

1897

DEPARTMENT REPORTS.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT.

To the Honorable the State Board of Agriculture:

I herewith tender my report, as President of the College under your control, for the year ending June 30, 1897.

As I assumed the duties of my present position in March, 1896, my report for last year was necessarily very brief.

Soon after taking charge of the College three very important and somewhat radical changes were made in the policy of the institution, namely: the long winter vacation was changed from the winter to the summer months. A course for young women was outlined and adopted and Abbot Hall set apart for their exclusive use; it was decided to offer four special six-week courses during the winter. These changes had been under consideration for several years and seemed to meet the approval of the faculty, as well as many influential citizens of the State.

During the early history of the College students taught school during the winter vacation and thereby earned almost enough money to carry them through the school year. It was believed also that practical agriculture could be studied to better advantage during the summer months than during the winter. This plan seems to have been well suited to the conditions prevailing at that time, but at the present time very few schools have short winter terms and in recent years only comparatively few of the students have found it convenient or profitable to teach during the winter vacation. It is believed, also, that students returning to the farm during the long vacation will be kept in closer touch with agriculture and will be more likely to return to industrial pursuits after graduating. The experience of the first year testifies to the wisdom of this change. It has not resulted in students dropping out to teach or leaving college for the lack of funds. Only one student during the last year got leave of absence to teach during the winter. It is believed that this change will result in great good to the College.

It has been urged for a number of years that the College should offer to young women the same advantages that it has offered in the past to young men. It has been believed by many that what science has done for the farm and shop it can do for the home. With this in mind, a course of study for young women, covering four years of work, has been outlined and adopted. It affords an opportunity to acquire a thorough knowledge

of English, mathematics, history, literature, French, German, botany, chemistry, entomology, natural philosophy; but the distinguishing feature of the course is the emphasis it lays on home making. There is given, in addition to other studies, in the freshman year a very full course in cooking. The object of this instruction is to familiarize students with the most healthful, attractive, and at the same time economical methods of preparing such articles of food as are found on a well appointed table. A course of lectures in Domestic Science is given during the sophomore year. Students during this year also spend four hours per week in the sewing room. A thorough course is given in plain sewing, cutting and fitting. Millinery is given as an elective during the junior year. (While the practical work has been emphasized, it has not been the intention to despise what are called accomplishments. A thorough course in drawing; a course of lectures in the graphic arts; a course of lectures in the history of art with illustrations, and elective work in painting, are given. Two years of instruction on the piano, free of charge, are offered to young women who are pursuing the regular women's course and not deficient in more than two studies.) There is a chorus class free to all who may desire such instruction. This meets one hour each week for practice. In addition to the three regular studies during the junior and senior years, young women elect work in one of the following courses: Floriculture, fruit culture, kitchen gardening, millinery, invalid cooking, dairying, poultry raising. This course is put on precisely the same footing as the other course and the graduate is given the degree of Bachelor of Science. About forty-five young women entered upon this course at the beginning of the year, and the indications are that it will become very popular and attract many students.

The College, in its endeavor to keep in close touch with the agricultural interests of the State, has deemed it wise to offer to that class of farmers, both old and young, who cannot avail themselves of our long four year course, the advantage of special winter courses. Eighteen took the special six weeks course in dairying, fifteen live stock husbandry, ten fruit culture and two floriculture and one vegetable gardening. They entered into the work with enthusiasm and expressed great satisfaction with the results. It is believed that these special courses will be very much appreciated by the farmers of the State. All these changes have met the highest expectations of those who are responsible for the progress of the College.

The attendance during the year was fairly good. There were enrolled during the year 342 regular students, 11 graduate students, and 45 in the special courses, making a total of 398.

Very respectfully,

J. L. SNYDER.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, MICH., }
June 30, 1897.