

OUR SOCIAL CHAT

All letters intended for this department should be addressed to "Aunt Jennie," care of The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, N. C.

Aunt Jennie's Letter.

This week have the pleasure of introducing an interesting writer, "Forest Gray," to the Circle. Hers is a sensible letter and there are hundreds of mothers who will appreciate the truths contained therein.

I endorse most heartily what Mrs. J. L. D. says as to the foolish and extravagant style which dragging skirts display. Almost all women detest them and then allow Dame Fashion to force them to wear them. Where is the common sense in thus displaying our weakness as a sex? No man would submit to so intolerant a bondage. Were they to submit to such inconvenience one time and feel the cramp of hand and arm from the constant holding and supporting of a heavy skirt on a long walk, rest assured one time would suffice to effect a cure of that case of vanity. So many women are governed by what people say about the way they dress, and literally have nervous chills if they are seen in an old-fashioned dress or one that is not quite up-to-date. Is this right? Ought we to care so much for our outward appearance and force ourselves to forget other and more important things by the necessary endurance of the torture of them?

No girl can be happy while both shoes pinch and cramp her feet, and we all know that she cannot move about with grace. Why girls persist in believing that small feet are preferable to beautiful symmetrical feet is an enigma yet to be solved. A No. 4 foot in a No. 2½ shoe is a deformity and a travesty on nature. Be comfortable, and if your feet are large, wear shoes to fit them, remembering that you thus rid your body of much pain and your brain of a useless, senseless care.

The proposition to send the extra material that would be used in trailing skirts to some orphanage, even for six months or a year, would clothe hundreds of helpless children. To look pretty is one of woman's missions, but to abandon common sense in the effort, is to call forth censure instead of admiration, even if her lack of better knowledge does sometimes make her think differently.

How does an anti-train league strike you? What do you say as to the feasibility of it? I know that most young girls are anxious for the time to come when they can don their first sweeping dress, and imagine that the feeling is like that experienced by a boy when he quits knee pants. They believe that it tells the world that they are nearing the glories of manhood and womanhood. A long dress is all right provided it does not touch the ground or floor; just long enough to escape them and avoid the dust and infectious filth.

AUNT JENNIE.

Does the Father Do His Part in the Training of His Sons?

Dear Aunt Jennie:—Possibly the few remarks, which I beg your permission to make, may not be in strict keeping with the lines of thought usually pursued by the Chaterers. But the subject has been forced upon my notice by several incidents, and I trust you will not object to my calling your attention to it.

A great deal has been said of woman's influence, especially in the home, and while I would not detract from it in the least, I wish to present another side of the question. I hold that while woman's duties as home-maker and character-builder are great, the duties of the husband and father in the home are too often neglected. In homes where the father's business does not occupy all of his time and he remains at home at least part of every day, it may not be as I stated. But in the majority of cases the care and management of the children are left almost entirely

to the mother. Take the business men, the professional men, the traveling men—they spend only a fraction of their time at home. They see very little of the children, and rarely know anything of the daily round of little things that make up the tiny lives. The little joys and sorrows, the puzzling questions that find their way into the growing brain, the little fits of wilfulness—all are left for the patient mother to deal with.

It is a pleasure for her to do so? Of course it is. Nothing gives more joy to a mother's heart than to be near her little ones, and help and train them. It is her duty, her first and most important duty. But I ask if the pleasure and duty of training immortal souls for God's eternity, should not be shared more equally by the two into whose keeping that soul was entrusted?

Woman is what some please to term the "weaker sex." If this epithet is correct, should she be left with that most important of all work to perform almost alone? I do not desire to lessen the influence of women, or to be unappreciative of the noble work they are doing. I only insist that the responsibility of training children be more evenly divided between the husband and wife.

I have in mind an incident, an exceptional case possibly, but it shows what disastrous results neglect on the part of the father may have. The man of whom I am thinking is a merchant, and a minister, a good man. His wife is a delicate woman, and incapable of managing a large family of boys. The father is never at home except late at night. He is a well-to-do man, and provides well for his family. He gives everything he can in the way of educational advantages and worldly goods. He seems to be kind and affectionate. Is he a good father? I say not. His business and his preaching occupy his whole attention; he knows not where his boys are, nor what they are doing; his wife cannot keep them with her all the time, and consequently a worse family of boys is rarely seen.

