

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES,—

I am afraid most of us are Gentile enough to take an interest in that (to many women) absorbing question, "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

Such is the variety of styles and fashions this spring that we can really wear almost anything most pleasing to ourselves, as long as we are careful to put a very generous share of our dress goods into the manufacture of our sleeves. They still continue to be quite the feature of a gown, and if they fulfil the demands of Dame Fashion, the remainder of our costume will probably pass muster.

All sorts of dressy little capes are to be very much worn this season, in the manufacture of which ribbon and jet enter largely. The latter is used with nearly every color, and the effect is generally very pleasing.

Amongst the spring novelties are velvet blouses—shirts they are called in the English fashion books (black, deep crimson, dark blue, and green, are the favorite colors for street wear); these, worn with a skirt of similar or contrasting shade, look most stylish. Evening blouses of the same material, made in the more delicate shades, have already become very popular.

Orepon goods of all sorts continue in high favor, and deservedly so, for they make up very prettily and wear well; their *uncrushableness* is another quality which makes them popular; and last, but by no mean least, they are very reasonable in price.

For the warmer weather the merchants are already displaying the prettiest of muslins, organdies of the most delicate shade, with floral patterns so lightly printed on them that they look more like the shadow of the flowers than the flowers themselves. Dotted Swiss muslins, either in plain colors or flowered in the daintiest of tints, are also shown in every variety of shade; they make lovely summer frocks for either afternoon or evening wear; in the trimming of the latter, ribbon and lace are used in profusion. The finer qualities of these muslins should be worn over a silk skirt of the same shade, or if that cannot be procured, it is a good plan to have a fine bookmuslin petticoat made, with a deep frill trimmed with lace.

For morning wear, nothing can be prettier than a chambray frock, and they are so delightfully cool and light. If worn carefully, they ought to keep clean the entire season, but as it is a wash-material, most people have them made with a view to their being readily washed and ironed; the gored skirt, round waist, and large sleeves, is preferred by most dressmakers. While we are on the subject of wash-dresses, let me remind you that starching generally spoils the sit and appearance of them, besides making them much more difficult to iron. Fancy collars of every description are much worn, from the high plaited velvet one, for street wear, to the exquisite floral collars, reserved for evening dress. The latter are especially pretty for young people, and very becoming to those with thin necks. Any one with a little taste and ingenuity can make one of these dainty accessories to any costume.

Hats and bonnets are shown in a most bewildering variety of sizes and shapes, and very hard to please must that member of the fair sex be who cannot find one to suit her style of beauty, no matter how unique that style happens to be! To small faces the exquisite little floral bonnets are very becoming; but very ridiculous they look when worn on the head that refuses to be covered with a headgear of twice the size. Equally ridiculous does the short woman look when oppressed by a hat large enough to serve as a sunshade—or as a most effectual screen, if you want to see somebody or something in front of her!

Spring flowers, combined with jet, appear to be the most fashionable trimming, and the hats themselves are of the lightest and airiest description. Many of them are wire frames covered with lace, or a sort of trellis-work of the stems of the flowers, through which the flowers peep in the most natural manner.

MINNIE MAY.

Recipes.

PUFFETS.

One quart flour, one pint milk, two eggs beaten light, butter size of an egg, three tablespoonfuls sugar, and three teaspoonfuls baking powder.

MAHOGANY CAKE.

One quart milk, three pints flour and four eggs. Beat yolks and whites of the eggs separately. Add the yolks to the milk, stir in the flour, a pinch of salt; beat well; stir in the whites; put into hot gem pans and bake.

LAYER CAKE.

One cup of sugar, piece of butter the size of an egg, half a cup of milk, two eggs, two cups flour, two teaspoonfuls baking powder. Bake as jelly cake.

DATE PUDDING.

One-half pound of dates, one-quarter pound of suet, five ounces brown sugar, half-pound grated bread crumbs, a little nutmeg, a little salt; mix all together with two well-beaten eggs; put into pudding tins and boil two and a-half hours.

