



HOME MAGAZINE



Life, Literature and Education.

Our Debate.

Below you will find the four essays selected as the best amongst those sent in for our debate; also the replies sent by the leaders of the respective sides. This last matter we effected by sending typewritten copies (bearing neither the name nor address of the writers) of the essays selected as best to the leaders, or "first-prize" winners, of the opposing sides.

Now, as mentioned before, the decision in this debate rests wholly with you, the readers of our journal. If you have taken no active part, and intend to take no active part (other than that of being an interested reader) in our Literary Society, you can surely find time to figure in this. All you need to do is to write the word "Affirmative," or "Negative," as you may decide, on a post card, with your name and address, and send it to us (addressed to the "Literary Dept.") so that it may arrive at this office by March 31st. This surely will not be much trouble, and will be the only means of helping us to secure a popular vote. When the vote has been given, and the decision announced, we shall give another prize for the best criticism on the essays submitted in the debate. By "criticism," of course, we mean a criticism with reference to the favorable as well as the unfavorable points.

Now, just a word as to the general quality of the essays received. We may, perhaps, express our opinion of them in the fewest words by saying that we were "proud of them." In fact, we felt like awarding a score of prizes, rather than just four, but could not break through our precedent. Our Honor Roll, had we space, would be a very long one indeed; but as space is a very necessary consideration, we are obliged to reduce it to the names of the five who most closely combated for a place with the prizewinners. "X. Y. Z." sent a very fine essay, which, however, was ruled out of the contest, since X. Y. Z. (W. J. Way) won a prize last time.

In consideration, then, of all the facts, we think no one should be disappointed at not receiving a prize. As we have said so often before, the mental exercise is the main thing; and you have had that, and the satisfaction, besides, of hearing from headquarters that your work was creditable. We did not receive a single poor essay. So don't be discouraged, but try again. Next time you may come out at the very top.

The prizewinners this time are: Affirmative—Agnes Hunt, Nipissing, Ont., and C. M. M., Middlesex Co., Ont. Negative—"Olivia," Simcoe Co., Ont., and "A Spectator," Peel Co., Ont.

The Honor Roll.—X. Y. Z., Chester Nicholson, Margaret Earle, Sandy Fraser, J. D. Taylor, Frank Small.

If we have a regret at all in connection with our debate, it is that so few of our Maritime Province or

Quebec people were represented. We shall hope for a better showing next time.

SUBJECT.

Resolved that a High-school Education Qualifying for a Teacher's Certificate is of More Advantage to a Farmer than an Education Qualifying Him for a Diploma from a Business College.

Affirmative—Essay I.

A farmer should be one of God's most perfect men, with all parts of his mind as well developed as the muscles of his stalwart form. Not a mere machine, mechanically doing the work put before it, but a living, thinking man, with intellect clear and keen, fully alive to the reality of his life-work and the forces with which he has to deal. To fit him to become such, the High-school Education, to my mind, is emphatically preferable. Reasons:

1. The Business-college Course requires but a few months, hence it cannot be so thorough as years of High-school training.

2. It teaches but few subjects, while the High School educates along many lines, and in a broader sense.

3. Business College fits a man for the higher and more difficult branches of business life, but bookkeeping, as taught in the High School, gives all that is necessary for the farmer's work.

4. The High School turns out good penmen. The cramped hand of the hard-working farmer cannot master the extra flourishes of the Business College.

5. In arithmetic, the farmer needs to know more about the measurement of land, lumber, grains, vegetables, capacity of bins, tanks, etc., as well as parts of commercial arithmetic, while the Business College deals most fully with the latter.

6. Stenography and typewriting are not required on the farm, but think, on the other hand—

7. Botany opens his eyes to plant life, and he is enabled to classify his enemies, the weeds, and cope with them the better.

8. The sister sciences, physics and chemistry, get him down to fundamental truths regarding mother earth, the air, water, and forces of nature. He understands the value of different gases, and the elements with which he has to deal.

9. History and geography acquaint him with the wide world and its people, and give a store of useful knowledge.

10. Literature cultures, educates, refines, and, combined with No. 9, makes him feel himself not a whit inferior to up-to-date, well-read men, with whom he will find it delightful to mingle.

11. Composition and grammar make him master of the English tongue, both spoken and written.

12. Drawing, like penmanship, trains the hand and eye, and develops aesthetic tastes; but, trace its teachings in the planning of lawns, the architecture and placing of buildings, and you see a further value.

