



Dear Friends,—

To-day I have the privilege of giving you two of the essays which were successful in winning prizes in the last competition. The first gives us the question, "How to Enjoy the Winter," considered from a mother's standpoint. We think the observation that the species of amusement must be suited to the disposition of the individual, is well taken. There is little use of forcing on one what one has positive dislike for. At the same time, as "Farmer's Wife" has said, it is possible, to a great extent, to lead children to like advisable forms of recreation, one of which, most certainly, is the habit of reading, and of choosing good literature. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that it is just as necessary to train the bookish child to like taking physical exercise regularly. The parent, in every case, must study the child.

How to Enjoy the Winter.

By a Farmer's Wife, Laurel, Ont.

"Enjoyments and recreations must be as varied as the character of the individuals for whom they are planned. What to one person would be a positive delight, to another would be an irksome task. One boy will delight in games, another must have skates, while a third can only be content when training his favorite steed. While endeavoring, to a certain extent, to cater to their fancies, and allow them to indulge in their favorite pastime, it should be our aim to cultivate in our children a taste for more enduring pleasures.

"Reading, for example, is not dependent on any season, age, habits or conditions of life, but may be enjoyed by young and old, rich and poor alike, for, while the tastes which require physical strength decline with age, that for reading steadily grows. It is also a pleasure which enhances many others; it adds to the pleasures of society, of travel, of art, and leads us to take a greater interest in what is going on in the world around us.

"I would suggest as one of the first requisites to a pleasant, profitable and interesting winter, a definite plan of work, something to accomplish which we have never done before. If school boys or girls, we can aim at reaching a certain standard in our studies; or, it may be, we can take the initiative steps in learning some trade or profession. If older, we can plan, arrange, and perhaps accomplish some improvement in our buildings or home surroundings; but let us do 'something'.

"In the country, for the young people, and young-old people, a literary society could be formed or organized. Meetings could be held, essays written, debates given, and subjects appointed for discussion. Impromptu speeches are very helpful in training us to express ourselves readily and fluently, but a definite subject should be taken, that time be not wasted in talking at random. We might choose for discussion subjects such as the following: 'Education: What it is and does'; 'Benefits of Classic Education'; 'The Novel: Its Origin and Use'; 'Canadian Poets and Poetry'; 'Canadian Statesmen of the Nineteenth Century, or any Century,' and many others would arise from these. Do not attempt too much in one evening. Have your discussions interspersed with music, vocal and instrumental. A wise leader will endeavor to draw out the talents of each member. A very small fee from each individual, either monthly or as admissions, would defray expenses of sitting and heating a room, or it might develop a habit of meeting from house to house.

"The evenings spent in preparation; the pleasant walks or drives to and from the gatherings; the consciousness that you are improving yourself, and, it may be, contributing a little to the happiness of others, must be a source of unalloyed pleasure. I have described only one form of amusement for winter evenings; many others might be suggested, but time will not permit us to dwell on this very attractive theme."

Our second essay has evidently been written by an enthusiastic lover of Dickens. I have enjoyed this letter very much, and must congratulate Miss McTavish on her faculty of being able to form pretty solid judgment on that which she reads, as well as her facility in telling her opinions in few and crisp words. Perhaps Miss McTavish would like to hear what a

Enjoying the Winter with Dickens.

By Florence M. McTavish, Chesley.

"Here is one practical reason for reading Dickens. He is one of the most creative writers. Next to Shakespeare, he supplies most of the current quotations. Not to know and understand them is to be perpetually missing the point in conversation and reading.

"Dickens' personages are all alive, and, I believe, immortal. Not to enjoy their acquaintance is to be exceedingly unfortunate. One who is still so happy as to have all of Dickens unread before him, had probably better begin with David Copperfield. If he does not enjoy this delightful book, it is likely he had better abandon his researches into Dickens. For humor and tenderness, this book is among his masterpieces; though the pathos as to Dora and her Dying Dog, may be forced, though the tale is too long, and though Little Em'ly is, or has come to seem, conventional. The heroine has not many admirers, for, as a rule, we do not love Dickens' women, but his men and boys are simply delightful, and Mr. Micawber is a proverb.

"After Copperfield, Pickwick ought to be read. Dickens never again wrote such a book—nobody has ever written such another book.

"Dickens is often referred to as the

The Advocate in the Home.