THE QUIET HOUR.

"Who Shall Roll Away the Stone?"

St. Mark: XVI., 3, 4.

What poor weeping ones were saying
Eighteen hundred years ago,
We, the same weak faith betraying,
Say in our sad hours of woe.

Looking at some trouble lying
In the dark and dread unknown,
We too often ask, with sighing,
"Who shall roll away the stone?"

Thus with care our spirits crushing,
When they might from care be free,
And in joyous song out-gushing,
Rise in rapture, Lord, to Thee.

For before the way was ended
Oft we've had with joy to own,
Angels have from heaven descended,
And have rolled away the stone.

Many a storm-cloud sweeping o'er us,
Never pours on us its rain;
Many a grief we see before us
Never comes to cause us pain.

Offtimes in the feared "to-morrow"
Sunshine comes—the cloud has flown!
Ask not, then, in foolish sorrow,
"Who shall roll away the stone?"

Burden not thy soul with sadness;
Make a wiser, better choice;
Drink the wine of life with gladness;
God doth bid thee, "Saint, rejoice."

In to-day's bright sunlight basking,
Leave to to-morrow's cares alone;
Spend not present joys by asking,
"Who shall roll away the stone?"

[Selected.]

Go Forward.

Sometimes the difficulties in the path of duty seem to be insurmountable. We are tempted to despair, or, like Jonah, rush off in an opposite direction. Does God ever command us to perform impossible tasks? Sometimes it looks like it. Once a great host stood before the Red Sea,—behind was an angry foe. What was to be done? The Lord said: "Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Was ever an order more surprising than that? There appeared no possible outlet in that direction. And yet we know that even through the sea the way was easy, and what looked like destruction to Israel proved salvation instead. Again, they stood before a walled city. The command was given to raise a victorious shout and enter the city, "every man straight before him." How could they "enter?" They could not climb the wall. Again the insurmountable barrier was easily overcome by faith, for "with God nothing is impossible."

If we always walked up boldly to the difficult tasks set before us, they would always prove possible, often easy, and sometimes vanish altogether. A word is given us to speak for God. We are too shy, perhaps, or like Moses, say, "I am not eloquent. . . . I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." What of that? Has not God promised to "be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say?" Possibly we expect coldness and unkindness in reply. Go Forward! "As thy day so shall thy strength be." How often when a man feared a cold reception to his trembling words for Christ, he has found instead a kindly heart, and broken down the barrier between himself and his brother. How often when we knew the way was blocked by a huge stone of misunderstanding or anger, going forward in faith and hope we find that angel hands have rolled away the stone, and the way is open. The Lord never builds the bridge of faith visibly stretching across the gulf before us. If He gives firm footing for each step that is enough, we can trust Him for the next. If the bridge could be seen it would not be of faith. Faith can conquer countless foes, like Gideon with his three hundred men against the hosts of Midian. "The lions in the way" are chained, but only the man who goes forward finds this out. The mountains can be removed from the path and "cast into the sea" by faith. A way is opened even through the rushing river of Death. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

If Thou Couldst Know.

I think if thou couldst know,
O soul that will complain,
What lies concealed below
Our burden and our pain;
How just our anguish brings
Nearer those longed for things
We seek for now in vain,
I think thou wouldst rejoice, and not complain.

I think if thou couldst see,
With thy dim mortal sight,
How meanings, dark to thee,
Are shadows hiding light;
Truth's efforts crossed and vexed,
Life's purpose all perplexed,—
If thou couldst see them right,
I think that they would seem all clear, and wise, and bright.

And yet thou canst not know,
And yet thou canst not see;
Wisdom and light are slow
In poor humanity.

If thou couldst trust, poor soul,
In Him who rules the whole,
Thou wouldst find peace and rest,
Wisdom and light are well—but Trust is best.

—A. A. Proctor.

THE SOCIAL CORNER.

Under this heading, communications relating to the home or any subject of interest will be published and questions answered.

MINNIE MAY.

