yet so tangibly natural that each book appears a plant sprung from widely varying seed. Everything in this world is but a repetition of something that has gone before, or that exists somewhere else. We see a thousand different faces, not two countenances in the world are alike, we are assured, except that we all thank God for our two eyes, mouth, nose and ears. The same pattern, as old as Eden, yet how wonderfully varying from continent to continent! How often have we laughed, how often have we not laughed, at that old debating subject, "Which is the mightier, the pen or the sword?" But can the greatest scoffer of us all logically dismiss the question in ten, fifteen or twenty-five minutes' talk? No, we venture to assert. Just come out of your all-knowing self and consider it, "Which is the mightier, the pen or the sword?"

Granting you picked up the gauntlet in favor of the former, what would you have to contend with from the latter? You must possess not only a wide and valuable knowledge of ancient and modern history, but a keenly-balanced judgment, coupled to a most unprejudiced mind. To support your statements you have almost half of the world's literature behind you—if you are aware of it. Against you are arrayed the campaigns of Hannibal, Cæsar, Marlborough, Napoleon, Grant and Moltke—a subject that is in reality stupendous in its immensity, yet how often laughed down by the unthinking?

In fact, the very reason why such subjects of debate have fallen into disfavor is not because of their being so easily decided upon, in the affirmative or negative, but because they are too vast to be talked about inside of two hours. A debating club

should interest itself in topics of pregnant historical or intensely absorbing present interest. Even if some personal feeling, afterwards condemned by a cooler judgment, enters into a discussion, it but serves the purpose of bringing a spirit of enthusiasm into a man's words, which is better than an apathetic deliberativeness. The old-fashioned debating club is not yet dead. Some day it may take a wonderful spurt of energy, overspread the land with its great educational privileges, and become the fashion—the new fashion, once more. At least the most of us enthusiastically hope so.

WILLIAM J. PITTS.

Rosseau Falls, Ont.

OUR LITERARY SOCIETY.

So many excellent essays have been submitted in Competition No. II. that we have thought best to present them topic by topic, dealing with but one subject in each issue. In the

prisonment of the Actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, 'here or nowhere,' couldst thou only see." He who would live must work. There can be no growth or development of body or mind without it. When you cease to work, you cease to live. "The idle are a peculiar kind of dead who cannot be buried."

It is true that there is a proverb, long-current, that "God takes care of the lame and the lazy." But I suspect that it originated in the philosophy of that class of gentry, who, whether clothed in purple and fine linen or decorated with rags, are fond of saying that "the world owes them a living"—an assertion utterly absurd and wholly untrue. It is bad enough to be a "do-nothing," but why add falsehood to shame by claiming assets never possessed?

Endowed as we are with such god-

away, no matter how much it is used. It is terrible to do nothing worthy, to live for nothing worthy, to be nothing worthy. The beginning of all excellency lies in the determination to make the best of oneself, for upon the proper development of your powers of body and mind depends your highest, best success, here and hereafter. You have been given your special work so do. It may be lowly, it may be uncongenial, but if it is for you to do, do it. Do it the best you know how. Whoever consents to less than his thorough best is neither shrewd nor good. It will be found in the long run, and often in the short dash, that there is nothing more practical than a high and relentless ideal.

To do things by halves or thirds, to put only a part of oneself into the given task, whether the tool be a pen or a pick, is to add to the general bulk of unrighteousness. The old sculptor who said of his carvings, whose backs were to be out of all possible inspection, "but the gods will see," touched this matter to the quick.

To accept conventional estimates, to excuse oneself by averages, to let facility cheat thoroughness, to intermit that stern self-censorship which both fidelity and far-sightedness command, is to be always an apprentice, and never a master.

The ultimate and inestimable reward of work well done is the answer of one's own soul in deep approval. Self-respect attends the outlay of one's total energy for worthy ends. The solid soul who writes not alone on a crest, but on his heart, "Ich dien," attains a peace above all earthly dignities. And the Sage of sages speaks yet, as he spake through the seer of Patmos, "I know thy works."

His "well done" will be the recognition and crowning reward of all true men and women.

ANNIE McDIARMID.

Dundas County, Ont.

Essay II.

In these significant words of Carlyle, a great truth is stated. We have here the keynote of a true and useful life.

I would suggest, however, that a qualifying term, expressed or understood, be attached to the word "work." To be effective and truly valuable, work must be performed with skill, must be wisely-directed. Work, as mere work, may be of little or no productive value. It may not even be disciplinary. A man who works mechanically or blindly, is likely to prove a failure.

Sir Joshua Reynolds declared: "Nothing is denied to well-directed labor." Franklin tells us that, "God gives all things to industry." Ruskin observes: "When I hear a young man spoken of as a genius, the first question I ask about him is, always, 'Does he work?'"

Carlyle, himself, was an illustrious exemplar of his philosophy of work. The man who studiously read five hundred volumes as a preparation for writing his "French Revolution," and who—his manuscripts being used to kindle the kitchen fire by the servant of a friend to whom it was loaned—rewrote the whole, was assuredly "a born king of something."

If we note the characteristics of the kings of achievement in any of the walks of life, we find the salient feature to be, not genius, but work; not the mere power to achieve, but the will to do "something," despite all barriers, and to do that something well.

Whether it be to hold an audience enrapt by impassioned eloquence; to charm, to inspire the mind with bright images and noble thoughts; to preside over a railroad, or direct the course of a ship; to "make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before," or guide the destinies of a state; whether it be to dig ditches, to edit a periodical, or to preach sermons, in every sphere, the man who does his work, and does it well, is a "king of something."

Were any argument or evidence needed to prove the greatness of



Mount Asama in an Eruption of Smoke and Steam.

first to hand, one of Carlyle's slogans for the honor of work, A. McDiarmid and W. J. Way have been most successful. Announcements regarding the other topics will appear in later issues of "The Farmer's Advocate."

Topic—"He that can work is a born king of something."

Essay I.

We live in a day when the poet and the philosopher have combined to sound the praise and dignity of labor. Work is the new patent of nobility—it is not a curse, but a benediction; it is not a mark of degradation or of servitude, but an insignia of royalty.

O thou that pinest in the im-

like qualities in embryo, and placed in a world that is fitted to develop the best that is in us to the highest point possible for us to attain in our present stage of being, what a shame it is to make one's life only a bitterness and a curse!

All worlds are workshops, and this of ours is no exception. Heaven is to garner at last the best productions of earth for its great universal exposition. "They shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it." But it is only "the glory and the honor" work that goes on exhibit there.

Are you and I now doing anything that "they" will think worthy of preservation? Any energy that is not consecrated energy is thrown