

Minnie May's Department.

Set the Table Neatly.

DEAR NIECES,—Not long since, when visiting at a friend's, I noticed such a bustle and confusion while at dinner, simply for the want of proper attention while setting the dinner table.

"Ada, run and bring the carving knife and fork," said the mother, as we began our meal; "and bring me the sugar bowl." "I hav'n't any fork," cried Jim; "guess I'll eat with my fingers." "No, indeed," said mother, "go right away and get yourself a fork." "I do wish we could always have a pitcher of water on the table," said the father. "Mary, get some water for your father, and do try and remember that; I am sure I have told you often enough." The three children were at last in their places again, and quietness was restored. "I do hope we can get on now without having any one to get up again until the meal is over," said the father; "it makes so much confusion and discomfort. Whose business is it to set the table?" "Mary's," said little Ada. "Well, Mary, if you set it for a week without having one missing thing when we sit down, I will get you a new dress." Mary was pleased with the proposal, and exerted herself to the utmost. She increased order and comfort in the family meals, and was rewarded with the new dress.

There is a science about setting tables which is too often neglected in our country homes. The first point is a clean cloth; then let the plates and cups be shining and evenly set, the knives bright, and the salt cellars and sugar bowl clean. A little care and forethought can prevent the disorder which so often spoils half the meal in our country homes. A good dinner will not look the least tempting if it is carelessly put on the table. Some housekeepers seem to have no skill in these departments. Good flour is converted into some indigestible mass, and fresh vegetables, by being all cooked together, lose all their own peculiar excellencies. The whole meal, when the family are called to partake of it, has the appearance of being thrown on the table. How seldom do we see a bouquet of flowers on our dining tables; yet what a charm they throw over our plainest meal! How refining their influence on the hearts of children, and delightful to all flower lovers! Nothing that makes home bright and pleasant is too trifling to receive our earnest study and attention.

MINNIE MAY.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—May I be allowed to congratulate you upon your well conducted department; the advice which you give to your many nieces is very good. I have followed the proposition you made last month in regard to making a flower garden. I persuaded my brothers to dig the ground; I then laid it out in flower beds, and have planted some rose bushes, ornamental shrubs and bulbs, and intend sowing some flower seeds soon. What is more pleasant than to spend a portion of every passing day in working among plants and watching the growth of shrubs and trees, and to observe the opening of flowers from week to week, as the season advances? Then, how much it adds to the enjoyment to know that your own hands have planted, tilled, pruned and trained them! This is a pleasure that requires neither great riches nor profound knowledge. The wife or daughter who loves home, and would seek ever to make it the happiest place for husband or brother, is willing to forego some gossiping morning calls for the sake of having leisure for the cultivation of plants, shrubs and flowers. The advantages which women personally derive from stirring the soil and sniffing the morning air are freshness and beauty of cheek, brightness of eye, cheerfulness of temper, virgin of mind, and purity of heart. MYRA.

The company of a good humored man is a perpetual feast; he is welcomed everywhere—eyes glisten at his approach, and difficulties vanish in his presence.

"Why is it, my dear sir," said Waffles' landlady to him the other day, "that you newspaper men never get rich?" "I do not know," was his reply, "except it is that dollars and sense do not always travel together."

The superiority of man to nature is continually illustrated in literature and in life. Nature needs an immense quantity of quills to make a goose with; but man can make a goose of himself in five minutes with one quill.

Recipes.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—I would like to become one of your worthy nieces. Do you admit any one who subscribes for the paper. If so I should be happy to send you a recipe occasionally which you might find of use. I have taken a great interest in your department for years, and have found many useful hints in regard to housekeeping. I have a recipe to offer for making nectar, which is a very refreshing beverage in the hot summer.

BLANCH PLAXTON.

TO MAKE NECTAR.

Take two pounds of chopped raisins, four pounds of loaf sugar, two gallons of boiling water. Mix, and, when cold, add two lemons, sliced; braudy or rum, two pints. Soak in a covered vessel for four or five days, occasionally shaking; strain, let stand in a cool place for a week to clear, and then bottle. It will be fit for drink in ten days.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—I am afraid you will think I have forgotten you, as I have not written for two months. The fact is, I have not been able to, as I have had a severe attack of sickness, which has left me very weak still, though I hope to be quite well soon. I will inclose our recipe for making raspberry vinegar, as that season will again soon be with us. Perhaps some of your readers may find it useful.

RASPBERRY VINEGAR.

Put two pounds of raspberries into a jar and pour on them a quart of the best white wine vinegar and let all stand twenty-four hours; then add two pounds more of raspberries and let all stand twenty-four hours more; then strain the pure vinegar, and to every pint add one pound of sugar; then boil it up twenty minutes; when cold bottle it for use. It will keep for years. Seal each bottle air tight.

L. SIFTON.

RHUBARB PRESERVES.

