

THE HOME CIRCLE.

Be a Good Boy; Good-by.

How oft in my dreams I go back to the day
When I stood at our old wooden gate,
And started to school in full battle array,
Well armed with a primer and slate.
And as the latch fell I thought myself free,
And gloried, I fear, on the sly,
Till I heard a kind voice that whispered to me:
"Be a good boy; good-by."
"Be a good boy; good-by." It seems
They have followed me all these years.
They have given a form to my youthful dreams
And scattered my foolish fears.
They have stayed my feet on many a brink,
Unseen by a blinded eye;
For just in time I would pause and think:
"Be a good boy; good-by."
Oh, brother of mine, in the battle of life,
Just starting or nearing its close,
This motto aloft, in the midst of the strife,
Will conquer wherever it goes.

Mistakes you will make for each of us errs,
But, brother, just honestly try
To accomplish your best. In whatever occurs
"Be a good-boy; good-by."
—John L. Shroy, in Saturday Evening Post.

Mistakes and Possibilities of Rural Life.

Are we in rural life filling the measure and responsibility of men and women? Are we reading, thinking and acting in the great drama of life? Are we adding to the health-giving pursuits of the farm that which will ennoble the mind and fit us alike for battling with the financial problems of the day, and for entering cultured society? In brief, are we keeping pace with the march of progress visible in the world about us?

In answering these interrogations we are compelled to say that while farming has very much improved in the general routine of out-door life, we are sadly behind the spirit of the age in many of the characteristics which would render our homes more pleasant and our business more profitable. So far as regards the labor of the farm, it has been very much lightened by the aid of machinery of all descriptions. But what are the results of this? Are we reaping all the benefits from this change that are possible to be gained from it? Through this channel we may be enabled to shorten the hours of toil and increase those of recreation and mental improvement. But as a rule, are we doing this? On the other hand, is it not true that the greater facilities we have for accomplishing labor on the farm the more we undertake to do? Not content when performing the same amount of labor in six or eight hours, which formerly required ten, to devote the time thus saved to other useful occupations and developments quite as necessary to our general welfare as the silver and gold we are so anxious to obtain.

Hardly is it necessary to state that this is one of the most prominent mistakes in rural life—that inordinate thirst for wealth in some, which crushes all the finer qualities of their nature that they may grow rich. The mind that is never expanded beyond the circumference of the Almighty Dollar works ultimately its own ruin, and meanwhile robs itself of the real joys in life.

Scarcely less excusable is this than the groveling, unambitious farmer who seeks nothing but the commonest level of mankind, yet grows eternally at his lot.

The greatest wisdom is displayed when we seek to develop the nobler characteristics of our natures. Social, mental and moral culture should engage our best endeavors and receive liberally of our means. Many rural homes, where dollars are rapidly accumulated and possessions widened, are destitute of what should most abound, viz.: contentment and the development of true character. Many gain the reputation of model farmers by raising large crops, displaying good judgment in securing bargains and making frequent land purchases, whose homes in general appearance are anything but creditable to them.

When buildings and surrounding present an appearance of neglect and decay, it is a sad disappointment to visit such premises where you have reason to expect to find everything in a flourishing condition, and some characteristics of modern style, to see ill-taste and inconvenience on every hand, the family simply getting along with buildings which look like they belonged to the renter instead of the well-to-do owner. As our subject intimates there are possibilities within our reach which have not yet been attained. In presenting some of the mistakes prevalent in the country we unhesitatingly affirm that many of

them may and should be remedied. In our State more than half the population are engaged in agriculture. Almost half the citizens of the entire nation are thus employed. It is the great wealth-giving power of the land, and by it all other industries are moved. While it is thus the acknowledged leading industry of our country, we should expect to see it largely represented in the important councils of the government. Yet how few comparatively ever assist in framing the laws by which they are ruled. The cause for this injustice is very apparent when we consider how little attention is given by rural people to that preparation which will fit them for such positions. While we do not argue that the farmer should aspire to political honors, we do claim that he can and should be "a man among men," having a mind strengthened and developed by education until he possesses wisdom to know his rights and ability to defend them. Just here exists one of the most formidable troubles among the inconveniences of rural districts. The educational advantages offered in the country are not encouraging, especially to boys. School terms are short, at best, and when we consider how little of them the average boy enjoys, our sympathies for him should be aroused. At the beginning of the term, while the little ones, not of much service at home, are answering the call of the school bell, the father is, perhaps, laying out work for the half-grown boys, whose time he considers too useful to himself to be spent in the school room.

So it happens that from wood-cutting to corn gathering and a legion of other duties, they are kept back a month or more at the beginning. Neither is it infrequent that they are stopped two or three weeks before the close of school. Shall we wonder that many boys arrive at manhood and settle down on farms who are unable to calculate the sum of their products when marketed, having to depend upon the buyer or some friend for that which he should be wholly competent to do for himself? There may be cases where this can not be avoided, but there are many in which there is no necessity for such neglect and detention.

