

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

Our Irish Letter.

DEAR CANADIAN SISTERS AND BROTHERS:

I can scarcely realize another month's having flown since I wrote you before. I suppose it is that events lately crowded on me, and I shall tell you of a few.

I suppose you have all heard of the celebrated Sans. Souci Diamonds, which were amongst the plunder, in fact amongst the crown jewels plundered during the French Revolution, and which had been presented by a certain Madame de Montespan to one of the Louis's—I forgot which. They were worn last month at our Queen's drawing-room by a lady, a Mrs. Aston. I should like to know how she became the possessor of them, but I don't. I fear we are verging towards a revolution here, though that is too tragic a name for what might look like one when only seen in print. We are mere windbags, half of us at least. It is simply abominable the way we respectable ladies and gentlemen are being bullied by this Home Riot affair. Some call the thing Home Rule, others Home Ruin, but I have invented my own appellation, which is Home Riot. There is to be a wonderfully large Orange demonstration here in Dublin on the 17th. I applied for a press ticket, but have had no reply. I suppose the secretary cannot see his way to granting my request; however, it may come, and if it does I shall have an account of the meeting in my next letter for you.

The vice-regal people held a drawing-room last week. Many personal friends were there, but they one and all told me they could give me no pleasant account of it. It was mere wreckage—people odd, dresses odder, refreshments oddest. I wish our dear old Queen would come amongst us, and hold even one before she becomes too old. We want something of the kind.

I played Patrick's Day for the last time the night we heard of the "Riot" having had its first reading; unless it is thrown out, I shall never try it again. I think myself a plucky little woman writing in this way. Perhaps my letter will not be taken, but please, dear friends, do not blame Minnie May for any shortcoming of mine. I am a very out-spoken little lady, and am given to form opinions for myself, and stick to them.

Our antiquarians have been put on the *qui vive*. Excavations for sanitary purposes were lately ordered to be carried out round St. Patrick's Cathedral. When digging the men came across one pillar, then another, and so on, until the shape of a church was discovered, and some of the walls. I've looked through this morning's paper to see if any fresh light had been thrown on the discovery, but see nothing of it. A thing of this kind sets one thinking. If the antiquarians, who may root out, to their own satisfaction, the when's and why's of this underground curiosity, give us ignoramus the benefit of their research, I hope the ending may not be a new edition of Dickens' delightful play upon the landmark in Pickwick's Papers, where Mr. Pickwick gloried in discovering the ancient cross, with the inscription which he hoped would immortalize the finder, but which when interpreted correctly was only "Bill Stumps, his mark."

The wedding I spoke of as coming off came, and a charmingly bright one it was. The very pretty bride (not pretty because she was one, which compliment one is apt to pay brides in general, but because she is sweet to a degree) was obliged to have six little train bearers—three miniature Lord Fauntleroy's, and three little Red Riding Hoods. We returned to the *dejeuner*, which passed as all things of the kind do. I thought it touching to see the bride's little mother (a degree smaller than your humble servant) give her only daughter away. She is a widow, so there was no father to take the happy duty off her shoulders. When it came to going away time, all we guests arranged ourselves down each side of the broad staircase and hall, with rice *ad libitum*, servants in a back hall armed with dreadful looking old shoes ready for a rush to the front. After a little while the murmur rose, "she is coming, time is up". Then from the upper landing there flew, I might say, down the stairs, straight through the hall door, down the steps, into the carriage, the very brightest looking little girl bride I ever saw. She said during the morning that she felt that she was not like the correct thing. She could not grow pale, her brunette complexion and soft brown eyes were things of beauty to behold. Her cousin, on whose arm the rush was made, is a "McNeill, of Park Mount," a name perfectly known in "upper ten" circles. He is familiarly known in the north of Ireland as "Long Ed." He is an Edmund McNeill, and measures six foot seven inches. She fitted under one of his arms, he holding the end of her long travelling cloak over her head with the hand of the other arm, to save her face from the showers of rice. When they had only been away a few minutes, lo! an alarm to return. What has happened? Quite an excitement prevailed for a second or two, but it only turned out to be the bride's Gladstone bag which had been forgotten, and they returning for it. This bag was a wedding present from Lord Cairns. Lady Cairns had given *carte blanche* for "Manning's" own make in the beautiful white corded silk wedding dress. I dreamed on some of the cake, but having a husband I was satisfied to spend a dreamless night.

