

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES,—

It is the desire of every woman, young or old, to be attractive, and a laudable desire it is. Not only so, but it is our duty to be and to look as attractive as possible. Each of us has at least one attractive point, either physically or mentally. Just run over your list of acquaintances and think of some particular attraction which each one possesses. How varied are those attractions, and yet each has one or more! One friend may have beautiful hair, another a fine figure, a third well-shaped hands and feet, while the attraction of a fourth may be a loving disposition or a clever brain. Suppose we confine our talk this month to attractions physical, and leave the attractions mental till another time.

Every one of us will admit that a good complexion, regular features, and a head of fine hair go a long way in making a woman attractive and in throwing into the background any defects which may exist. Only a very small proportion of womanhood can boast of a beautiful face, and the plain sisters envy the possession, forgetting too often the old saying that "beauty is only skin-deep," and that there are attractions far more powerful than a pretty face. Well, just before leaving the face, let us think of the complexion. Is it necessary to tell my nieces that a good complexion depends largely on health? Pure blood makes a clear skin; therefore we must study our food, avoiding what is indigestible and unwholesome. Eat a great deal of fruit and vegetables, and use tea and coffee sparingly. Wash the face with hot water and delicate soap daily, and dry with soft towel. The soap and water cleanse the pores of the skin from the dust which is everywhere, and the friction of drying stimulates the circulation of the blood. The best time to do this is before retiring for the night.

The hair, too, should be abundant and glossy, and daily brushing will work wonders on it, and repay a little trouble taken at night. The teeth should be cleansed after every meal. Whatever you do, girls, don't forget the tooth brush. There is nothing that will make anyone more disagreeable to look at than teeth that are uncared-for. It is easy to keep them clean, and takes but a minute or two, and then think of the benefit to one's health as well as to one's appearance.

A woman cannot afford to overlook her figure and the carriage of her head. These are points of attractiveness, and are within the power of everyone to control. Every girl should cultivate the habit of holding up her chin. A teacher in the Southern States, when drilling her pupils, used to tell them to hold their heads as if trying to look over a wall. How many girls hold their heads forward while walking, or bent down just as if they had lost something and were looking for it! This leads, too, to round shoulders, which are not only ugly, but unhealthy, for the lungs cannot work properly if they do not have room. A flat back, a well-poised head, and a graceful way of walking make all the difference between a stylish girl and a girl who is clumsy and awkward.

My nieces who live in the country may not have the advantage of a gymnasium for the training of the muscles and the development of the figure: but they have all the gymnastic exercises necessary for such in their daily duties. The carrying of two pails of milk (not too heavy, of course), one in each hand, will strengthen the arms and hands and straighten the back just the same as the carrying of dumb-bells. It is said that there are no finer or more robust girls in the world than the country girls of Holland, and their erect and graceful carriage is due to the custom they have of carrying their milk-pails on their heads.

If you wish to grow plump you must eat, bathe, and sleep regularly, and this, with plenty of walking, will greatly help not only to improve one's figure, but to impart ease and grace to every movement. By walking I do not mean going to town and shopping, or sauntering from window to window of various stores. That is not exercise. But walking is moving briskly, with head erect and shoulders thrown back and chest expanded, feeling the blood bounding through one's veins, and forgetting, for the time being, all one's cares and troubles. Did any of my girls ever try the following for the good of their lungs while walking? Keep the mouth closed and slowly inhale through the nostrils as long as possible (until you count, say 20), till the lungs are full of oxygen, then open the lips and through the mouth exhale as quickly as you can, emptying the lungs of carbonic acid gas, and thereby expanding and strengthening those organs. I speak from experience, and can say it is good. Try it, girls.

There are some local exercises which may be taken with advantage. In the neck, for instance. The throat should be round and full, and one way of accomplishing this is as follows: Roll the head as far to the right as possible, then as far to the left as you can; repeat this a dozen times in each direction daily, and you will be surprised to see how the hollows of the neck will fill out and become rounded.

Another distinctive mark of attractiveness is in having well-shaped hands and feet. While we cannot regulate the size of these, we may always have the hands and nails cared for, and the feet well dressed. To be well gloved and well shod is half the toilet. Rather spend a little less on the gown, so that the gloves may be good in quality, and of a color suitable to the costume, and also

that the shoes may be well-fitting. Soiled, ill-fitting or worn-out gloves, with holes in the fingertips and the buttons off, will ruin any costume and detract seriously from a woman's appearance. Here is a little hint about putting on new gloves. If the hands are first dusted with oatmeal or fuller's earth, new gloves will be far less trouble to put on, and will not be so easily pulled out of shape. And here is a little whisper about whitening the skin—lemon juice is one of the safest things you can use, and it is generally very easy to obtain.

So many points of beauty occur to one that it is impossible to talk of them all. But the chief things to remember for the preservation of health and attractiveness are four—pure air, wholesome food, cleanliness, and exercise.

Your loving old auntie,
MINNIE MAY.

The Bobolink

(*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*).