The objections may be urged that they often do not improve the time in school. This is lamentably true the world over, but no more so of country boys than those of the city. But in the well regulated schools of the city, compulsory rules enforce a regularity of attendance and a higher grade of recitation, all of which is backed by such authority as to demand the respect of parents as well as students. There is indeed a call for general improvement, especially home culture and better educational advantages.

Parents, to you we appeal in behalf of the present and future generations to exert your influence properly to bring about this needful change. It is in the home and under your influence that the first and most lasting impressions are made. The most illustrious statesmen, the most distinguished warriors, the most eloquent ministers and the greatest benefactors of human kind, owe their greatness to the fostering influence of home. When these necessary developments of mind and cultivated tastes, in connection with applied science to agriculture in all its departments, becomes the rule instead of the exception, then shall we indeed walk in the highway to success, and rural life will be in the wake of progress in securing that which it is possible to attain.—Mrs. Jas. A. Mount, in American Farm Magazine.

BEAUTY'S GREATEST FOE.

An Ill-Temper is Always Sure to Ruin Its Victim's Beauty.

Bad temper and worry will trace more wrinkles in one night than hot and cold bathing and massage and complexion brushes and creams and lotions can wash out in a year's faithful application. Physicians assert that an immense amount of nerve-force is expended in every fit of bad temper; that when one little part of the nervous system gets wrong the face first records it. The eyes begin losing the luster of youth, muscles become flabby, the skin refuses to contract accordingly, and the inevitable result is wrinkles, femininity's fiercest and most insidious foe. There is no use attempting to reason with a woman about the evil effects of ill-temper while she is in an ugly mood. She knows perfectly well that it is bad form; that it savors of the coarse and unbridled; that it is weak and belittling and immoral, and that it hurts her cause to lose her temper. But she does not stop at just that time to think about it, and to remind her of the fact only adds fuel to the flames.

But when she is cool and serene and at peace with all the world, if you can convince her that each fit of temper adds a year to her age by weakening her mental force and by tracing crow-tracks about her eyes and telltale lines around her mouth, she will probably think twice before again forgetting herself. For no matter what she asserts to the contrary, woman prizes youth and beauty above every other gift the gods hold in their power to bestow upon mortals.—Adele E. Shaw, in Woman's Home Companion.

NO DISCRIMINATION.

An aged Georgia negro, Nathan by name, is employed by a gentleman very prominent in state politics. That Nathan, also, has an eye to political favors is shown by the following conversation, which recently took place between him and his employer:

"Marse Jim," said Nathan, "is you gwine in dis yere race fer governor?"
"Haven't thought about it."
"Well, ef yer does run, an' gits elected, will you give me a job?"
"Certainly I would remember you, Nathan. What would you like?"
"Well, sah, I'd des like ter black boots roun' de Capitol."
"And what would you expect for that service?"
"Well, sah," he replied, "I should say four dollars a day would be reasonable. Dat's what de yuther legislators get."—Youth's Companion.

SHE HAD THE ART, BUT DIDN'T KNOW IT.

"Tell me," pleaded the artless maid, "wherein lies the secret of the art of conversation!"
The sage assumed the attitude he was wont to assume when in the act of imparting wisdom, and said:
"My child, listen!"
"I am listening!" breathlessly she answered.
"Well, my child," he rejoined, "that is all there is of the art of conversing agreeably."—Chicago Tribune.

AN AWFUL MISTAKE.

A man in Iowa had been storming at his family, especially at his poor wife, one day, until he had spoiled the pleasure of everybody in the home for that day at least. Then he went out, slamming the door behind him. His little boy had stood off at one side listening to it all. He looked into his mother's face and tearful eyes, and coming across the room, took her hand in his own and exclaimed, "Ma, we made an awful mistake when we married Pa, didn't we?"—M. B. Williams.

A lady with a three-year-old daughter once asked her physician when she ought to begin the education of her child, and the answer was, "Mama, you have lost two years already." It is easier to train the flexible twigs than to bend the gnarled wood of the matured tree into symmetry. It is impossible to begin too early to teach children to observe the amenities of life, and act with a scrupulous regard for the rights and feelings of others in the intimate relations of home, as well as in association with friends and strangers.—Elizabeth, in The Stockman and Farmer.

Truth is violated by falsehood, and it may be equally outraged by silence.—Anmian.

Our Social Chat.

EDITED AND CONDUCTED BY AUNT JENNIE, RALEIGH, N. C.
AUNT JENNIE'S LETTER.

