

# PUBLISHERS' DEPARTMENT.

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## FARMER SMITH'S OPINION OF THE DOMINION MONTHLY.

DEAR MESSRS. PUBLISHERS:—I am much obliged to the Publisher's Department for a hint about topics of conversation. I used to think that I was a very sociable kind of man, but somehow it was impossible for me to talk at home when I returned from work. I am a farmer. I got my supper, and then used to ask some questions about the new cow, or ask how it was the pigs got into the corn, and my wife says that I used to scold continually,—but that must be a mistake—tell the children not to bother me, and go to sleep in the chair by the mantel-piece for an hour or two, wake up and read one of your papers for a few minutes, and then go to bed.

Now I will ask you, Messrs. Publishers, what I had to talk about? Freddy, my eldest son, was always thinking about his particular crochet for the time, although he is a very good boy on the farm. Sarah didn't care a snap then for anything, I used to think, but beaux and dresses. My wife always had enough to occupy her; and I could'n't direct all my words to the helps.

Under these circumstances, your article came like a light in the dark. When I read it I made up my mind that we should have family talks. Well, after a good deal of thinking the matter over and over, I took the last number of your Magazine to begin on. I got Jennie, my second daughter, to read "Partridge Shooting and Romance." Jennie is a very good reader, and although I say it myself, a first-class scholar for one in her condition, but she wasn't interested for the time, and drawled it out as if it were a task. I almost thought that the whole idea was a failure. But this sort of thing didn't last long, for as soon as she got to the meeting between Adele and the young man with the name she never could pronounce—if you want us to read your stories aloud you must get easy names; not Smith or Jones, of course, but novel names, Jennie says. Well, as I was saying

when she got to the love part she began to read quicker, and we all got interested in it, and the first thing I knew ma left her work, and took her knitting and sat down by the table; and little Eddie managed to get on my knee somehow, and when we got to the end ma said how happy we all ought to be with such a comfortable, nice, quiet home; and she hoped that nothing would ever happen her girls like that. Then the girls (the little minx's) said that they liked home too well ever to leave it—they always used to be grumbling and all that sort of thing. I never felt so comfortable for a long time as I did that night.

Well, the next night we read about the "Recollets and the Jesuits," and I found that Freddy had read a great deal about them in the *WITNESS*, and was anxious to tell all he knew, and I tell you the mother was proud of her boy then. We didn't think there was anything in him you know, because he was so quiet, and I am rather inclined to believe that he is a little lazy anyway, but he surprised us that night.

The next night and the next I was busy, but the one after read the "Old Maid's Reflections," but it didn't interest anyone very much, and the boys began calling the girls old maids, and all that sort of thing before I was half through. "The Spray of Wild Roses" came next, and "Nina's" adventure interested the little ones very much, although it took them sometime to understand that "Nina" was a pony and not a little girl.

The next day was Sunday. That used to be the longest in the year, but this day we took some of the Bible stories, and you cannot believe how quickly the time passed, and we were all sorry that it went so quickly; and ma said, with a smile, that she must fix that clock next night. She used always to say before that it went too slow.

But when we got to the "Young Folks," what fun there was. I tell you if Popinjay had been in our house when she wouldn't own up that