If any of my Canadian friends go to the Chicago

World's Fair, I wish they would go and see an Irish jaunting car, Irish horse and Irish man, who are all being taken out to exhibit from Blackrock, where I hail from, or, I should say, from near Stillorgan. The man's name is Byrne, his trap is a clean specimen of our Jarveys. I advisedly say "clean," as some of our Irish cars and cabs are not so.

SUSAN STUDDERT KENNEDY.

Dress.

BY JESSIE J. LAMBERT,

(Written for the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.)

"For the apparel oft proclaims the man." Did you ever consider that our clothing is often a true reflection of ourselves. So far as dress can improve our personal charms, I can understand the love for it, for then it gratifies the desire for admiration, and, to a certain extent, is not blamable, for personal attractions are the gift of Providence, and therefore to be estimated in due proportion to their worth. The earth is not constructed on the principle of producing so much food for man's bodily wants; it has its cornfields, but it has also its wild flowers, on hill and moorland, to give us a sense of simple and touching beauty. Every woman ought to believe in the science of human beauty, and to cultivate it they should make the most and best of that which nature has given them. I am a believer in the right of a woman to look her best; it is not only her right, but it is really a duty for the mother of children to dress well and look her best; she should be to them the ideal woman, and ideality and slovenliness never go together. A dowdy woman seldom has good influence; slovenliness spreads to everything—a slovenly dress helps to create a slovenly mind; disorder without means confusion within. A neatly dressed person always meets with a respect which a slovenly one cannot demand. The art of dressing well lies in wearing that which is suited both to the time and place, and to one's position in life. It is not necessary that a person should be dressed in costly garments, or that they be made in the latest style, but it is necessary that they be clean, whole and appropriate, and it is very desirable that they be becoming, and at least passably well-fitting. To be well dressed is to be comfortable, and to be comfortable means to be one's self, not ill at ease and likely to commit any mistake for which one would feel ashamed afterwards. Good dressing means propriety, not necessarily expense. No lady need be ashamed to dress plainly and cheaply. Not every woman can dress well, with even reckless expenditure, but a clever woman can dress with intelligent economy and artistic taste.

There is a class who innocently wrong themselves by their dress. If a woman paints her face, dyes her hair, and draws in her waist, she may not be morally bad, but she will be quite sure to be mistaken for quite another person than the lady she is.

"Still to be powdered, still perfumed,
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found.
All is not sweet, all is not sound."

The woman who delights to array herself in cheap laces, sham jewelry, and inferior silks, is generally as artificial as her attire, lacking the ring of sincerity, just as her garments lack the marks of genuineness. She is committing a grievous wrong when she centres all attention on the feathers that bedeck, and the flowers that will go out of fashion to-morrow. To seek admiration in this way only is the surest way to lose respect and love. A vain woman is not lovable, and has been said to have many points in common with that most unmusical of fowls, whose beautiful plumage does not hide his ungainly feet nor overcome the harshness of his untimely voice. Vanity is not a becoming sin. The inordinate love of admiration is indicated by an undue attention to dress.

The foolish mother spends her ill-spaced pence to purchase a bead necklace, and does not fail to impress on the child the pleasure of putting it on for the first time. The untidy school girl sticks an artificial flower into her torn and dirty hat, and exults over her companions in ideal splendor. A little older, and she spends her scanty wages in finery, and goes without decent and necessary clothing. A little older and her wages will not suffice the growing desire, and theft, iniquity, and final ruin are to be traced to this propensity. The inordinate love of dress and display which young women cherish, and the time given to the ministering to their personal vanity, leads very many into a reckless and heartless state, and to an utter distaste for the things which would profit their spiritual, intellectual and social nature.

Some Queer Advertisements.

Babies taken and finished in ten minutes by a country photographer.

Wanted—A female who has a knowledge of fitting boots of a good moral character.

For Sale—A handsome piano, the property of a young lady who is leaving Scotland in a walnut case with turned legs.

To be Sold—A splendid gray horse, calculated for a charger, or would carry a lady with a switch tail.

A lady advertises her desire for a husband "with a Roman nose having strong religious tendencies."

A newspaper gives an account of a man who "was driving an old ox when he became angry and kicked him, hitting his jawbone with such force as to break his leg."