One of my girls wrote me that she would probably attend the Christian Endeavor Convention which convened in this city last week, but she failed to come and I was disappointed. The sessions were largely attended and the work received an impetus which I trust will endure. I am glad to know that at least one of my girls is enlisted in this army of workers for the uplifting of mankind.

Mrs. Mull writes us an exceedingly interesting letter this week. She has been absent quite a while and we are glad she has returned. Many thanks for your nice letter, and may I ask that you be so kind as to tell us something of what you see in Macon and Cherokee on your anticipated trip through these counties? Now, will not many of you follow Mrs. Mull's example and tell us of your county, its scenery, enterprises, factories, schools and historical facts connected therewith? We North Carolinians are lacking in home pride. Ours is a grand old State and we should take more interest in her history, traditions and the lives and deeds of her great men. I have so often envied Virginians their State pride and wished that there were some way opened to me by which I might tell our boys and girls that the world values us as we value ourselves. This is why so little is known of our State and her resources by the outside world. How anxious a Virginian is to tell you of his or her native State! And there is something so impressively beautiful in their loyalty. Let us know more of our dear old State's resources, struggles, defeats and victories, and I think that we as her daughters and sons will feel proud to proclaim to all mankind that North Carolina is our mother State. Many times have I been asked by strangers if I were not of New England origin and I always take pride in replying that my ancestors for generations have been native North Carolinians. I regret that we have not the pluck and push that characterizes our Northern brothers and sisters, but I do not envy them their nativity.

Mrs. J. L. D. reminds readers of a matter of much importance. Her suggestions are worth remembering; and heeding.

That is a very valuable paper, "Mistakes and Possibilities of Rural Life," which the editor has selected as the leading article for our page this week. Study it; it is full of thoroughly sound and sensible ideas.

I am almost tempted to call the roll or at least a part of it. But if you have not written to us recently just remember that I would call yours loud enough for an answer, please. So many of our first contributors have occupied seats with us recently that we feel encouraged to hope and believe that others will return ere long. And new members are always welcomed by us. AUNT JENNIE.

THE GOOD OLD COUNTY OF CATAWBA.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—It has been so long since I last wrote to the Social Chat column I feel like a stranger seeking admittance. This time I will tell my readers something of Catawba county, where I was born and always lived.

This county was largely settled by immigrants of German origin, who still retain unimpaired their thrift, industry and skill as farmers and mechanics. I remember when a girl I attended church in the country, all the old folks spoke the German language, and it was a source of great annoyance to me, as I could not understand a word they said. Catawba county has many Lutheran and German Reformed churches, but other denominations are well represented.

We have six nice little towns, and good railroad facilities, fine schools, mineral springs in different parts of county, and a large number of manufacturing enterprises. Numbers of our thrifty Dutch have emigrated West, and George C. Yount, one of the earliest pioneers of civilization on the Pacific coast, the man who built the first log house and raised the first chimney in California, was a native of this county and was born in the year 1794.

It was customary here many years ago to give only the boys a college education, but now the girls have equal chances with the boys. Catawba is well represented in most of the best colleges in the State, and a good many go North to school, and some

few go to Germany to finish their education. Newton, our county seat, has a population of nearly two thousand, and is well known for its fine schools and manufacturing enterprises. Hickory is the largest town in the county.

Will Retlaw's letter was not one of condolence to Tennessee Boy. I enjoyed it greatly. I would like very much to see the lovely mountain country where Mrs. McKinney lives, and I may some day in the near future pass through Macon on my way to Cherokee, to visit my cousins in that county. For fear of becoming tiresome I will close.

MRS. ALICE YOUNT MULL.
Catawba Co., N. C.

FOR CANNING STRAWBERRIES.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—I have been a reader of the Social Chat for some time, but have not had the courage to join the band. I think Cape Fear wrote a nice letter. Education is what is lacking in this part of the country. Free schools are by no means as good as they should be. I think Will Retlaw wrote a good letter in reply to Tennessee Boy.

I wonder how many of our cousins have read the book "Ten Nights in a Bar Room?" I think it should be a lesson to all who read it. There is nothing good carried on in a bar room, and I do not think one has to go far from home to see it. A great many spend Christmas in drinking whiskey and gambling. Do you think that is the way to celebrate Christ's birth?

I will give a recipe for canning strawberries. Pick the fruit when fully ripe, rejecting all imperfect berries; remove the hull and wash, if necessary. Make a syrup of sugar, and sufficient water to dissolve, allowing from a fourth to half a pound of sugar to one pound of fruit. Let the sugar boil, and remove the scum; then add the berries and allow to boil slowly until cooked through, stirring carefully from the bottom to insure their cooking evenly. As soon as sufficiently cooked put into self-sealing cans; when cold tighten the covers and set in a cool dark place. If allowed to stand in the light the berries will not retain their color.

Wishing Aunt Jennie and the cousins much success,
LORETTA.
Richmond Co., N. C.

