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An Answer to "A. L." on School Fairs.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

I will take the negative side of the argument which appeared in your very valuable farm paper in the issue of November 4. Probably this was not meant for debate, but when I read that account of the man in the eastern county regarding the dark side of School Fairs, I was forced to take up my pen in defence of them.

Near the end, this worthy writer drew our attention to the fact that he is a great agriculturist, and an upholder of any movement that will tend to advance agricultural welfare. What I want to ask is this: Why did that man spend so much valuable time in criticising, when he might have been doing something to straighten matters out in that fifty-year-behind-the-times county of his? His letter would be poor encouragement for a county or section that has never joined the School Fair movement and was dubious about joining. They would say, we will stay out, and in that way this great agriculturist, who upholds everything that tends toward the advancement of better farming, would probably be the cause of having no School Fair. It is the best move yet to keep the boys on the farm.

Let me prove my arguments. In the first place, he spoke of grandmother's fried cakes, ma's bread, pa's colt, brother's apples, and sister's bugs and weed seeds. He doesn't say these are facts if you will notice, but, supposing they are, this is only one section he has reference to. I will state a fact I know to be true, because the teacher went and watched one girl make her cake and bread, and she did it under her mother's instructions, but her mother did not touch the dough. This girl won a prize. That same little girl will not forget in a day how that bread was made, because she won a prize, and is proud of it, and I will wager she has tried her hand again since. One boy won a prize on his collection of weed seeds, and I know that he gathered them himself. No doubt he got help to name them, but would my worthy agriculturist expect that boy to know them all, and him only twelve years old. However, that is not the question. He knows them now, and will not soon forget them. I have had this boy show them to me and name them over. About pa's colt, what if it was pa's colt, and if it was over age it was the Fair Directors' fault if this was the case, but will that boy, supposing the colt won a prize, take a greater interest in it after the Fair than if it had never been shown? If it had not been for the Fair the boy probably would not have known such a colt was on the farm. He will at least know that much. About the apples that big brother gathered, I know a boy that at twelve years old correctly named nearly every variety of apples at an Exhibition, not a School Fair. Big brother would not have been much use in that case.

I have touched on some of the things that the elders could help the children with. I will mention something they could not help them with (I notice my worthy upholder of agriculture did not mention them, and I hope to gain a point), namely, public speaking and stock judging. It makes no difference how a father, mother, brother or sister may rush around and do their best, they can't make a child a public speaker without some effort on his or her own part. We live in an age when we need men and women who can get up and express their opinions of the everyday occurrences that take place, and the need is becoming daily more imperative. The person who cannot get up and say something when he is called upon to do so has to take a back seat with the rising generation. I may say that in our county there were some fine speeches made at the School Fairs this fall, speeches that would be a credit to orators much older than the young contestants who competed. This is something that will not leave them, even if they do eat their seed potatoes the next

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