

## Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—With this number we complete our labors for the year and make our last visit for 1881. We hope, however, to continue the acquaintance of all with whom we have had such pleasant intercourse for months and years now passed away, and when we consider what a beautiful volume the numbers for the year will make, and how much information it will contain at so trifling a cost, we settle down into the conviction that we have really done something toward making our friends both rich and intelligent. Doubtless our readers have discovered all this long ago, and we are, therefore, wasting both time and paper, so will think a little about what can be done to make the winter home pleasant and especially to secure a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This we wish all our friends most heartily; but we have never accomplished much good by only wishing. A good deal of happiness depends upon the dispositions we cultivate, but none are independent of their surroundings. Christmas Day in country houses, far removed from business centres, is too frequently a dreary season, remarkable only for a big dinner, and the absence of the usual routine of work. Where there are no children in the household there is some excuse, possibly, for the failure to observe this holiday in a joyful manner. Otherwise, it is unjust to the young folks, who are thereby defrauded of a rightful heritage. Every child is a subject for sympathy to whom Christmas tide comes and goes without marking the 25th of December as a red letter day. A distinguishing feature of Christmas has always been that of the decoration of the churches and the home, and we have often been both interested and pleased to observe the zeal and taste with which the ladies do this work, with very little assistance indeed from those who are stronger and more useless on such occasions. Nowadays, in all enlightened countries, Christmas is the day when people possessing love for their families and fellows manifest it by some gift. It is especially a happy day for the children. It matters little whether it is Kris Krinkle, St. Nicholas, Santa Clause, or papa and mamma who give them presents—the important fact is that somebody loves them, and manifests that love in a gift. No man who loves his child should allow Christmas to pass without giving it something that will make its heart rejoice, and render the day one to be remembered with pleasure.

MINNIE MAY.

MADAM,—I am a small girl, but cannot think of doing without your paper, and seeing the premiums you offer, I have been canvassing and have got two new subscribers. I wish to try for one of the prizes, and if you wish to send me one, please send "Lorne and Louise."

Russell, Ont.

SARAH J. N. A.

## Recipes.

## MINCE-MEAT FOR PIES.

Shred and chop very fine two pounds of beef suet: by dredging the suet occasionally with flour it chops more easily and does not clog; boil slowly but thoroughly, two pounds of lean round beef and chop fine, (mix all the ingredients as they are prepared; stone and cut fine two pounds of raisins; wash and pick two pounds of currants; cut fine half a pound of citron; chop two pounds of apples, weighing them after they have been peeled and cored; a tablespoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of cinnamon, a grated nutmeg, a salt-spoonful allspice, half as much cloves, half an ounce of essence of almonds, half a pint of brandy, and a quart of cider. This may be kept in a cool place all winter. If too dry add more cider.

## IRON RUST STAINS.

Iron rust stains may be removed thus: moisten the stain with soft water and spread crystals of

oxalic acid on it, wet these and dissolve them lay in the sun till the stain disappears; then rinse thoroughly in clear water. Or use lemon juice and salt. It is well to have a bottle of oxalic acid in the house, but it should be labelled poison.

## OLD ENGLISH PLUM PUDDING.

One pound of raisins, stoned and cut small; one pound of currants, well washed, picked and dried; quarter of a pound of citron, cut fine; half a pound of suet, shredded and chopped very fine, almost like flour; half a pound of brown sugar, six eggs, a salt-spoonful of ground mace, the same of allspice, half as much cloves, two teaspoonfuls of cinnamon, the same of ginger, one teaspoonful of salt, a nutmeg grated, one gill of brandy, a pint of milk, half a pound of bread crumbs, and half a pound of flour; beat the yolks of the eggs, one at a time, well into the sugar; add all the spices and the salt, then the brandy and milk; sift the flour and mix it well in; then the bread crumbs and all the fruit, last of all the whites of the eggs, beaten to a stiff froth; the pudding should be about the consistency of a plum-cake; butter and then flour two tin forms and put your pudding in them, (a two-quart covered tin milk-can answers admirably; have a pot with boiling water, the water to come about a third from the top of the form; put the form in the pot and let it boil uninterruptedly for four hours; have a kettle of boiling water, to add to your pot, as the water evaporates very rapidly. This pudding can be kept all winter in a cold dry place, and be warmed by boiling over for an hour.

## SAUCE.

Four ounces of sugar and two of butter well creamed together; then beat an egg thoroughly into it, and two ounces of brandy.

## TO TAKE OUT SCORCH.

If a shirt bosom or any other article has been scorched in ironing, lay it where bright sunshine will fall directly on it. It will take it entirely out.—[Buckeye Cookery.

## Answers to Correspondents.

Dandruff.—R. R. K. says: "Soft water and persistent effort will free and keep the head free from dandruff. Wash the scalp and rub it thoroughly with the fingers twice a week, taking care not to wet the hair much beyond the roots. Then brush the hair well with a bristle brush. When the dandruff is once removed, the application once a week regularly will keep it away. It is of no use to wash it one week and neglect it the next.