MAKING WILLS AND OTHER LEGAL MATTERS.

DEAR AUNT JENNIE:—I was trying this morning to count the number of persons whom I have known that have been robbed of their property rights because of the failure of parents to leave a written will. These parents expressed themselves as wishing such and such child to have so and so, but when they died the unwritten wills proved in law no wills at all. We have known noble self-sacrificing boys and girls to remain at home, tenderly care for the old folks, economize and manage things for them, believing and having verbal promises to the effect that when the parents no longer lived the home place would be theirs. The final day comes. All gather to pay their last tribute. The children in business come home from afar. The last sad rites have been observed. They return from the burial and soon property rights are discussed. The avaricious brothers discover that Sam has only his fathers "say so" as to the ownership of the home place.

Now most of us who have attained years of discretion and have observed human nature know how this incident ended. Sam is to start life middle aged and poor, compared with the other members of his father's house; but he is a man and after all, I do not think his condition as pitiable as that of a girl whom I knew similarly situated who was compelled to live around among her people after they had cheated her out of all that her parents "said" they meant for her to have.

Still another instance that has come under my observation was that of an honest, hard working, stingy old farmer, who possessed little education himself but was anxious that his children have every advantage offered by higher education. A son who was especially bright in his books got the home place after the father's death. The old man had always said that a certain daughter would inherit it but "said so" failed again.

Could our text books on civil government be revised to include more of common law I fancy their usefulness would be much enhanced. Much of such evil arises from ignorance of

the simplest elements of law. Many parents will teach their children these elements and then seem to cherish an idea that they are in some mysterious way exempt from such laws. The least hint on the part of the children that they make property matters more secure is at once taken as evidences of unfeeling regard and resented accordingly. They mean all right; they fully intend to "see to it," but there is plenty of time and they don't want to be hurried. And while they are taking their leisure death comes along and reaps his harvest.

I sometimes think Carnegie's plan the better after all: distribute your wealth while you live and then die with the knowledge that no man can change your will, and what you have worked to accumulate is spent just as you direct it should be. With best wishes,
Mrs. J. L. D.

FASHION NOTES.

The pulley belt is the favorite thing in belts. Pretty little silver rings or black rings can be used, and any color of ribbon desired. They are made a little wider in the back, giving a long waisted effect. The advantage in these belts is that they can be pulled to fit and keep about place.

The shirt-waist this year might almost be called skimp. The sleeves are small, the back is perfectly plain, and there is but slight fullness in front. The use of lace and embroidery is what relieves them from their absolute plainness. Tucks between the insertion are also very effective. Some of the newest waists are made of a heavy coarse linen, which comes in delicate shades, and are trimmed with Russian peasant work, which is a heavy embroidery. These waists are very pretty, and will stand innumerable washings and wear. Some of the most stylish waists are made entirely of embroidery and others entirely of lace.

The street costumes for this spring are made with skirts just escaping. The plain back has gone out, and one large box pleat or two smaller ones are used in the back. The dressy costumes will still have a train and much trimming around the bottom of the skirt.

HEALTH NOTES.

The patent medicine vender now wishes to reap a harvest from his "spring medicine," which six weeks ago was a "winter medicine." If you would be well, use more care in what you eat and drink, thus regulating the bowels and kidneys. Unless you are ill, let drugs alone. Don't believe it when some one recommends a medicine by saying "It won't do any hurt if it don't do any good." Any drug having a power for good has an equal power for evil.

Decaying animal or vegetable matter—either lying on the ground where the spring rain may wash it into other places, or in cesspools or privy vaults where the warmth of the May sun will develop bad odors—should not be allowed.

The following is said to be excellent for croup in children: Two tea-spoonfuls pulverized alum; three tea-spoonfuls molasses; mix thoroughly. Dose: three to ten drops every few minutes until child is relieved. Vomiting will result in an overdose is given.—Dr. F. W. St. John.

THE READING OF POETRY.

Whatever may be the tastes or talents of young women for literature, they cannot overlook poetry. Sooner or later they should hope to know of Shakespeare, Milton and Goethe. The great poets rank next to the Bible. To be ignorant of Cowper and Burns, Whittier and Longfellow, Scott and Tennyson, is to have the mind dwarfed. Browning and Wordsworth will tax the powers of mature years, but poetry should not be rejected because of its depth or obscurity. Poetry should be especially read to give a proper attitude of mind, a habit of thinking of noble things, of keeping the spirit in harmony with beauty, goodness, strength and love. A poem like Tennyson's "In Memoriam" is worth more than a dozen popular novels.—John Miller, M. A., in Chicago Record.

All fine natures are generous. None are so poor that they have not something to give; if not money flowers; if not flowers kind words or crumbs to the birds, or at least generous thoughts, which may sometimes be the most difficult gift of all.—Sel.