



The Roundabout Club

Literary Societies and Rural Clubs.

November is here again with its blustering weather, ushering in a winter of long evenings. How shall these be spent?—Altogether in nonsense, or, during part of the time at least, in improving reading and study?

"A little nonsense, now and then,
Is relished by the best of men,"

and far be it from the advice of "The Farmer's Advocate" to discourage such relaxation. At the same time, it is recognized that the "all-round" man or woman, whether young or old, must see to all sides of his or her development. The summer season, for most farmers, is a time of work with little opportunity for study or for recreation. With the winter comes that opportunity. The individual who spends all the spare time then afforded in study, must miss something, for the need for social gatherings, for a little "fun," for mere mingling with humanity, is ever present,—to keep kinks and crotchets out of the brain. On the other hand, he or she who spends every spare moment in chasing about after pleasure, also misses something,—yes, an immeasurable something. The mind must be used else it loses steadily in power, atrophies just as the arm or any other organ which is never used, atrophies. One may, of course, and must, read and study "off his own bat," but, if possible, and especially for the young, it is also advisable to join a local literary society. Preparing papers and addresses for such a society, or for any kind of club that aims at mental improvement, compels research and study that might otherwise, perhaps, never be taken. Such tilts as must needs occur in public debate, compel a sharpening of the wits that might otherwise be missed, and which may lead to far-reaching results. Many of the most useful speakers of our time, and of times past, have received their first drilling in the little red, rural schoolhouse.

Even if no illustrious orator be the outcome, the effects on the community are bound to be salutary. As Mr. J. S. Willison, writing for the Canadian Magazine some time ago on the foundation of clubs for intellectual development, noted: "No sect, no school, no party, has all the truth, and it is only by keen debate, by the clash and conflict of opinion, by frank speech and fearless action, that our institutions will be wisely fashioned and established upon sound and enduring foundations. The pioneers of the world's progress have been the men who would not conform, who had the courage to attack abuses, who dared to plow the lonely furrow and to face coldness, suspicion and misunderstanding for the faiths which they cherished and the causes which commanded their enthusiasm and their devotion." . . . Yes, the little local society in the little red schoolhouse should help in all this,—in forming men and women capable of thinking through problems, and independent enough to stand upon their own feet in regard to conclusions which, after fair examination, they clearly perceive to be in the right; men and women who are willing to look at all sides of any question whatever, and broad-minded enough to give up, on occasion, an old opinion for a better one. The "inconsistency of great minds," based thus, surely exists for no mean reason.

We are often asked "how to form a literary society?" One hesitates, however, about answering such a question with much detail; people should think out such small matters for themselves, and act on their own initiative. But, after all, there is very little to tell. The chief essentials are to call a general meeting and there appoint the officers, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer (if necessary), and a Programme Committee. It is well, as a rule, to change the latter several times during a season to ensure distribution of "honors" to keep the interest general, and give everyone something to do. A rather inspiring idea, too, is for each society to choose a permanent motto, to be kept year after year as a spur to the ambitions of the society.

OUR "F. A. & H. M." LITERARY SOCIETY.

In our enthusiasm for local literary societies, however, we must not lose track of our own, which, we have been assured by many contributors, has been a help, a little spur of itself, to many a student especially in localities in which, for some reason, the formation

from any standpoint that you please, practical or otherwise; make your essay a dissertation on forestry and forest-conservation, or a prose-poem, as suits your fancy; and send it so that it may arrive at this office not later than December 1st.

We hope to welcome a fine rallying of the "old" students, and an inspiring number of new ones on that date.

The Windrow.

The plantation rubber-dealers have been almost on the verge of panic, and the rubber shares in England seriously depressed more than once recently, over the possibility of a successful marketing of the artificial rubber now being manufactured by chemists.

Sir Hiram Maxim has invented a device for enabling ships to detect the presence of obstructions, such as icebergs, in the vicinity. The idea of the device was taken from the structure of the heads and ears of certain bats. It is interesting to recall, in this connection,

sheen reminded observers of the sparkle of diamond dust. In Russia, a sort of fabric is being made from the fibre of a filamentous stone from the Siberian mines, which is said to be practically indestructible. It is soft and pliable, but, when soiled, has only to be placed in a fire to be made clean. A species of cloth made from iron is being used by tailors to make coat-collars sit properly, while a sort of cloth known as "limestone wool" is made in an electric furnace. Other novelties in clothing are those made from paper and cordage. Paper clothes were worn by the Japanese troops during the war with Russia, and were found to be very serviceable, and much warmer than those of cloth. Truly, we live in "the inventive age."

There are to-day 2,500 licensed pilots for ships, and fifty aviation schools where pupils make from one to two hundred flights each day.

A machine for scrubbing floors, operated by electricity, has been devised by the janitor of the Vanderbilt Clinic, New York.

It is estimated that there were about 5,000,000 more eligible voters in the United States this year than there were in 1908, because of the number of males coming to the voting age, and the increase of the number of enfranchised women. In 1908 there were something over 28,000,000 people who might have voted, but there were only 14,887,594 votes cast in the presidential election. It is estimated that this year there are, approximately, 26,000,000 persons who might lawfully vote if they would all qualify under the different State laws and go to the polls. Of these there are, approximately, 1,650,000 women.

"I have heard talk of the pleasures of idleness, yet it is my own firm belief that no one ever yet took pleasure in it. Mere idleness is the most disagreeable state of existence, and both mind and body are continually making efforts to escape from it. It has been said that idleness is the parent of mischief, which is very true; but mischief itself is merely an attempt to escape from the dreary vacuum of idleness."—George Borrow, in "Lavengro."

Some Old-Time Echoes.

ON TREK IN THE TRANSVAAL.

XII.

It is a great drawback to getting on with the Dutch not to know their language. They are suspicious of some "arriere pensee" when words are used which they do not understand. Hence their dislike to the use of legal documents or business papers which convey to them no meaning, and through their ignorance of which, advantage may have been taken of them? In a country where Dutch is so generally known and understood, it would seem but a small concession to meet them half-way by some mental arrangement. (This was written over thirty-five years ago and probably all barriers of language, etc., have been removed.)

In quoting from my old diary I hope that I have left no misleading impression of the primitive people amongst whom we found ourselves.

What I have related of the Boers is of them generally as a class. Many clever, educated Dutchmen are to be met with in the Transvaal and the Free State, and I have heard speeches in the Natal La-



"(And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Shakespeare—"As You Like It," Act II., Sc. 1.

of a local society has been found impracticable.

With November, then, without further preliminary, our "Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" Literary Society re-opens. As before, prizes will be given to those who send in the best essays. This year, these will consist chiefly of leather-bound "Everyman's Library" volumes, but in case choice is expressed, volumes on Nature Study or Gardening Manuals will be sent instead.

THE OPENING SUBJECT.

The opening subject for this term is: Write an essay about the accompanying picture of a tree. Treat the subject

tion, the fact that the idea of the telephone came to Dr. Graham Bell when one day in Brantford, Ont., he was studying the structure of a dead man's ear.

Arrangements are already being made for the lighting throughout of the Panama Canal.

The latest novelty in women's dresses, says a writer in *The Inventive Age*, is represented by robes of spun glass. The first lady to wear one was of royal rank. It was of a delicate shade of lavender shot with pink, and its peculiar