A Subscriber.—What is the best way to make good chocolate? Ans.—Procure the pure French chocolate, if it is not desired very rich use half milk and half water, put a pint of this on the fire to boil, scrape one square of the chocolate fine, and when the milk boils take it from the fire and put in the chocolate, stir or mill it well with a chocolate miller, and in five minutes serve with the froth. Add sugar if desired when it is served. Chocolate must be served as soon as it is made, as it is an emulsion containing much oil, which soon separates and floats on the top of the liquid, and can never be brought to its first state again.

A Reader.—Is vinegar spoiled when frozen; I had some frozen last year and it seems not so good now as it was? Ans.—Freezing vinegar separates the water from the acid, and if the ice which forms on to a tub of vinegar on a cold night is removed, the vinegar is increased in strength in proportion. If the vinegar is repeatedly frozen and thawed the acid is decomposed and the vinegar weakened.

Little Sandy.—Being a backwoodsman and not knowing the rules of etiquette, and wishing to secure the consent of the parents to wed the lady I so much admire, I would ask for the proper way to address them. 2. Is it etiquette for ladies to bang their hair? 3. Is it in good taste for a lady to have her hair singled? 4. Is it etiquette to secure the consent of the parents first or the lady with a view to matrimony? 5. What do you think of my writing? Ans.—Do you mean that you wish to address them by letter? If so, we will give you a formula, although we think you might write a much more natural letter yourself. However, as Humphrey Clinker and Blue Johnnie are asking for the same thing, we shall give a form which may be modified to suit circumstances:

DEAR MR. BROWN.—You must be aware of my attachment to your daughter, Angelina, and I now beg your permission to propose to her. I am in a position to keep a wife comfortably, and I think

you know enough of my character and disposition to feel assured that I will do my best to make your daughter happy, should she consent to become my wife. Hoping that you will look favorably upon my suit,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

HUMPHREY CLINKER.

When both the lady's parents are living the letter should be addressed to the father; if the father be dead, the letter should be addressed to the mother, but never to both. 2. It is still fashionable to cut the front hair short. 3. Singled hair is not now fashionable. 4. According to strict etiquette the parents should be consulted first, but nowadays it is quite usual to, as you put it, "secure the lady first." 5. It is poor.

Jennie F.—To kill the moths, you had better take your carpets up on a bright, sunny day, and give them a good beating; then sprinkle the edges well with cayenne pepper, camphor or snuff, when you lay them down.

A. G. O.—If you place your cider near the stove and put a little whiskey, and some sugar, and a sheet of note paper in it, it will soon become good vinegar.

## Isabel.

BY MRS. SARAH M. WYMAN.

The prayers all said, the good-nights told—  
On snowy pillow, coils of gold;  
Two dimpled hands, quite tanned and brown,  
Peep out beyond the white night-gown.

'Tis Christmas Eve, and Isabel  
Lips in the darkness, "Now I'll tell  
You, Santa Klaus, just ebery fing  
I want—A black and crimson wing."

"For Maggie's hat, a drum for Ned,  
For 'tittle Grace a trundle bed;  
A gold-head tane for my papa,  
Becase he's lame; and dear mamma,

"One 'tittle baby right from heaven,  
And me tsume kittens, four, tix, tseven,  
And that is all for them and me,  
But lots for Lu and Will, you tsee,

"Poor Lu and Will! Oh, please to bring  
Them toal, and shoes, and ebery fing;  
For they've no h'ose nor milk-nor bread,  
Their mofer tsick, their father dead—"

"Make her well, Santa Klaus! But no,  
'Tis only God does that, and tso  
I'll pray to Him and ask Him, too,  
To tsend the fings I want to you."

Two dimpled feet upon the floor,  
Two knees as white as robes they wore,  
Soft eyes like eyes the violets hold,  
And this the prayer the dear lips told:

"Oh, God, I pray that you will make  
Lu's mofer well, for Jesus' tsake;  
And my mamma—tso 'fraid there'll be  
Tsome awful fing befallin' me—"

"She worries tso—if you would tell  
Her you'd tate tare of Isabel,  
Then p'raps I'd let the baby stay  
In heaven, till next Kristmas Day.

"The other fings I need not tell,  
You know your 'tittle Isabel;  
Give Santa only what is best,  
But do send Lu's, if not the rest."

Ah, precious darling, mother hears,  
Rebukes, her penitential tears;  
Attest full stores for Will and Lou,  
And God provide, sweet child, for you.

## Life.

Was it not said by some great sage  
That life is an unwritten page?  
We write our fate, and when old age  
Or death comes on,

## We drop the pen.

For good or ill, from day to day,  
Each deed we do, each word we say,  
Makes its impress on the clay  
Which molds the minds

## Of other men

And all our acts and words are seeds  
Sown o'er the past, whence future deeds  
Spring up to form our wheat or weeds.  
And as we've sown

## So reap we then.

—Argosy.