



Life, Literature and Education.

The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine Literary Society.

AN ESTEEMED CORRESPONDENT ASKS US, FOR REASONS GIVEN BELOW, TO CONDUCT A LITERARY SOCIETY THROUGH THE COLUMNS OF "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE." WE HAVE DECIDED TO DO SO, AND WE COUNT ON OUR READERS, WHO WILL CONSTITUTE THE MEMBERSHIP, TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS.

The practical value of a Literary Society in a community requires no proof. It may not always be so named, but under any name, the society or club which brings people together for the purpose of cultivating and exercising their mental faculties, is of great benefit—directly to the people who thus meet together, and indirectly through them to the whole country, and this statement is borne out by the experience of those who have formed and carried on successful societies throughout the Dominion.

But in many sections of Canada, outside the towns and cities, a thoroughly progressive and interest-breeding literary society is an impossibility. Distances are great, roads are often poor, time always limited; and yet, scattered over our farming districts are many who would appreciate to the full the opportunity to exchange original ideas or opinions upon the productions of others, with some kindred spirit. The teacher in the country must keep out of the rut into which he or she would surely get if her mental processes were confined entirely to the work of the schoolroom. The younger men and women who have received educational advantages, and have wisely gone back to the farm, need some mental polishing to keep the rust spots from the mind's bright surface. And the men and women who have been compelled by circumstances to stick closely to the work of the home, would find in such a society a well of interesting and helpful information, and a place in which to present the ideas and thoughts that have been fermenting in their minds, perhaps for years, with no opportunity of giving them out to others. There is nothing more broadening and uplifting for a man or woman than to mentally rub up against someone else; as "iron sharpeneth iron," so does each receive benefit in seeing things through another's eyes and from another's point of view. Yet, too often, for the reasons given at

the beginning of this article, or for other reasons, this gathering together is not possible, and, as a consequence, many bright minds go hungry for a companionship that is necessary to their mental nourishment.

That many readers of this paper are in this position of comparative isolation, and that they feel it keenly, is evidenced by the letters frequently received at this office, in which the writers lament their inability to form and carry on a society for their mutual mental improvement.

To meet this widespread desire, "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" has, therefore, considered a plan by which the largest, most far-reaching and most interesting literary society in Canada may be made a reality. Why should not the readers of this journal bind themselves into one great society, with the columns of this paper for the meeting-place of ideas? We see no just cause or impediment why such a club should not prove an abounding success with the material which the members are abundantly able to supply. One thought more by way of introduction: Many people suppose that the art of expressing one's self in spoken or written language is the product of natural-born genius. To some extent it is, but it is chiefly a product of downright hard work. We learn to do by doing.

Now, without wasting time on vexatious preliminaries or a complicated constitution, suppose we christen it the "F. A. & H. M. L. S." All agreed?

Who may become a member? Well, any reader of "The Farmer's Advocate" not under sixteen years of age, who sends in a request to that effect, with the full name and P. O. address, will be enrolled in a book kept for the purpose. The proceedings will be conducted by correspondence. Prizes in the form of books will be awarded the successful competitors in debates or papers.

A correspondent writing us in favor of such a society, proposed a small membership fee to cover expenses, but for the sake of simplicity, and to save time, we do not consider that necessary. We will cheerfully assume that and do our share of the work if the members will do the rest.

The winter is passing. Let us settle down to business.

Two prizes are offered for the best essays, not exceeding 500 words, on the following seasonable topic:

Which do you consider the most important event in the year 1905, in (a) your Province, (b) in Canada, (c) in Great Britain, (d) in the United States, (e) in the world, with reasons for your answers?

All contributions for this competition must reach this office not later than Jan. 20th, 1906. The prize-winning essays will be published.

The applications to be enrolled as a member and the contributions may come in the same letter. Contributions to be written on one side of the paper only, with full name and P. O. on back. Literary merit will, in all cases, be considered.

