

THE DEBATER'S TREASURY

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The Debater's Treasury by William Pittenger

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WILLIAM PITTENGER

**THE DEBATER'S
TREASURY**

THE DEBATER'S TREASURY

BY

WILLIAM PITTENGER

AUTHOR OF "TOASTS," &c.

COMPRISING A LIST OF OVER TWO
HUNDRED QUESTIONS FOR DE-
BATE, WITH ARGUMENTS BOTH
AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE

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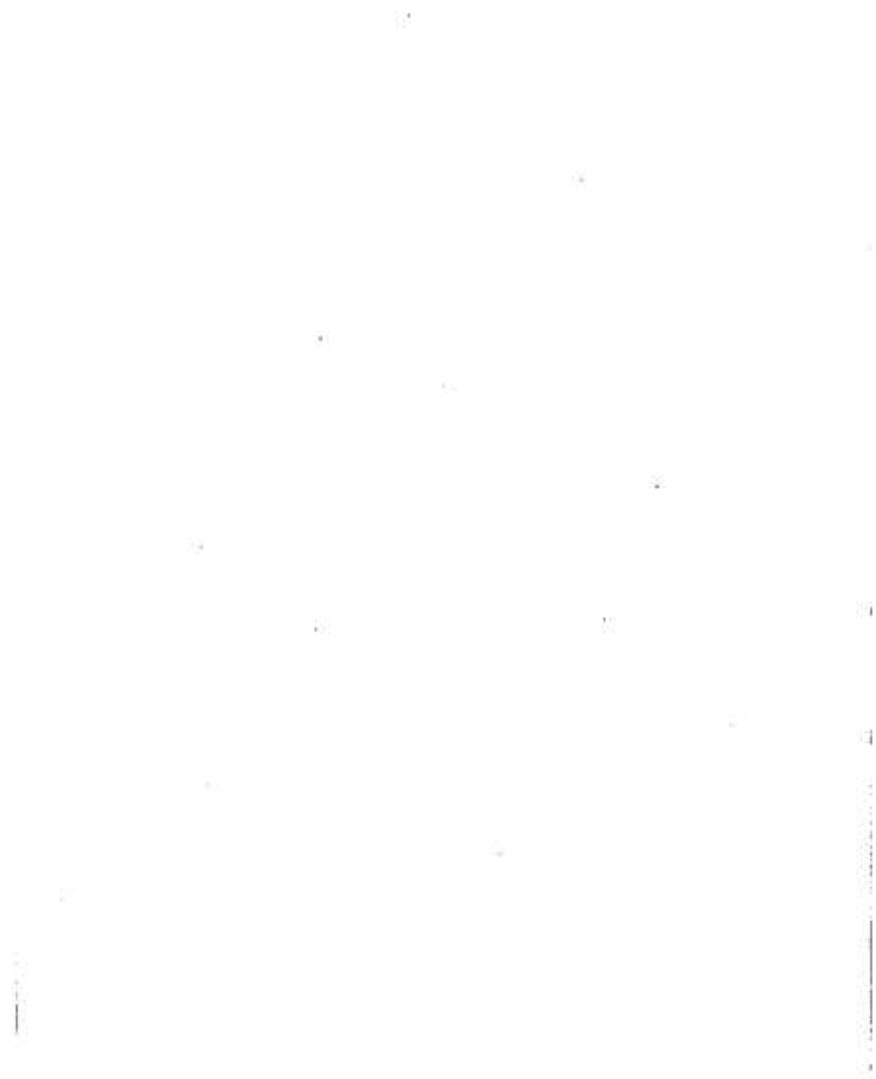
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1937

AMBLE FORD L. B JUN



INTRODUCTION.

The question is often asked, Can the art of debate be cultivated? To this question we reply, it certainly can. Natural qualities furnish the foundation in this art as well as in any other, but skill comes through rightly directed practice.

This treatise gives a few simple directions to help the novice into the right path, but he must rely upon the facility only to be acquired through long practice. A long list of questions is given, suitable for discussion, which will be useful in schools and in debating societies. When a question is to be selected for a coming debate it will hardly be possible to read over a list so varied as this without either finding what is wanted or a suggestion of an acceptable topic.

The arguments appended are not all that might be offered; they may not even be the best; but they will show that something can be said on each side of the question. The notes explain the nature and scope of the question, especially where arguments are perfectly

obvious. The list is intended for a wide range of debaters. Some topics will seem almost childish; others will appear too difficult for any but students specially prepared. This was inevitable. Let each take what may suit him and pass by those either too hard or too easy. No one class of students will ever need to use all of them.

It has not been thought necessary to add references to sources of information. Some of these are self-evident as to the appropriate articles in cyclopædias. Others would be beyond the reach of students. In several books of the same general character which have come under the writer's notice reference has been made to back numbers of English reviews and magazines, sometimes fifty years old. Not much utility in that! One who has access to a great library will have little trouble in finding the books and papers which will give material for a coming debate; others will have to be satisfied with the material at hand. The debater's art is not so much in accumulating a vast mass of facts: that belongs rather to the student: and while such facts may be used effectively by a good debater, they not infrequently are ill-digested and positively hurtful. We do not wish to imply that ignorance adds to a debater's force. The more he knows the better, if he has it well in hand and understands what to omit. But the gathering of knowledge belongs to the general student. The art of debate teaches to use effectively what is already known

THE DEBATER'S TREASURY.

FORMS OF DEBATE.

The ability to debate a question skillfully and forcibly is of great value. It is a desirable accomplishment and has often been the passport to wealth and fame. In the conflict of opinion prevailing in every department of life, it is desirable to maintain our own side in the face of all opposition. Whoever cannot do so may possess brilliant ideas, may originate wise plans, and even be eloquent with pen and tongue, but he will always find it difficult to secure the co-operation of others. "He is a good debater," when said of a man in State, Church, or business, is very apt to call out the rejoinder, "Then let us, if possible, secure his help."

The simplest form of debate is a regular discussion between two persons. A mere "argument," carried on in conversation on political or other topics is not dignified with this title. But when a formal question is proposed and two persons oppose each other in set speeches we have the rudimentary debate. A chairman may pre-

side and judges render a decision, and each speaker may speak more than once according to agreement. If each should have but a single speech the addresses might be interesting and might fairly set forth the opposing views; but the mental struggle which makes a debate the most interesting form of speech could not be fully developed. The second speaker might attack the first, but unless the exercises were extended there would be no opportunity of seeing what could be said in reply. In considering debate, therefore, we will assume that there are either more than two speakers or that more than one speech is allowed.

The question should be so stated (especially for this form of direct controversy) as to allow a distinct affirmative and negative. Should the question be, "Which is the most useful metal, gold, silver, or iron?" the speakers might advocate the metals in the order of naming, but it would be better to change the form so as to ask a question directly or affirm the superiority of one over the others, thus, "Gold is more useful than silver or iron," or, "*Resolved*, That iron is more valuable than gold or silver," or, "Is silver more necessary to men than gold or iron?" Either of these modes of statement throws the weight of affirming on one party and that of denying on the other.

Let us assume that the debate is between two persons only, A and B, the first affirming, and that they have two "rounds." If the speakers are well matched and