

This, That & the Other

By Mrs. Theo. B. Davis

Some time ago my daughter remarked to me that she would like to have a birth certificate, and I said I'd write to Newton, where she was born, and see about getting one for her.

In reply to my letter the register of deeds wrote that in 1906 there were no records kept of births; but she sent a form for me to fill out and return with affidavits. There was one place that called for information, then said "I know this to be true because..."

After filling in the blank spaces, all I could think of to put after the "because" was "I am her mother." It sounded so silly when read that I hated to send it off; but the certificate came all right. And I'd advise all parents whose children do not have those already to procure them without delay. After parents are dead the procedure is much more difficult.

Upon being asked last week what the styles were in 1901, I had to ponder some minutes before being certain what to reply. Then I remembered white shirt-waists open down the back, with fronts made entirely of tucks and insertion. High collars with ribbon wrapped twice around the neck and tied in a big bow at the back. Ruffles over shoulders and on all skirts, over or under, except those of woolen material, which were lined, interlined and stiffened with a cloth we called wigan. Sleeves so large that they took more than two-thirds of the cloth required for a waist. Hats with plumes, lace, flowers, ribbon, and whatever else you could buy, all held on by long, wicked-looking hatpins. High-top button shoes. Pulley belts, Watches worn either on a pin with a hook, (a chatelaine), or on a long chain that went around the neck and through a fancy slide, the watch being tucked under the wearer's belt. Hard on crystals, if not on the rest of the timepiece.

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Open-and-shut fans. Oh, yes, there was plenty to wear in those dear dead days beyond recall; and, believe me, we wore plenty.

A writer in this week's *Saturday Evening Post* states that in a few years one-fifth of this country's population will be sixty years of age or older. How nearly correct he is there is no way of knowing. This much, however, I do know:

No matter how many nor how spry the sixty-year-olds may be, they will always seem aged, if not ancient, to the young.

I heard last week of a play, written and presented by a group of high school girls. They had among the characters a grandmother, her daughter and granddaughter, all costumed suitably, according to the writers' ideas. The girl and mother looked all right, out the grandmother was a queer sight. In a long black dress and black satin sunbonnet she tottered feebly about the stage, speaking her lines in quavering tones. The person who told me of the play, said when she remembered how her sixty-five-year-old neighbor mowed her own lawn, did her housework and whatever else she pleased, and how many other persons she knew who were active

and vigorous at that age or older, the play was much funnier to her than had been intended.

No one is to be blamed for such concepts. To all of us those who have lived longer than ourselves are old; and there comes a time when we feel that any one under ninety is still middle-aged.

Weather like we are having is worrisome to farmers and gardeners. Nobody knows how to plan his work. The little plants that get set out stand and shiver, probably wondering why they were treated so cruelly. Apple trees doubtfully thrust forth a few tiny leaves followed by skimpy blossoms. Some trees seem to have decided not to bloom at all.

Peaches show little lopsided beginnings of fruit that fall off almost while you watch. The cutworms, though, are full of life and vigor, with appetites as insatiable as ever, and the same unbounded enthusiasms for tomato plants. In some things, at least, nature is very natural this spring. And lilacs are blooming again, proving that there was no use of my being anxious about that when they bloomed last fall.

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