

Minnie May's Department.

Premium for November.

From the many flattering encomiums I am constantly receiving from my readers, I feel assured that MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT has been a source of useful information and productive of much good in the family. I do not intend to retrograde in this respect, but to make it a household instructor and ladies' companion. And, dear readers, can you not assist very much in doing this? In the management of your homes are there not matters of common occurrence which, if published in these columns, would; from the immense circulation of the ADVOCATE, be a benefit to thousands of families, and thus advance the interests of all?

I purpose during the following month to give a handsome chromo to the subscriber sending in the best six new recipes—those that have been tried and found successful. Recipes to be in by the 20th November.

MINNIE MAY.

Recipes.

Mrs. W. W. has sent me a piece of cake made from the following recipe, which I would recommend my readers to try. Mrs. W. W. is no novice in the art of cooking, as her cake testifies:—

DEAR MINNIE MAY:—I have found some splendid recipes in your department of the ADVOCATE. I send you a couple of mine, which I hope you will like. Please give them a trial:—

DRIED APPLE CAKE.

Two and a half cups of flour; one cup of dried apples; one cup of molasses; one-half cup butter; one-half cup of brown sugar; one-half cup of sour milk; one and a half teaspoons soda; one egg; all kind of spices. Soak apples over night, cut fine in the morning, and boil in molasses for about an hour.

JELLY CAKE.

One cup of flour; one cup of sugar; three eggs; one teaspoon of baking powder; a little salt.

Mrs. W. W.

Can any of my readers [supply "H" with the information required?

DEAR MINNIE:—I want to know if you could tell me how to make skeleton leaves, and what is the best time to pick the leaves for that purpose.

COCOANUT CAKE.

Make it the same as jelly cake, only instead of putting jelly between the layers, beat the whites of two or three eggs to a stiff froth, then add a cupful of white sugar; spread it on the layers, and then sprinkle coconut thickly over it, and the same on the top and sides.

CUSTARD.

Put a quart of milk on the stove, and, while it is coming to a boil, beat the whites and yolks separately; when you get the whites to a stiff froth, drop it into the milk—a spoonful at a time—and keep turning the egg, until sufficiently cooked; then place them on a glass dish; take the milk off to cool; then add to it the yolks, with sugar and flavoring to taste; then put this on the stove to thicken, but don't let it go to a boil or the eggs will curdle.

Sarnia, Sept. 15, 1875.

H.

RICE.

To boil rice as in India, proceed as follows:—Into a sauce-pan of two quarts of water, when boiling, throw a tablespoonful of salt, and then put in one pint of rice, previously well washed in cold water. Let it boil twenty minutes, throw into a colander, drain, and put back into the sauce-pan, which should stand near the fire for several minutes.

TO DRY PUMPKINS.

Cut the pumpkins through laterally, clean the inside; then continue to cut, in the direction as before, rings about half an inch thick. Cut off the rind and hang the rings on a pole in the sun or warm room to dry. When dried it will keep a year. It is to be boiled in plenty of water until tender, then skimmed out and prepared for pies, the same as undried pumpkins.

Another way:—Take the ripe pumpkins, pare, cut into small pieces, stew soft, mash and strain through a colander, as if for making pies. Spread this pulp on plates, in layers not quite an inch thick; dry it in the stove oven, which should be kept at so low a temperature as not to scorch it. In about a day it will become dry and crisp. The sheets thus made can be stowed in a dry place, and they are always ready for use for pies and sauces. The quick drying after cooking prevents any portion from slightly souring, as is nearly always the case when the uncooked pieces are dried, the flavor is much better preserved, and the after cooking is saved. To use, soak pieces over night in a little milk, and they will return to a nice pulp as delicious as the fresh pumpkin.

TO PRESERVE CIDER.

The following method of preserving cider sweet is recommended as superior to any other:—"I allow the cider, after it comes from the press, to stand until the pomace settles. When this point is reached, I put it in a clear vessel, and let it come to a boil, skimming off the skum carefully. It is then put into kegs and demijohns, and tightly corked and sealed. By this process I have excellent sweet cider, not merely for the entire winter, but for years. This method would not of course be available where large quantities are made, but for an ordinary family it answers admirably."

DRYING APPLES.

As the time is now at hand when fall apples must be saved, if at all, by drying, I will give the method I am best pleased with, in hopes, if others have better ways of doing it, they will let them be known.

To begin with, I never dry withered, gnarly, specky apples, either for my own use or to sell. It is too much work to prepare them for drying; and then I don't think it honest to sell such, unless at a very reduced price. Some people have an idea that anything in the shape of an apple will do to dry, and that nobody will know the difference between bad and good dried apples when cooked. But I think if such people would buy such dried fruit for a year or two, paying a good round price for it, they would learn a difference between it and fair apples.

I have a machine which pares very nicely and saves much time. Any good machine seems to me far preferable to hand paring. I keep the cutting and coring even with the paring, for as soon as the fruit is exposed to the atmosphere it begins to soften and lose flavor.

I prefer laying the quarters on clean boards or racks to stringing them, but if they are at all crowded they will be sure to suffer from it. It is better that no two quarters should touch while drying. Let the heat—whether in a dry-house or by your kitchen fire—be at first sufficient to very soon close the pores of the cut fruit; afterward it should be a few degrees less; if a crust is formed upon the quarters, the thorough drying of them is made more difficult.