It is not always truest kindness to indulge every wish; it is not always deepest love that spends itself in making money. There are things better and more precious far than gold.

It would pay far better in the end to put less money in the children's pockets, and more noble thoughts and ideas in their minds. It is far better to allow their hands to become roughened by honest toil, than to keep them soft and white through idleness and uselessness. It is far better to clothe their bodies with less expensive apparel, their minds and hearts with the love of God's truth.

Yes, fathers, and mothers, too, give your children fewer of this world's treasures if need be, but give them the priceless inheritance of Christian parents. Lead them into that sweetest of all knowledge, the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; lead them into the acceptance of that which will be of more value to them than all things else—the Christian spirit.

FOREST GRAY.

Wake Co., N. C.

About Women's Dresses.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—I have just come home from a public meeting and must tell you of some of the things I saw which impressed me. One thing was a little boy about ten years old with a cigarette in his mouth. What a pity that the material that makes a man is being blown away with that smoke!

Then I saw a young, fragile girl with very high French heels and a waist that would not measure fifteen inches, who seemed trying to be comfortable in that fix. I wondered what she and her mother were thinking of when they imposed such punishment on her frail body, and if they believed her constitution could withstand the tax.

But one of the most foolish things I saw was

the seeming indifference displayed by those women who dragged several yards of dress goods behind them when they walked. How could they endure the filth of it? I detest long dresses that sweep the ground. It is not so bad if one can stay in the house and let the skirts drag over nice clean floors or carpets, but to go out and sweep the earth, then be compelled to carry the filth home and distribute it, is a nuisance sure enough. I am a germ fiend, but I do love cleanliness, and I know that long skirts are simply filthy. Why can't we wear walking skirts even when we are able to ride? They are so much more convenient and we need not have the cramp in either hand from that continual holding it off the ground. If the women of America would vote with one accord to abolish trains on skirts, the thing would be done, and if they are as anxious to pay the same for their dresses that they do now, why just buy the same number of yards and then send those left to some orphanage?

MRS. J. L. D.

A Negro Prophet Runs Amuck in Wilmington.

A large part of the negro population of Wilmington is considerably stirred up over a prophecy made by a negro crank who styles himself as "Prince George," in which he predicts the destruction of Wilmington by fire on August 8th, next. At the same time he says Wrightville and Carolina beaches, the nearby seashore resorts, will be completely submerged by a tidal wave. After this terrible catastrophe the negro says he will be crowned prince of the domain in this entire section.

Prince George's prophecy is believed by the negroes of the community to such an extent that scores of them have left the city for other parts, and many more are planning to get away before the so-called "evil day" arrives. Servants who have been in families for years are threatening to leave, and unless some influence is soon brought to bear to disabuse their minds, house servants will be scarce in Wilmington inside of the next few months. Many families who have been arranging to move to their cottages on the beaches are confronted with a serious problem. Their servants say they will not go down to the seashore for fear the tidal wave predicted by Prophet George may come true.

The colored preachers in the city, realizing to what an alarming extent this fear of their race has grown, have begun to preach to their congregations the absurdity of the prophecy. The situation is very serious and the white people of the community realize that strong pressure must be brought to bear to prevent a wholesale exodus of negroes from the city.

The prophet has made the same prediction for New Bern, N. C., on the same date.

The negro George is a man far below the ordinary intelligence of his race. He is of very weak mind and has only one thought, his prophecy. He verily believes that God has endowed him with the power to foresee this terrible calamity which he predicts, and he thinks it his duty as an apostle of Christ to warn his people to flee from the fire and the flood before it is too late.—Wilmington, N. C., dispatch, May 16th.

A Neat Reply.

Several years ago Mr. W. B. Marsh went to law with one of his neighbors, or perhaps it was the neighbor that went to law against him. Anyway, the said neighbor permitted his feelings to be so hard against Mr. Marsh that he wouldn't speak to him when he met him, yet Mr. Marsh would speak in a friendly way every time they met. It is said that at one time when they met in the road Mr. Marsh spoke politely to his stubborn neighbor who drawled out: "I don't speak to dogs." Mr. Marsh promptly replied: "Well, I do."—Marshville (N. C.) Home.