

**OUR SOCIAL CHAT**

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

**Another Prize.**

Another prize is now offered to readers of Social Chat. A copy of Webster's International Dictionary is offered to the writer of the most interesting and valuable letter sent to this department between September 1st and November 15th. This particular copy has been in use in The Progressive Farmer office for several years, and though not new by any means, will be good for use for several years yet to come, and we hope that the competition will be spirited. Send on your letters.

AUNT JENNIE.

**Aunt Jennie's Letter.**

During years of experience I have often noticed a sad lack of even simple knowledge in a sick room. For instance, a young mother was caring for and anxiously watching her baby night and day through its first serious illness, and a neighbor—herself the mother of several children—came blustering in and waked the little one from its first natural sleep in many days. But this was not all. She explained to the anxious young mother why she knew that the child would certainly die. Then she insisted on holding the child in her own arms and commented on its pallor and the temperature of its head and hands; and finally handed it back to the tearful mother with the consoling (?) remark that that was the last time she ever expected to see it breathe, and she felt like it would have been a sin if she had not held it the last time she would ever see it. Now, I think it was a sin for her to see it at all. She left the young mother doubly anxious about the child and so exceedingly nervous that every picture in her imagination was over-drawn and many times during the days and nights that followed before its recovery she saw her darling cold and white, ready for the grave. Why she even had the little clothes she meant it should wear laundered and ready for immediate use. Can you realize the harm which that one call did?

Never go into a sick room in a hurry, and don't talk loud or slam things around. Be gentle and don't comment on how the patient looks or ask about the medicine they take, and then talk of its deleterious effect on this person and that one whom you have known. Be cheerful; be full of hope; don't wear a long face. If you feel badly yourself, why stay away from those who seem sicker than yourself. Don't be a Job's comforter; find the bright side. Even if you know that the patient must die, you can with tact make his last days more comfortable; for if he is a Christian, he is not loath to go home, and may tell you as much. Then of course you can discuss the beauties of that country with him and the rest awaiting him where sickness is unknown. Don't sit with folded

hands and fear that you, too, will take the same disease, and whisper about him and what you have heard that the doctor has said about him. This is wrong; and, besides, a whisper might make him nervous and consequently worse. Visit the sick by all means. Be helpful, but don't forget to be quiet.

AUNT JENNIE.

**Another Defender of the Feathered Tribe.**

Dear Aunt Jennie:—I have been very much interested in the several articles that have appeared in your department of The Progressive Farmer urging the importance of bird protection, and I think it probable that this subject can be most effectively presented in the shape of an appeal to the young people who read your columns.

Taking altruism out of the question, it is very objectionable from any point of view to prosecute the slaughter of the feathered and musical innocents. I can remember when every boy who could throw a stone straight, use a bow and arrow with skill, or fire a gun with accuracy, waged a war of extermination on the king-bird, or bee-martin. The reason given was, he ate bees. This very fact proved him an insect-eater, and a means of destroying pests detrimental to growing crops. The blue-bird came under the ban likewise because he fought the house-martin. Taking up for a pet had some redeeming features, or at least some extenuation, but the blue bird is also a friend of the farmer, being likewise an insect eater.

In my youthful days I considered it a religious duty to shoot the Bob-white because, in the expressed opinion of every neighborhood oracle, they took up corn and ate wheat. He is guilty on both counts of the indictment, but does a hundred fold more good than harm in the amount of bugs and worms he destroys. The moaning dove, the emblem of innocence and the bird that returned to the ark as the friend of man and as the bearer of the symbol of peace, came under condemnation, because some wisacre had seen it eat wheat. Therefore, it must die the death.

All well-informed people know that worms and insects have caused a great detriment to crops and fruit trees, and one reason of this is that the singing birds, with the dove and quail have been nearly exterminated. I can remember proving my skill with a rie, when a mere boy, by shooting off the heads of sap-suckers. In my ignorance I did this, because he pecked fruit trees. I did not then know he was hunting for the very borer that has worked such havoc in our orchards.

It is pleasant to know that the Audubon Society has been organized to protect these feathered friends of man, but it is mortifying to contemplate how the law is evaded and openly violated. A sense of innate kindness to the weak and helpless will restrain the truly good and merciful, but if a person has none of

these finer feelings it is better to spare the birds from sordid considerations. Bull-bats are shot for sport in eight miles of where I live just out of the corporate limits of the town, and boys shoot birds on the shade-trees of the very streets with spring guns.

Taking an esthetic view of the question, who would like to live where there are no singing birds? Speaking for myself, I enjoy the song of the mocking bird, the whistle of the quail, the notes of the different members of the thrush, lark, and robin family.

The man who sees no beauty in flowers, hears no music in the song of birds, has a makeup not to be envied. While I do not know the names of many feathered songsters, and am woefully ignorant of botany, I can certainly appreciate the beauty and fragrance of a flower; as well as the grace, beauty and music of many of our birds. Some critic might say he has no music in his soul, and all birds do not sing, any way. That is a fact, and many good and useful people do not make music either. Neither have all useful people beauty and accomplishments. The birds of the wood-pecker family have not the captivating strains of the eolian harp, nor yet the cadence of the last tuneful effort of the dying swan. But if he destroys bugs and worms that hurt fruit trees and crops, let him live.

While I am not as pious in the estimation of some as I ought to be, because I don't wear a face long enough to eat oats out of a churn, yet I see pious people, so-called, perform and sanction acts of cruelty towards birds and dumb animals at which my mind revolts. What I have said regarding religion, also applies to my bravery. I am not valiant to hurt, but I am too brave and generous to wantonly wound, torture, or kill the lowest of the animal kingdom, except for food or in self-defense.

CORN CRACKER.

Cleveland Co., N. C.

**A Suggestion for Brides.**

Dear Aunt Jennie:—The mothers of young women who are preparing their wedding outfits are unconsciously assisting them to set the trap that will deprive them of some of the sweetness of life. By this I mean that they encourage needless extravagance, consequently the girl buys too much, and oftentimes finer articles than she will henceforth be able to buy after the first are worn to fragments. I sometimes think that it would be well and more conducive to peace and harmony in our homes were the prospective bride to begin life with the young man of her choice without so extensive a wardrobe. Let her have what she will really need and then depend on his generosity to procure the extras. He will then learn that she is dependent and will gladly help her to get things, but I have so often seen brides whose super-abundant supply of clothing lasted for years after marriage—in fact, until the good man had time

and again congratulated himself on securing an economical wife, one who never needed anything. The awakening was something shocking and awful to both parties. She realizing that she must have new garments occasionally, appealed to him who had so seriously and earnestly repeated, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," on the day of their marriage and found that he did not mean even the half of those goods, and refused, saying, by way of consoling, that he meant to buy a new horse in a few days. And so she waited. Then the horse needed a saddle, and after that a new buggy. Still she waited uncomplainingly while the wagon and farm implements were replaced by new ones of better make. It may be that she is waiting still—yet they tell us that Job was a man.

MRS. J. L. D.

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