

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.

I feel very much encouraged this week, as several of our old members have written, and I feel assured that more will do so in the near future. Nellie's letter, telling of a new industry, is interesting, and may prove of value to many farmer boys, as the material is furnished in any neighborhood in North Carolina. If we could be induced to save the waste products of our farms and forests it would not be many years before we would be accounted one of the most enterprising as well as one of the wealthiest States. It pays to keep your eyes wide open spying for opportunities. I once knew a boy who slept with his eyes opened, but he was only partially conscious, and many things happened in the room which were unobserved by him. I sometimes think that we are somewhat like that boy. Are we awake? If so, look up and see if there is no remunerative occupation, no new field of industry where we can begin to grub and clear away the rubbish, and by and by reap a rich harvest.

Christmas week is usually the busiest week of the whole year to housekeepers. I wonder how many women will overwork themselves preparing for others to have pleasure for only a day or two. I want to call a halt and say, Please don't; for what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And I want to add, what does it profit a woman if she worry herself into a fever of impatience, ill temper and bodily pain in order to prepare cakes, pies, and various dishes which will in all probability not be tasted on Christmas day? No man can eat heartily of fifteen or twenty dishes at one meal. They may be his favorite edibles, prepared just as he likes them best, but there is a limit to his capacity, and no one should be expected to eat more than he can.

I remember on one occasion I prepared an elaborate Christmas dinner for several guests, and after the meal was over and the food was being removed from the table I discovered that the custard had not been tasted. I felt sorely disappointed, and believe that I was foolish enough to shed a few tears. I was young then, and had tried hard to have things just right, but was so thoughtless as to prepare too much. I learned that enough is sufficient, and too much is surfeiting.

It is so hard to laugh when one is thoroughly tired. Spare yourself and laugh some Christmas day. See if I am not correct when I tell you that it is better for you and all the family if you do this. Let us hope that the men and boys who are near and dear to you will help you to enjoy this Christmas as you have not before in years. "A hint to the wise is sufficient." While a gift is not always appreciated, good conduct al-

ways elicits a double reward, the gratitude of those who love you and an increased quantity of self-respect for yourself.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, I will bid you good-night.

AUNT JENNIE.

Setting Himself Right With the Chatterers.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—It is with great fear and trembling that I knock for admittance into your Social Corner, for I feel that it is not altogether unlikely that a very cold reception will be given me. It seems that I have offended the girls and some of their stalwart champions by striking too severely at the evils which are encountered in courtship; and since my name has been handled rather furiously already in consequence of that letter, I am truly fearful that the storm will be doubly increased when I make this my first appearance after that unhappy attack.

However, I will venture to offer an explanation—the usual thing done when there has been a misunderstanding. To begin with, my letter was not intended for an abuse of the girls, as some have taken it, but rather for directing attention to those frivolous and useless things that hide behind the smiles cast from the sexes; and I must say again, to do justice to my present feelings with regard to the matter, that conscience does not smite me for what I said. I feel that there is nothing worse than vanity, insincerity or nonsense, and that in courtship there is nothing more prevalent. And I feel, and must emphasize it, that that despised and much-abused letter is yet my pride, because it assails these evils with that fearless energy which any one in the right need never blush to own.

But I didn't mean to give the girls all the blame. No; bless the little creatures! They can pull a fellow from the mire of shame and degradation when nothing else can; they can bring the sunlight in when a fellow's heart is all dark and dejected, when his hands would grasp the bottle in spite of the cannon's booming or a Hannibal's shouting! Search Ward, can you say more? You are an honorable fellow, I know; then can't you acknowledge that your feelings are not a whit higher?

I did strike some heavy blows at somebody: that is evident. But if those who have been offended will just hunt up what I said, I am sure that if they hate insincerity and those other faults mentioned, their offence will vanish like a vapor. They will find that I have only noted those things in the opposite sex which I wanted to shun; and surely they won't attempt to blame me further, after having discovered that I was no more cautious than they show themselves to be when they abuse the evils of intemperance. That I am never guilty of, and do I frown and cry shame when intemperates are abused? No, I am only caused to admire the girl that speaks her dis-

approval. So, as I see it, girls who are sincere and are not guilty of the crimes of perpetual nonsense will not take offense at me for noting the faults which circulate among the numerous feminines that abuse their station among the intelligent things of the century.

