

## Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—One of my nieces writes for an easy method of washing dishes. She says "dish-washing" is her greatest trouble, and is undoubtedly a trouble with many little girls. The first thing necessary for the great task is to have plenty of hot water, of course. Make a point of having a boiler or kettle well filled before each meal, so as to be in readiness. After the table is cleared, the table cloth neatly brushed or shaken, and folded away, and dining room tidied, proceed with the dishes. First take a large dish-pan, put into it a bit of soap and pour three or four dipperfuls of hot water over the soap; then add cold soft water sufficient to make it cool enough for the little tender hands to bear. Be careful not to attempt to use too hot, or it will redden the hands and make them look coarse. Wash the cleanest dishes first, such as glasses, cups and saucers, spoons, etc. Put them in a pan, then pour hot water over the whole of them, and then put on a tray to drain. Then wipe with a clean, dry towel, and put away. The dishes should be scraped free from grease, crumbs, bones, etc., before commencing to wash them. A neat housekeeper will have the same dish-cloth in use until it is worn out, when it should be put into the rag bag. Never allow the dish-cloth to be used for anything but washing dishes. It is a good plan to rinse your tea-towel with a little clean warm water and hang up to dry to be ready for use. Hoping these hints will be of use to my little inquiring niece and others,

MINNIE MAY.

## RECIPES.

## MATTRESSES.

"Jennie" asks "how a hair mattress may be cleansed and thoroughly renovated." Rip up the mattress and wash and scald the tick, rinsing it well in clear water. Take the hair and put it in a tub of clear, cold water, a part at a time; souce it up and down, pass through another water and lay on boards to dry in the sun. This will remove all dust and particles of extraneous matter. Then pull it all apart till it is light and fluffy. Then replace it in the tick, even it, and tack with a mattress needle. Husk mattresses are treated in the same way, only the husks are not washed, and fresh husks should be added to make up for the waste.

## TO PICKLE MEAT IN ONE DAY.

Take a tub nearly full of water, and put two pieces of thin wood across it, and set the beef on them about an inch from the water. Heap as much salt as will stay on the beef, and let it remain 24 hours, and you will find it as salty, when boiled, as if it had been in brine for weeks, as the water draws the salt completely through the beef.

## VARIETY IN FOOD.

We must not restrict ourselves to a few articles of food, but must have a great variety of foods to select from; we must not partake of the same fare day after day, but must vary it as much as possible. Only with a varied and alternating dietary can we be sure that what is lacking in one food will be supplied in another, and what we fail to get to-day we shall have to-morrow.

## CORN STARCH.

When eggs are scarce, corn starch may be used instead of flour in light cakes. Take the quantity of flour prescribed by the rule, and half the number of eggs, replacing each omitted egg by a tablespoonful of corn starch.

## LIQUIDS.

Four large tablespoonfuls make half a gill. Eight large tablespoonfuls make one gill. Sixteen large tablespoonfuls make half a pint. A common-sized wine glass holds half a gill. A common-sized tumbler holds half a pint.

## LEMONS.

Before using lemons for any purpose always roll them awhile with your hand on a table. This will cause them to yield a larger quantity of juice.

## Leaches, Lye and Soap.

The value of ashes depends upon the kind of wood used, the soft woods yielding ashes very poor in potash, which is the important constituent so far as soap-making is concerned. Where soap is to be made from ashes, the first step is to extract their soluble parts, to get a solution of them in water, known as *lye*. To do this the ashes are placed in some receptacle, called a leach, in which water can gradually trickle through them, and come out below as a strong solution or lye. Figure 1

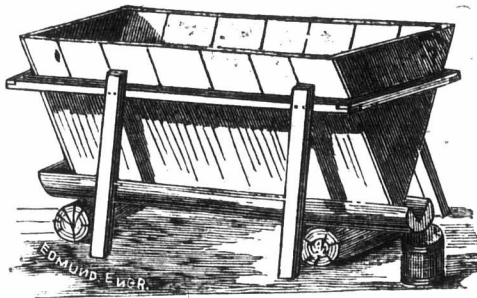
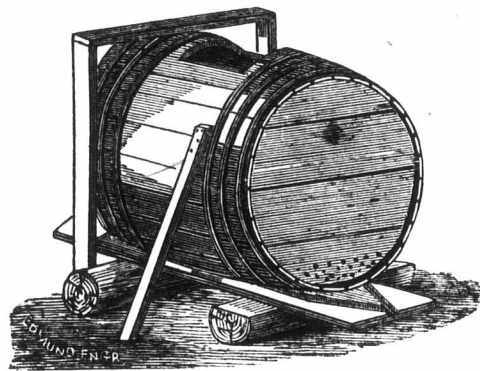


Figure 1.

represents the old-fashioned V-shaped leach sufficiently well to show its structure. There is a frame of 2 x 3-inch scantling about a foot from the top, which is stayed by side pieces; the bottom is a log, in which a gutter is dug to convey the lye to a pail, or other receptacle, placed at its lower end. The manner in which the leach is supported, and the arrangements of its side boards, is sufficiently shown in the engraving. Sometimes an old sugar or molasses hogshead, obtained cheaply at "the store," is used as a leach. The hogshead, first having half-inch holes bored in its lower staves and ends, is set up, as shown in figure 2, upon a grooved plank, which will convey the lye to a vessel placed to receive it. This is kept in proper position by a frame, or by braces at the sides, as shown in figure 2.