13. The languages, ancient and modern, if taken up, open to him the best literature of the ancients of other lands, and give a better under-

standing of the English language and our own literature.

14. Algebra and euclid (which should have been mentioned after arithmetic) but widen his grasp of mathematics, and help him grapple with knotty farm problems.

15. My own personal experience in changing from public-school teacher to farmer's wife, shows me that nearly everything mastered in the High-school education comes useful daily. What Business-college graduate can say as much?

AGNES HUNT.

Affirmative—Essay II.

It has been said that the High Schools are educating our boys away from the farm, giving them desires and ambitions for other callings in life. The reason for this tendency is in the fact that the boy's desires are wrongly moulded before the High-school education begins. But if a young man enter High School with farming in view as his calling in life, no greater influence is exerted to lead from the farm than if he entered Business College. Wherein are the superior advantages of a High-school education? And, in answer, we combine its utilitarian and aesthetic features:

1. Giving a broader basis for mental development through a wider curriculum, a more symmetrical mind and nature are produced in the student, while the specialized education of the Business College is not neglected.

2. This wider curriculum opens the way to the study of sciences the student sees exemplified in farm life and work: Botany, enabling him to familiarize himself with the different forms of plant life and their manner of growth; Physics, assisting in a better understanding of the movements of air and water in the soil, and the application of forces in connection with his farm work; Chemistry, giving a basis for further study in its many relations to agriculture.

3. A sufficiently thorough knowledge of mathematics and bookkeeping is given to enable him to solve any problem he may meet in the financial side of his business.

4. The field of literature and history is opened up to him, and in that he learns of the men who have faced the realities of life, sees how they have overcome its difficulties, and better understands how the realities of the past help to make real the ideals of his life.

5. Through this wider education he is better fitted to take his place in society, to apply his mind to the many-sided problems he may have to deal with, to hold his own in public debate on matters pertaining to church and state, than if his education were specialized on the basis on which a Business-college Education is usually founded. It may be interesting to state here that the basis for admission to our Agricultural University, at Guelph, for the four-years' course, is not a Business-college diploma, but the equivalent of a teacher's non-professional certificate, and every student is urged to spend at least one year in High School before entering the O. A. C.

6. The farmer, as well as other men, needs to feel that the chief end of life is not simply to transact business, but to leave an influence for

good on all with whom he comes in contact. A special education whose only object is development along the line of too greatly existing commercialism cannot serve this purpose as well as a wider one. Agriculture combines profession, trade and business, and demands an education on all these lines, not on one.

C. M. M.

Negative—Essay I.

The Business Education is of more value to a farmer than that of the High School, since it is more practical, more concise, and requires less time for its completion.

We will consider that in both lines the graduation from the public School, with an Entrance certificate, is the starting-point. The boy has thus already secured a very good general education, and, having decided upon his life-work, requires special training along that line.

Since, as a general rule, a young farmer cannot spend as much time in school as a boy who is preparing for a profession, he will find the business education more advantageous, since he can secure this training in a six-months' course, while it would take him at least two years to become qualified for a teacher's certificate. This is a saving in time and in money—two important considerations. He can also enter at any time, which is a great convenience. If engaged in any other occupation, he can even attend night school in the Business College.

The general education the boy has started with gives him an insight into the different lines of thought and study, and he is placed upon a good footing to make further researches for himself to broaden out his mind for general purposes. Instead of continuing this general education, as in the High School, it would be more profitable for the young farmer to have his attention directed to those subjects especially adapted to his calling. In the Business College his whole time and attention are focussed upon those subjects which will be of use to him afterward.

Here he will not be compelled to spend time upon what he will forget when he leaves school, but his attention is devoted to that which will be of practical use to him in his everyday work. In arithmetic, he is taught how to calculate rapidly problems relating to weights, measures, etc. Stress is laid upon mental arithmetic, and he can quickly work out problems in grain and lands. He is also taught to realize the importance of keeping accounts, and he learns such bookkeeping as will fill his requirements in farm work. In commercial law, he secures instruction about leases, mortgages, and the laws governing hired help, etc. A knowledge of law is extremely helpful to a farmer, as he can thus settle many disputes quietly, and without expense. Stress is also laid upon good penmanship, and the student learns to draw up proper notes, cheques and drafts.

The very fact that so many Business Colleges have sprung up through private enterprise, proves that the High School is not qualifying men for a business life. The education is not sufficiently practical, and so students have sought for help else-