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES AND NEPHEWS:—

"Now the noisy winds are still;
April's coming up the hill;
All the Spring is in her train,
Led by shining ranks of rain,
Pit, pat, patter, clatter,
Sudden sun, and clatter, patter!
First the blue and then the shower;
Bursting bud and smiling flower;
Brooks set free with tinkling ring;
Birds too full of song to sing;
Crisp old leaves astir with pride,
Where the timid violets hide—
All things ready with a will,
April's coming up the hill."

So writes an American poetess, Mary Mapes Dodge. Our feelings keep time to the words, for who is not glad when Winter's bands of ice are breaking and Spring's winds, sunshine and showers appear? These are soon followed by leaf and bud and blossom, and soon we will be ushered into summer. The wild flower and the violet will be in bloom, and the blue flag in the swamp. Your city cousins buy iris bulbs from the florist along with their Chinese lilies and hyacinths, and what do you think they turn out to be after all their watering and sunning and care? Merely flags, not so pretty nor so lasting as those you see down there where the cows are eating by the creek side. "Once upon a time," as the stories we used to like to hear began, a little girl used to feel badly over the fact that she was not pretty. This silly child was presented by her teacher with an ordinary, oniony-looking bulb and asked to give it water and sunlight. She did so, and was rewarded in time by a beautiful flower, full and rich in color and delicate in perfume. As she watched it unfolding day by day, what lesson do you think she learned? It was this: unsightly surfaces may cover wonderful possibilities of life and beauty, and we hope she learned what all of us learn as we grow older, that beauty lies not so much in face or figure, grace or carriage, as in thoughtful common sense from which come kind words and actions. These bright spring evenings bring many memories back to us older folks as we sit and hear your merry voices at your play—memories which lie "too deep for tears"; buried away, which only this time of year at even-tide recalls. "History repeats itself," even in the lives of persons, and as you rake the lawn, make your gardens, drive your horses, it calls to mind how we, with others now far, far separated, did similar things in other days. Not one sound of enjoyment would I hinder. The days are going by— even to-morrow you will be older than to-day; but I'm afraid Uncle Tom's reverie has been too long to-night, and lest he weary you with his sombre tone he will close.

UNCLE TOM.

P. S.—I want to remind all those who have not yet sent their photos, to do so at once if they wish to appear in our "Souvenir Group," as I hope to have it ready for distribution early in May.

I have been much gratified at the interest taken in selections for the "Poet's Corner." I have been literally deluged with bushels of poems, but on account of the space occupied in publishing the three selections, henceforth I will be unable to obtain room in our department for more than one selection each month, which, of course, will be entitled to the prize of one dollar.

POETS' CORNER.

Selected Poetry.

BY FLOSSIE GRAHAM, HAWTHORNE P. O., ONT.

The poems of Alice and Phoebe Cary were published in a joint volume during the lifetime of the sisters. The first venture in this way was made in 1819, and the large public interested in their works has ever since then instinctively connected writers, who, bound together by peculiar ties, were as akin and divergent in their natures. Subsequently to the first venture, they issued their volumes of poetry separately, but after their death the editor of their writings, Mrs. Mary Clemmer, again associated them. Her memorial contained their later poems, followed by the last poems of Alice and Phoebe, and finally by Ballads for Little—Folk again a joint collection. Alice Cary was born 1820, and her sister Phoebe in 1824, in Cincinnati. They were the authors of many beautiful gems of poetry. In 1851 they moved to New York, where they supported themselves by writing poems and prose sketches for newspapers and magazines. They died in 1871, within three months of each other.

"Nobility."

ALICE CARY.

True worth is in being, not seeming—
In doing each day that goes by
Some little good—not in the dreaming
Of great things to do by-and-by.
For whatever men say in blindness,
And spite of the fancies of youth,
There's nothing so kingly as kindness,
And nothing so royal as truth.

We get back our mete as we measure—
We cannot do wrong and feel right,
Nor can we give pain and gain pleasure,
For justice avenges each slight.
The air for the wing of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
And straight, for the children of men.

'Tis not in the pages of story
The heart of its ills to beguile,
Though he who makes courtship to glory
Gives all that he hath for her smile;
For when from her heights he has won her,
Alas! it is only to prove
That nothing is so sacred as honor
And nothing so loyal as love!