Looking at this benevolent and solemn-faced bird, one would hardly believe that it plays such havoc with the rice fields of the South that total extermination of the species seems to be the only remedy! It is not that they will not take other food, for when in the Northern States they eat the small seeds of useless plants, and also insects, feeding their young almost entirely on the latter. The rice fields happen to lie in the line of the birds' migration. In one journey they pull up the young rice plants and eat the seed. On the return journey they fall upon the ripening crop! The food is easy to get, and, like many of us humans, they take what is handy—especially if it suits the palate. In New England and many other parts, Mr. Bobolink has



BOBOLINK.

quite a reputation—as he does but slight harm, if any, to grain, and, also, is a bird around whom romance has woven her charm: for surely few birds have been so much versified. The sweet song-note has been translated: "Clarsy—be true to me! Clarsy, Clarsy, be true—be true." In the fall the Bobolink's black-and-white plumage changes to yellow-and-brown, and his name, also, is sometimes "Reed-bird" and "Rice-bird." This latter is the Southern name. I'm afraid his sweet, jolly little song cannot make him beloved in districts where, for years, rice planters have tried slaying the bold marauders by millions, with, however, but small effect. The large part of the loss sustained does not so much lie in the grain devoured, as in the outlay necessary to prevent their eating it all. Fie! greedy Mr. Bobolink.

Two Acres Enough in Belgium.

What many an American farmer fails to do on one hundred acres, the thrifty Hollander in Belgium easily does on two acres, namely, support a large family and lay by something for a rainy day. He does it by making the most of every inch by heavy manuring, allowing no waste places. His two acres are surrounded by a ditch of running water. The typical two-acre Belgium farm contains a patch of wheat or rye and another of barley; another fair portion grows potatoes. A row of cabbage grows all around on the sloping sides, with a row of onions just inside, leaving bare walking room between them and the grain. The shade trees round the house are pear trees. Every foot of land is made to produce. He keeps pigs and chickens. We refer to this as illustrating the possibilities of land production. In Belgium, 6,000,000 people, chiefly farmers, live on a piece of land the size of the State of Maryland. They furnish an object lesson on successful intensive farming.—*Colman's Rural World*.

THE QUIET HOUR.

The Home-maker.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles
And wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoever estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

She is a woman, of course, but there are many kinds of women, and not all are home-makers.

We all agree that the slipshod, untidy woman, who is always behindhand with her work, whose house is always in a "muddle," does not make much of a home. But we will not stop to discuss her, for you good housekeepers would be offended if I dared to hint that you belonged to that class.

But some of you may fail because you run to the opposite extreme. A woman who makes an idol of her house and sacrifices the family to it is making a terrible mistake. The floor is so clean that you could "eat off it," but the husband and children are almost afraid to venture indoors for fear of soiling it. There is no bright sunshine let in. Oh, no! the carpets might fade, or a fly might get into the room! The house is, in such a case, not made for man, but, rather, man is bound to consider the house in all things. No one dares to upset the spotless order of the rooms. The children grow up to look on the house as a place where stern discipline is maintained, but no freedom allowed. The only advantage it has over a well-kept prison is the great advantage, that they can get away from it. But do you want your children to think "home" the dreariest spot on earth? Perhaps some day you may find out that you have thrown away the richest talent God has committed to you. If husband or children should drift off into evil ways through the influence of bad companions, you would be willing to sacrifice anything for the sake of making them care for the pure and innocent home pleasures again.

You can make home the brightest, cheeriest, dearest place in the world to them. But in order to do this you must not let work be a tyrant, crushing all the youth out of you and taking up every moment of your time. In order to influence others you must study their natures, and take time to show a little sympathy. The woman who is always too busy to talk to her children, who always refuses to spend an hour in entertaining them, need not complain if they drift away from her.

Perhaps the work which is so much more important than the friendship of your family is only some trumpery piece of fashionable fancy-work which in a few years will be out of date. You feel that you are working when you are doing it, but if you spent the evening making home jolly and bright for the rest of the family, you might be called lazy. Does it really matter what you are called? It is quite possible to put more work for Christ into a lively game than into what the world calls work—and He knows who are working for Him.

Perhaps the work which keeps you from having "a heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathize" may be really necessary sewing or mending. Even then, could you not do some of it, at least, at another time? Could you not do less scrubbing or sweeping in the morning, and sandwich it in somehow, so as to leave the evenings a little more free?

It will matter very little ten years hence whether your floors have always been as white as snow and your carpets without a speck of dust. It will be a lifelong sorrow to you if you have carelessly let one you love drift into evil habits.

This is not a plea for idleness—far from it. It is only intended as a warning to you not to turn your work into an idol and fall down and worship it. If you do, it will crush you as remorselessly as the car of Juggernaut. Working for people will hardly win their affections unless some human feeling is shown. We don't love the machines which do our work. If you will persist in turning yourself into a living machine you must suffer the consequences. If you break down, the other members of the family will probably be worried because they are uncomfortable. The household arrangements don't go on as smoothly as they did—the machine is out of order. Or, what is even worse, they may feel it a relief—there is more freedom in the house.

In your zeal for the reputation of a good housekeeper, do not sacrifice the friendship of your family, lest the time may come that you may feel the words to be true:

"I only saw how I had missed
A thousand things from blindness,
How all that I had done appeared
Scarce better than unkindness."

If you are too busy to enter into the joys and sorrows of others, you will waste a grand opportunity of home influence, and some day will find out the value of that which you so carelessly let slip now.—*Hope*.