"M. F."—Your oleander probably wants re-potting in fresh earth. As they require rather a rich soil, mix some fertilizer with it.

Pansy seeds can be sown from September to March. The finest plants are obtained from seeds sown in the autumn, and protected during the winter; these will flower early in the spring. The plants from spring sowing should be planted in a shady border (in fresh soil, enriched with decomposed manure), placed six inches apart.

Carnations thrive best in a light, sandy soil; with the latter should be mixed some fertilizer.

M. M.

"L. M."—The chapping of hands is caused by exposure to cold. You should be careful to protect them well, and always dry thoroughly after putting them in water. Rub them well with vaseline every night, and wear loose kid gloves with the palms cut out. Treated thus, hands will soon heal and become soft and smooth.

M. M.

"FLORIST."—The red spider that infests your plants can only be gotten rid of by frequent and generous applications of water. If you have not a syringe for the purpose, the best plan is to dip the plant into a tub of water.

Heliotropes can be easily propagated from seed, and require no more care than verbenas. Nasturtiums will thrive in almost the poorest spot in the garden, and will produce more and better colored flowers than if in rich soil, which tends to produce too much foliage. They are very showy, easy to raise, and remain in bloom for a long period.

M. M.

"READER."—The ten best books by American writers, selected by vote of the readers of the New York "Critic," are: Emerson's "Essays," Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," Longfellow's "Poems," Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Dr. Holmes' "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," Washington Irving's "Sketch Book," Lowell's "Poems," Whittier's "Poems," Gen. Wallace's "Ben Hur," and Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic."

M. M.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—I am very glad to see the S. C. prospering so well, and am sure, from the interest every one seems to take, it will continue to do so. Could you tell me what will restore the stiffness to China silk which has been washed? Do you think starch would injure it?

A. P. HAMPTON, Boyne, Ont.

[A solution of gum arabic and water can be safely used on China silk. You may require to experiment a little to obtain the required stiffness. Thin starch might be used on cream or white, if very carefully done.]

Many thanks for your encouraging words.]

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—On reading Mrs. Matthew's cure for insomnia, in the last issue of the ADVOCATE, I remembered one given by Margaret E. Sangster, in the form of a pretty poem, which I inclose, hoping it will please your readers as it did me.

Yours sincerely, ADA ARMAND,
Pakenham, Ont.

A Watch in the Night.

In the long, dim night, if you cannot sleep,
Don't fall to counting the dreamland sheep;
They follow their leader fast and faint,
Over the hedge in a dizzy train,
But they have no power to drive away
The haunting ghosts of the weary day.

Cease, if you can, from adding lines
Of courtesying figures, sevens and nines,
Sixes, eights, and tens, till by and by,
Like a cloud of notes in a summer sky,
You could brush them away, but they'd backward creep,
And never, never would bring you sleep.

And whoever may bid you, do not say
The verses you learned in your childhood's day,
Over and over, until full fain
You wish you were merely a child again,
With a head that at touch of the pillow knew
The tender dropping of slumber's dew.

But dear, just think of the forest pool,
Where the ferns stand close on the edges cool;
Where the whispering willows bend and lave,
And the lisp is heard of the rippling wave;
Hark to the wind in the pine-tree tops,
To the syllabled murmur in grove and copse,
Shutting your eyes, drift out to sea,
Where the stars look down and the sails float free,
And the waters will croon you a drowsy tune,
And the lulling of slumber will reach you soon.

Or think, if you will, of the sweet green grass,
Acres and acres where no feet pass;
Of daisies and clover, that over and over
The zephyrs kiss, with the heart of a lover;
Of dunes that are billowy 'neath the sun,
Where the skylark stoops when his song is done.

Or ever you know it unaware
The angel of sleep will find you there,
Will sift his poppies above your head,
And rock you as if in a cradle bed;
And hushing and hushing will hush you deep
In the wonderful, beautiful care of sleep;
And you'll never wake till the new day's dawn,
When the watch of the dark, dull night is gone.

Margaret E. Sangster.