TO "SET THE LEACH."

as putting it in operation is called. The old method was to put in the bottom some bricks or stones, then some brush, and over this a layer of straw, and then put in the ashes. This will answer, if no better method can be followed, but it is much easier and better to place on the bottom of the leach, of whatever kind, a piece of old blanket, or old carpet. This will accomplish the purpose for which the straw, etc., are used—i. e., to prevent the ashes from clogging up the holes, and allow the lye to flow out. Ashes moisten slowly, and in filling the leach it is better to put in a small quantity at a time, moistening each layer as it is put in, and compacting it with a pounder of some kind. If the ashes are thus moistened all through the leach will work more evenly than when filled dry. It is customary to make in the top of the ashes a cavity large enough to hold a pailful or two of water, and replenish the water as it soaks way. The more slowly the water percolates among the ashes the stronger the lye will be. It is a common practice to put lime in the leach, six or eight quarts of quick lime being placed on the first layer of ashes. This makes the lye much stronger, the lime converting the carbonate of potash, as it exists in the ashes, in part into caustic potash.

## MAKING SOAP WITH LYE.

There are some facts about soap-making not generally understood, and are here given in brief. The alkali in lye from wood-ashes is always *potash*. Potash will not, with any fat whatever, form a *hard* soap. All hard soaps contain *soda*, instead of potash. All the recipes that are sold for making hard soap from potash, or from lye, require the

use of salt. The salt decomposes the potash soap, its soda taking the place of the potash and forming a hard soap with the fat, while the potash, having formed a new combination, remains in the liquid at the bottom of the kettle. From lye alone, then, only soft soap can be expected, and this, when well made, is very useful for ordinary domestic purposes, and vastly better than the soft soap sold all over the country, which is merely common hard soap thinned to a sort of jelly with water, and is a most expensive article to purchase. While almost every farmer's wife who makes soap from lye can do it satisfactorily, and have the soap "come" every time, she will find it difficult to give a precise rule, so much depends upon practice and judgment or "gumption." In a general way she takes the strongest of the lye, and boils it with the rough grease, pours this into the soap barrel, and then adds the weaker lye as it runs from the leach. The usual result is a barrel of good strong soap, made without much reference to rules or proportions. So far as we can come at a rule, for soap with lye, an experienced soap-maker says: "Have the lye strong enough to float a potato. Take 12 pounds of clean grease, previously tried out, and add to it four gallons of lye, and boil together over a slow fire, put this into the soap barrel, and add more and weaker lye, to make a barrel of soap, frequently stirring." It will be seen that this is far from definite, and we shall be very glad if some one will give a more precise rule. In making soft soap from potash, the usual rule for a barrel of soap, is 12 lbs. of potash to 14 lbs. of grease. Dissolve the potash in about two pailfuls of hot water, poured on it over night. The potash dissolves quite slowly, especially if in compact lumps. Have the grease, previously rendered, in a barrel, and pour on it the potash liquid, stirring well. If some of the potash, as will probably be the case, remains undissolved, pour on more hot water, and the next day add this to the barrel, and continue doing so, stirring thoroughly, until the potash is all dissolved. Then add cold water, in moderate quantities, stirring each time, until the barrel is full.—S. D. Snook, in *American Agriculturist*.

## TO KEEP GREEN CORN.

My plan is this, and it never fails:—Gather the corn when in good eating state; place the corn, cob and all in a vessel, and pour boiling water over it; let it remain in the hot water three to five minutes, then cut the corn from the cob, put a layer of corn, then a layer of salt in large stone jars; when full, weight down; keep adding layers as the corn sinks down in the jar; the salt makes a brine without water; when used, soak all night in clear cold water.

## CANNING TOMATOES.

Skin them carefully by pouring boiling water over them; boil 20 minutes in a porcelain kettle, then take out all the water that stands on the top (or, if preferred to have them thin, only drain off a little of it). Have the jars heated by rolling them in boiling water; fill to overflowing with the boiling tomatoes, and seal quickly. I use Mason's jars, with glass lids, and think them preferable to those with metal tops, on account of the acid in the tomatoes. Mine last season were pronounced a perfect success. Keep in a dry, cool cellar.

## PEACH FIGS.

Pare and cut nice peaches in half; weigh them and allow half a pound of sugar to every pound of fruit. Heat both gradually without water till the sugar is dissolved, then boil until clear. Take them out with a fork, lay them on dishes without any syrup; put them in the sun and turn frequently, changing the plates if the syrup oozes out on to them. When so dry you can handle them; pack them in boxes or refuse fig drums, with layers of sifted sugar, beginning and finishing with it. The syrup that remains is fine for preserves. These are better than bought figs.

## APPLE JELLY.

Pare, core and cut up five dozen large, juicy, acid apples; put them in a pan with as much water as will cover them, let them boil gently until soft; when cold, strain through a jelly bag, put the juice into a preserving pan, and to each pint add one pound of fine sugar and the peel of two lemons. All jellies are best made by cooking the fruit syrup or juice alone, adding the sugar just a moment before removing from the fire. A piece of writing paper cut the exact size of the glass, moistened in brandy and laid upon the jelly, will prevent mould. A jelly-bag made of stout, unbleached muslin will prevent some vexatious accidents. I have never used any patent arrangement that is as satisfactory to me as this. The most convenient shape is ob