To every six pounds of rhubarb add six pounds of sugar and a quarter of a pound of bruised ginger; the rhubarb to be cut in pieces about two inches long and put into a stone jar, with the sugar in layers, till the sugar is dissolved; take the juice or syrup and boil it with the ginger for half an hour, then add the rhubarb and boil another half hour.

BLACK CURRANT JELLY.

It is necessary to add a little water to the fruit in order to strain it. After it is boiled so as to heat the fruit through, press it, little by little, until all the juice is extracted. Allow one pound of sugar to every pint of juice; mix the juice and sugar and boil ten minutes, stirring constantly, when it will be ready to put in moulds.

SALAD DRESSING.

Take one raw egg, beat it well; then add a little salt, a teaspoonful of mustard; mix thoroughly together; then add two or three tablespoonfuls of salad oil. This ought to make a tenacious mass. Dilute it with vinegar till it assumes the consistency of thick cream. This makes a rich salad mixture.

These receipts have been used in our family for a long time. I send them in part payment for the many favors I have received through the column of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE. Jennie's cheese cakes were delicious.

A. E. PRICE.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—I enclose you the following recipes, which I know to be very useful:

MOCK CREAM.

Boil one pint and a half of milk, sweeten and flavor to taste, beat three eggs very light, add to them three heaping spoonfuls of flour and a teaspoon of salt, stir this into the boiling milk; spread this, when cold, between two layers of the cake, and you will have a nice cream pie.

BREAKFAST PUFFS.

One-half pint of milk, one pint of flour, two eggs, a tablespoon of butter or two of cream, and a teaspoon of salt. Bake in hot roll-pans.

PUDDING SAUCE.

One and a half cups of sugar, one-half cup of butter, one egg beaten to a froth; when the whole has been beaten together very thoroughly, pour in one big spoonful and a half of boiling water and let it boil up at once beating it all the time, then remove from the fire and flavor with nutmeg and half a wine-glass of wine. H. I. WARREN, Pembroke.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—Please accept the following recipe from your niece and well-wisher:

JOHNNY-CAKE.

For a good Johnny-cake that has been tried and found successful, take of sour cream four cups, two eggs, one teaspoon of salt, one teaspoon soda, and cornmeal enough to make a thin batter, and bake in a moderate oven. V. F.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—I send you a recipe for preserving green tomatoes. I have tried it and can highly recommend it to the readers of the ADVOCATE.

GREEN TOMATO PRESERVES.

Take green tomatoes 7 lbs., peel and slice, then add 3 lbs. of nice bright sugar, a pint of vinegar, and cloves and lemon to suit the taste, boil half an hour, then put into glass or stone jars.

MRS. C. S.

Miscellaneous.

GOOD BLACK INK.—To one quart of strong decoction of logwood, well strained, add three ounces of blue galls in coarse powder, twelve drams sulphate of iron, one and one-quarter drams acetate of copper, twelve drams of well-ground sugar, one and one-half ounce of gum arabic. Set it over the fire till it begins to boil, then set it away uncorked till it has turned black enough; add a few cloves to keep out the mould. It is a real pleasure to open a letter and find a clear, legible chirography in ink of a decided color.

To ruin oil-cloths, clean them with hot water or soap-suds and leave them half wiped, and they will look very bright while wet and very dingy and dirty when dry, and soon crack and peel off. But if you wish to preserve them, and have them look new and nice, wash them with soft flannel and luke-warm water, and wipe thoroughly dry. If you want them to look extra nice after they are dry, drop a few tablespoonfuls of milk over them and rub them with a small cloth.

It is said that about 15,000 bunches of violets are sold every day in Paris. Their sale amounts to 500,000 francs a year. They are not in so much favor now as they were during the Empire, for the violet is looked upon as an emblem of the Bonapartes. Great numbers of persons live by its sale and its culture in the sandy fields to the south of Paris.

REMEDY FOR BEE STINGS.—Dr. J. C. Emery, of Lansing, Michigan, writes that, as a remedy for the sting of the honey bee, there is nothing which gives quicker relief than the common peach leaf chewed to a pulp and applied to the wound. The good effect is due to the prussic acid contained in the leaf.

If possible, buy an oilcloth which has been made for several years, as the longer it has lain unwashed the better it will wear, the paint being harder. Never scrub. Sweep with a soft hair brush, and wash with a soft cloth dipped in milk and water. Don't use soap. Rub dry with a handful of rags.

The proprietor of a well-known silver establishment in Philadelphia says that housekeepers ruin their silver by washing it in soapsuds, which makes it look like pewter. He recommends a piece of soft leather and writing to be used.

NEURALGIA.—Persons troubled with this distressing complaint will be glad to learn a cure. Two drops of laudanum in a half teaspoonful of warm water and dropped into the ears will give immediate relief.

A wise cook has discovered that, while peeling onions, if she keeps her hands and the onions under water, she escapes the fit of weeping generally incidental to the process.

To preserve beauty, preserve your health and spirits.

Hours of recreation are not lost hours by any means.

To keep out of trouble keep out of debt.