Having said this, and feeling that those who are not dead to reason will soon see and appreciate my position, I'll close, wishing for all the Chatterers a Merry Christmas and a renewed good-will toward their poor fallen friend, ALVIN HORTON.

Yancey Co., N. C.

A New Industry in Duplin.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—New things are coming in almost every day. I have seen something to-day that is entirely a new business in this neighborhood—men gathering holly to ship to the Northern cities for Christmas decorations. They had horses and wagons and carts to carry the boxes to and from the woods, where the holly was gathered. The boxes are two feet square and four feet long. The two men that are having the work done have an order for two thousand boxes, and they have nearly filled the order now. They want only the dark green leaves with berries. There are several places on this railroad that I know of where there is much holly being shipped.

This is quite a new enterprise, and perhaps some money for the gatherers, but yet is this not taking food from the poor little birds? They must be fed and the winter berries must have been put here for their food. It looks like robbing them of their winter support to take that which they should have to eat to beautify the already beautiful homes of the wealthy people.

God did not make anything that is not for some use. He put the birds here for some good purpose, and why should they not be protected? Now the bird hunters are very busy trying to kill all they can.

Oh, doesn't the cold pinch after such a warm fall and winter as this? A cold day like this draws us close to the fire and keeps us there as much as possible. Why it has been so warm some of the strawberry farmers have been shipping strawberries. My husband was out to town, near here, about Thanksgiving, and saw some as nice red berries as he has ever seen. This is quite a treat at this season; but some think it will cut off some of the spring crop.

Wishing the Chatterers, and Aunt Jennie especially, a jolly Christmas, I remain,
NELLIE.
Duplin Co., N. C.

Some Observations on Duty.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—Perhaps it might be better for some of the other Chatterers to write than for me, but I am not willing to wait on them any longer, as I am tired of seeing the Chat left out of The Farmer. It ought to appear in every issue. The Chatterers are tardy, not to say indifferent, in answering to

the roll-call. I freely confess my negligence (as my name was called some time ago), and humbly ask pardon, promising to come nearer the line of duty in the future. I do consider it a duty for us to write, especially those who are gifted with both thought and pen. I do not know how it is with others, but I can handle my thoughts better than my pen, for I never could, when going to school, satisfy my teacher with pen as well as with my tongue. But every man to his gift or talent, let it be little or much. So let us do our duty towards Aunt Jennie. I well remember having the honor of being the first to join the Circle at the start of the new century. I thought then of living up to my duty by writing as often as once a year, but have even failed to do that.

I feel impressed to write some general considerations of duty, leaving it for others of the Chat to take up special lines of thought on the subject. I fully agree with the immortal Lee that duty is the grandest word in the English language. Duty! what a world of meaning in the word! Solomon, the wisest man of all time, sums up all his knowledge, experience, observations and instructions in the final injunction: "Let us hear the whole conclusion of the matter. Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

How important it is, then, that we as individuals exercise the talents that an All-wise Creator has so kindly given to us, remembering that where much is given, much will be required." Therefore we must all give an account of our stewardship according to time and chance, knowledge and opportunity. I consider that we are as individuals responsible to our Maker for whatever talent has been given us. For we shall all be judged according to our deeds, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

Paul said: "Do good unto all as you have opportunity." The greatest mistake that I have ever made in the treatment of others used to be that I tried to treat everybody alike by trying to do good, whether they gave me an opportunity or not, thereby perhaps giving occasion to be humbugged or imposed upon. So my present aim is, first, to be true to myself, and then to others, and require them to be true to me, otherwise leave them to deal with others.

Let us all strive to do our duty to ourselves, and to the Giver of All Good, by trying to live up to the Bible as a rule of life.

ONSLow OBSERVER.

Onslow Co., N. C.

Indifferent correspondents will sympathize with the lad who, after he had been at a boarding-school for a week without writing to his parents, penned the following letter: "Dear people—I am afraid I shall not be able to write often to you, because you see when anything is happening I haven't time to write, and when nothing is happening there's nothing to write about. So, now, good-bye. From your Georgia."
—Liverpool Post.