[Editor's Note.—Suggestions for the future conduct of the "F. A. & H. M. L. S., with subjects for papers or debates, will be gladly received.]

Church Union in Canada.

The joint committee on Church Union, composed of representatives of the Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, has prepared a report from the points submitted by the various sub-committees, which will serve as a framework for the proposed union of these three denominations, and which will be brought before each of them in their conferences next summer.

In this report are formulated the doctrines held in common by the three churches; the lines along which a united church would be possible; the settlement and transfer of ministers, and their preparation for the ministry; and the relations of a minister to the doctrines of the church, that, as a candidate for ordination he must believe himself a child of God, truly called to the ministry, must hold the Holy Scriptures as containing sufficiently all doctrines necessary to salvation, and be resolved to teach nothing not in conformity with them.

The report on the doctrine suggested by the sub-committee, as a basis of possible union, contained nineteen articles, covering the beliefs held in common by the three churches; the power, immutability, love and goodness of God as revealed in nature, in history, in the heart of man, and in the Holy Scriptures; the divinity of Christ and the power of His atonement, as also His intercession in Heaven for human beings; the influence of the Holy Spirit; of the redemption, justification and regeneration of those who believe. The law of God as shown in the ten commandments and in the words of Christ when on earth, is given as the standard for the conduct of mankind; the Church to be one holy catholic body united, with Christ as its head; the sacraments to be two—baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The sub-committee on Ministry, in its report, advised that the pastoral service be without a time limit, ministers being able at the end of any one year to seek a change, by application to the Settlement Committee, which shall have authority to fill vacant pulpits with ministers temporarily, and to initiate correspondence between ministers and charges. It shall be the policy of the church that every congregation shall have a pastorate without interruption, and every effective minister a charge.

"Canada led the way in the matter of denominational reunions. Presbyterianism, divided by the secessions and disruptions in Scotland, was reunited in 1875. Methodism, beginning with the divisions in England

and the United States, was reunited in 1884. And now it would seem that once again Canada is to be first in the healing of those wider breaches which the controversies of the centuries have made in the Protestantism of the world."

It is a historic pronouncement, and the result is most gratifying. A marked feature of the findings is the substantial unity and essential harmony existing between these three great denominations. Neither in doctrine, policy, nor in institutions, was there disclosed any insuperable objection to organic union, which even conservative publicists admit is now, in sight. It may take some time, but the logic of events is leading these bodies into one with a common name and common creed and a common purpose. The statement of doctrine is a truly remarkable statement of essentials in Christian belief. As a tentative basis of union, what has been happily agreed upon will next go before the great assemblies of the three Churches concerned during the approaching year. The strength of the union sentiment among the masses of the people, and particularly throughout the West, was one of the features very strongly emphasized at the union conference which was held at Toronto.

Training to Think.

"I may lay too much stress on the importance of a young man's working at some manual or mental money-making pursuit while he is at school, but it does seem rather foolish to graduate Bachelors of Arts into the primary grade of the working world."

There is in our own schools and universities far too much of the very type of "cultured scholar" referred to in the above quotation from a recent magazine article. Men graduate from our schools and universities into the A B C of the workaday world. We claim that credit is due to the man that fights his way through school and earns his bread while attending college, but in the majority of cases success is due to the very fact that in the daily effort to earn his way, he has prepared himself for graduation into the school of success in the business or professional world.

The students who graduate from agricultural colleges are usually successful in after life, even if they do not remain with their chosen profession of agriculture. Why? Because, in their work at college they have been trained to think and work for themselves, and the power of thought, of individual initiative is what lifts the genius above the clods. As a nation, we should guard against reading too much and thinking too little, and our schools with a long line of subjects calculated to place a premium on cramming, tend to accentuate this difficulty.

All hail, then, to the man who thinks. The problems of Canadian national life and the problems of the Canadian farmer will be solved by the thinking men; and thoughtful men will come from the schools and colleges of our land where men are trained to think and work, and not from places where dead languages sing a requiem over bright minds in process of decay.