That the Farmer's Advocate is fast becoming the women's paper as well as the men's, is very clear to us from the numbers of letters filled with praise of it which the women send in to our offices. One woman wrote recently: "We have to drop some of our papers, but the Advocate will not be one. We find it to be the greatest help to us." And this is only a sample of many that we receive. We are glad to know of this appreciation, and assure our readers that we are trying in every way to deserve it. We are sparing no expense to make the Farmer's Advocate the most attractive and useful paper that enters the farmer's home. Indeed, few people, perhaps, have any idea of the amount that it costs to run a thoroughly high-class paper such as ours. But we are determined that the Farmer's Advocate shall maintain its position at the very top. We ask the readers of the Home Department to tell their friends of our paper and get them to subscribe for it. Push the Advocate. You will be helping both your friends and adding to the welfare of the country by doing so.

prominent critic, Mr. Walter Trewen Lord, recently said in regard to Dickens:

"We may say of his work, as a whole, what Tourgueneff said of Le Nabab—that it may be described as being in some parts very great, while much of it is hackwork. If there is something in Dickens that we would prefer to forget, there is at least as much that we cannot forget if we would. He is often a caricaturist, but at least as often he is far above all caricaturists. His place is not with the greatest artists. He does not live with the Veroneses and the Titians, but he is far apart from the Caraccisti. He is hardly Rembrandt, but we cannot leave him with the Jan Steens and the Ostades. He is not academic, he remained to the last untrained, undrilled, recognizing no models consciously or unconsciously—one would even say that he despised them. As a result, he often created, and he often drivelled. He cheers us beyond any other writer that ever lived, and he bores us worse than the daily newspaper. He stands alone—Charles Dickens."

laughing philosopher. Quite the most comic of his later works is "Great Expectations," where the terrible and the humorous are deftly blended. Here, too, the pathos is moral, not that of the deathbed or suffering childhood.

"In this age of change, Dickens must become old-fashioned, and only intelligible with more or less of an effort. A great many of the social abuses which he satirized are modified, if not abolished. His pathos is often forced, and we resent the continual struggle to make us cry; but let us forget his faults in his merits.

"The writer of this sketch will be much pleased if the effort brings new readers to Dickens, and sends old readers back to him, in whose words we always find something new and fresh, causing our gratitude and admiration."

Perhaps it may be necessary to explain that I have been obliged to leave out the first part of the above essay, which introduced the advisability of taking up the reading of Dickens as a pleasant and profitable winter recreation. I also wish to say that Miss A. L. McDiarmid ran Miss McTavish a very close race in this competition. Miss McDiarmid

sent an exceedingly good essay, but its extreme length militated against it. With our limited Ingle Nook space, and our ever-increasing number of correspondents, I find it utterly impossible to find room for very long articles, no matter how much I should like to give them space. I mentioned the advisability of writing fairly short essays when setting the competition, but am afraid some of our correspondents forgot all about it. However, Miss McDiarmid, come again, and don't forget next time.

Another Ingle Nook Friend.

"Dear friends of the Ingle Nook,—Noticing, in the issue of the seventh, a request for the simpler and easier method of breadmaking than that sent to New Ontario Boy, I send the following 'tried' recipe: Into a three-gallon crock, put four cups of flour, one cup of salt and one cup of sugar, pour boiling water over this, about three quarts. Stir thoroughly. Add four cups of boiled-mashed potatoes; stir again. Add gradually warm water, until the crock is three parts full. When lukewarm, add one Royal yeast cake, previously dissolved in warm water. Cover the crock, and keep in a moderately warm place over night. In the morning, remove to cellar and keep from freezing. This will keep a month or until used. Take three cups of this yeast, add a little more salt and three quarts of warm water (this will make a large batch). In cold weather make the water quite warm, or warm the flour. Stiffen this ready to mold; cover closely, and wrap warmly. This will be ready for molding early in the morning. Knead in the pan, then turn on a warm board; knead again, as much of the success depends on this. The better way is to cut off a piece the size of a loaf; after molding, lay on one side of board until all has been gone over in this way; then commence at the first and shape into loaves for the pan. Set in a warm place to rise. This method is simple and easy, and any farmer's wife who finds breadmaking a task should give it a trial, and report for the encouragement of others."

MRS. MARY E. BYCRAFT.

We are very grateful to Mrs. Bycraft for her ready response to our request, and dare to hope she will come again with many other practical suggestions. In conclusion, may I ask those who are writing on our new competition, "The Most Amusing Thing I Ever Heard of," to make their essays as short as possible, and to be sure to have them in by the last day of February.

DAME DURDEN.

"Farmer's Advocate" Office, London, Ont.

Domestic Economy.

A day or two's abstinence from solid food aids the system to throw off a cold.

Cloths (flannel) wrung from hot water often relieve neuralgia and other severe pains.

If hiccoughs do not yield to the usual remedy of drinking water very slowly, take a small piece of sugar and dissolve it gradually on the tongue.

Heartburn can be immediately got rid of by taking cream of tartar, about half a teaspoonful in half a glass of water. It makes a pleasant effervescent drink, cooling to the blood.

The best treatment for a bruise is an immediate application of hot fomentations; after that, witch hazel, vinegar and hot water or alcohol and water, put on with a bandage and often moistened.

Sprains require prompt treatment. Immediately on receiving the injury bathe the part in water as hot as can be borne, and then swathe in compresses of witch hazel, changing as each becomes dry.