It is a great pity to dry apples (as many people do) so very effectually that they are as hard and tasteless as chips. There is more danger of this when apples are sliced than when quartered. I last year saw some most delicious apples cut into thin shavings and dried till they rattled in the pan like bits of shingle. When wanted for use they will require a two days' soaking at least before being fit to cook, and will then be almost without flavor. If, when you put dried apples away, they cannot be easily pressed and mellowed with the fingers, they have not received just the right treatment.

Sacks that will hold two or three quarts are better than larger ones for the keeping of dried fruit. Let them be tightly closed and hang where no dampness can gather. Either paper or cloth sacks will do, so that they are impervious to flies and millers.

The Latest Fashions.

Notwithstanding the presence of many dark, quiet colors, modest enough for street attire, black costumes will prevail, as they have done for years. To give something of novelty to these is the object of the modistes, and this is accomplished by combining two or three black fabrics in one dress. Thus, instead of using gros grain for the whole dress, matelasse silk will be used for the overdress, velvet for the sleeves, bows and flounces, and gros grain for the underskirt; striped and plaid velvets—all black—are sometimes used instead of damask-figured stuffs, but the latter are seen in the most elegant dresses. There is also a renewed effort to relieve these dresses by facings of cardinal or strawberry red faille, but of course this is

restricted to house dresses. Square trains separate from the lower skirt are a conspicuous feature of these dresses. The overdresses of these new black toilettes have some resemblance to polonaises and to demi-polonaises, yet at the same time they suggest a basque and upper skirt. The French modistes seem to have devoted their ingenuity to making undecided nondescript garments that are very pretty to look at, but which the fashion writer finds very difficult to classify and describe. One good thing to be said of these combination costumes is that they afford admirable plans for making over old dresses, as there is no necessity for matching old goods with the new, since a partly worn silk skirt may be taken from one dress, enough velvet for sleeves from another, while only a few little new matelasse or striped velvet must be bought for the over garment.

Flounces of new dresses are not flowing *volantes*, as at present, but are attached to the skirt almost as closely near the bottom as at the top. To keep these from looking stiff, they must be made very full and bunchy, and this brings box-plaiting into use again. A row of double or even triple box-plaitings is the tasteful border that edges the skirts of many handsome dresses. Others have a side plaiting, not straight like that worn during the summer, but bias, turned in very deeply at top and bottom, and sewed to the skirt two inches from the top of the plaiting, making a wide fringe for heading, and also tacked again about three inches from the lower edge. It is the rule now to have but one cluster of trimming, and to trim the skirt alike all around.

Since jet has gone out of fashion, various netted aprons without jet have been introduced. Thus, there are those made of soft silk braid, either colored or black, tied in diamond shape and richly fringed. Others, again, are of chenille, also netted in diamond designs, and these have very heavy fringes of chenille in tassels on the edge. These are seen on the richest French dresses, and later in the season will be imported separately.

Feather trimmings will be very much worn, and some novel designs are imported, such as a *ruche* of feathers for heading, below which is a fringe of the feathers. This trimming in finely curled black ostrich feathers for black velvet or silk cloaks costs \$8.50 a yard; in greenish-black cock's feathers, it is \$6.50. Simpler than the last, and much cheaper, are narrow curled fringes of black or of gray ostrich feathers to put under the edge of silk sacques, and give the effect of the fur linings of which glimpses are sometimes seen in this way. These trimmings cost \$1.85 a yard.

The large circulars and long sacques lined with fur became so popular last winter during the extremely cold weather that they are again preferred for the coming winter. They are made now of the heavy Antwerp silks that come of double width, also of Sicilienne and the ordinary gros grains. They are lined with squirrel-lock fur, and bordered with gray or black fox fur, or perhaps with black Alaska sable. The prices are higher than those of last year, owing to the advanced price of the squirrel furs for linings. A good garment of this kind now costs \$100; many are more expensive.

Real mohair braids in loosely woven tresses, in basket patterns and in the substantial Titan designs, are favorite trimmings for cloth and other wool stuffs. They come in various widths, and the wider they are the more stylish they are considered. There are various qualities in these braids. A stylishly woven braid of pure mohair four inches wide costs \$2.10 a yard; prices decrease, of course, as they get narrower. Black silk galloons with threads of gold or of silver cost from \$1 to \$4 a yard, and are from one to three inches wide.

Fringes will be more worn than ever. They are crimped, netted, tufted, tasseled, made of chenille, or of crimped braids, or loops of galloon, with strings of buttons here and there, and are of all widths from two to six inches.

Dog collars of silver, gilt and of jet are shown, to be worn close around the neck. These are very pretty with the high Cavour collars of linen.

New chatelaine belts of silver wire links and clasps fasten around the waist, and have pendants for vinaigrettes, fan or handkerchief; they cost from \$2 to \$10.

New French jewelry of blue enamelled forget-me-nots on *marked* steel is strong, and also in excellent taste. Pendants of forget-me-nots in leaves, birds, crosses and lockets cost from \$3 to \$10. They are to be suspended from a black velvet necklet that is studded with enamelled forget-me-nots. Ear-rings to match cost from \$3.75 to \$6.

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