

Cosy Corner Chats With Our Girls.

"My wish . . . that womankind had but one rosy mouth, to kiss them all at once from north to south."

(This department is edited by Cousin Ruth who will be glad to hear from our girl readers. Address all letters, suggestions, comments, questions to "Cousin Ruth," Ladies Pictorial Weekly, etc.)

WHAT do you read, girls? Now, don't all say "THE LADIES' PICTORIAL." Of course, I know that—but when you have two or three hours of leisure, and can turn to the book shelves—what? One can tell pretty well what sort of a girl one is by the mental food one needs. Sometimes you see articles in the papers about what girls should read, and when the girls scan over these articles they lay them down and sigh or laugh, just according to the kind of girls they are. I have just been reading one such article, where the writer recommends the girls to read Sir John Lubbock's "Pleasures of Life"—and Darwin and Ruskin and Huxley and Emerson. Now, for the average girl, one might as well say read Greek—isn't that true? And most of my cousins are average girls—isn't that also true? But though you may not read Darwin and the rest, please be careful what you do read. A novel, once in a while, won't hurt you, any more than a nibble of candy, but too much candy is bad for the bodily digestion, and too many novels act just the same on the mental assimilator. In serious earnest, dear cousins, the first book I recommend to you is your Bible strong and sweet and nourishing, and, as we believe, specially good to grow on is the food you get from these chapters and verses. Don't read in a hurry, don't read carelessly, don't read ever without whispering a little prayer for the help you will need to get all the good out of your reading. The girl who reads her Bible rightly, daily stands as far above the girl who only reads the only intellectual lights enumerated above, as that girl stands above the young woman who devours weekly instalments of the "penny dreadfuls," where countesses and brigands and innocent maidens and villains are hotch-potched together in an insane mud-dle which never was and never could be possible. Some of the cousins might tell me their favorite books, and we could talk over their choice and see how they agree, eh?

MARIA, that dear French cousin down east, has sent me another letter, and what is better, another cousin. Certainly, Corinne, I am pleased to have you; what a funny little auntie you are, only fourteen, well be good to that dear niece of yours, she deserves it. I don't know what "sacrifices you have to make to become learned," my little cousin. I never used to see it that way, but then, I was always fond of study. I suppose you mean, though, that you have to be away from home. That is hard, but then holidays are so splendid. When I was only nine years old, I went away from home to a boarding school in New York. That was pretty far and hard for a small girl, wasn't it? Cheer up little maid, years will go by, and you will come home quite learned and grown up!

COUSIN Jean comes along with a word of admiration for Cousin Ruth, because that person told the truth about those evenings, when she used to sit up late and keep her mother out of her beauty sleep. Well, dear Jean, it is just as true as can be, and Boaz laughed when I told him about Rhea's letter, and settled down to his reading again, while I wrote that confession to Rhea. Your description of the entertainment was extremely interesting. I am with you, in politics, my dear, what a stack of waiter girls you will have to entertain seven times six—forty-two. It will be a gay party. Are they going to wear their pretty caps and aprons. You don't tell when the birthday party is going to be. Seven little tables would be pretty—each with ribbons of a different color. The ribbons should run X shape from corner to corner, and end with a bow and streamers. If you are where you can get smilax, it would be pretty to make a large knot of the colored ribbon in the centre of each little table, and trail the green leaves out from it like spokes of a wheel. A very pretty little bouquet could be at each place tied with ribbon of chosen color. If you can't get flowers and smilax, just set your table or tables as neatly as you can, and have lots of lights. For the evening entertainment you could have games, flips, proverbs, dumb crambo or something else amusing. If they sing, a good chorus ought to come from such a number. I do hope the affair will go off excellently.

I AM afraid your answer will come too late my dear Dollie. I will try presently and get you the favour you ask. I shall be so glad to forward your letter to Lily Pearl. You can just put it into a plain envelope, with whatever postage stamps are required for Egypt, and enclose in a letter to me, and I will add Lily Pearl's address and send it on. It will be six weeks before you can get an answer, but I am quite sure you will like it, when it comes. I hope if that other worry doesn't come right, you will let me know. Two heads are better than one, and you may have a bit of my heart as well, dear.

JUST listen to Beth, girls! She says she would like some of the cousins (if they are gentlemen) to send her some cigar ribbons, to finish her ribbon table cover. Oh, Beth! don't you see the heading to this column, and don't you know, that I'd let a boy cousin in as quick as possible, and like to, but I know he would not be comfortable. However, if any of the boys read your little request I hope they will send along the cigar ribbons you ask for, and I'll forward them or as you say, they may address "Beth" Newton Centre Mass.—So much for the boys, but, girls, Beth has a proposal for you too. If anyone will send her some ribbons, she will show them how to make the table cover, which from her description seem to me very pretty indeed.

THANKS for your little hometalk, Maria, I seem first to see the little folks, and hear that cute George and I shall not forget Anita's birthday, though I doubt if I can attend her grand ball. When you told me about the small boy who would have finished his studies this year, I was reminded of another wee boy who says comical things in French. This boy "Teddie," has a great desire to be a policeman, because those gentry are the only being on earth he is afraid of. Give my love to Paul and George and Anita, and all the dear home circle.

JUST a little line for you, Edna Grund, who has nearly twenty years, golden-brown hair, deep-grey eyes, fair complexion and medium stature. Of course I like you the best of the sisters, since you are the first to write, and I am sure you must be sweet and pretty aren't you now? Write me again from your Western home, dear, and bring the rest of them with you—I have a few more letters in the little gold hand, which I will answer next week. Goodbye all—your loving

COUSIN RUTH.

Practical Information for the Housewife

"Nothing lovelier can be found in woman than to study household good."—MILTON.

All questions regarding this department will be cheerfully answered in this column.—Ed.

Plants in Sleeping-Rooms.

Among the facts which elementary science teaching has now made widely known, is the following information in regard to carbonic acid:

From chemistry it is learned that this is a poisonous gas, produced by combustion in the air, and known to miners as "choke damp," from the suffocation it sometimes causes when allowed to accumulate. Physiology teaches that this irrespirable gas is being continually breathed out by all animals—a fact which is generally impressed upon the pupil's mind by a reference to the "Black Hole of Calcutta," where so many prisoners of war were crowded together that the air they were forced to breathe soon became fatally charged with the poison from their breath.

Finally, in the study of botany, this same gas appears as a food which plants absorb during the day, and as a waste product which at night they exhale the same as animals. Once in possession of these facts, and the question not unnaturally arises whether a number of plants in the sleeping-room may not contaminate the air with carbonic acid to a harmful extent.

Many persons have not hesitated to answer this question decidedly in the affirmative, purely as a theoretical conclusion based upon the facts we have just given, but a moment's consideration will show that unless we know the amount of carbonic acid which a given quantity of plants exhale in a given time, no satisfactory answer is possible.

With a view to settling just this point, the following experiment was conducted by competent investigators at the botanic garden of Harvard University.

A number of vigorous plants were crowded into a large glass case from which all air was excluded, except such as had first passed through a chemical which freed it from all traces of carbonic acid.

A constant stream of this purified air was made to flow among plants all night long, and pass out through another chemical which absorbed what carbonic acid the air had taken up on the way.

In the morning it was an easy matter to determine, by analysis of the second chemical, the exact amount of carbonic acid with which the plants had charged the air.

So little did this prove to be, that a simple calculation shows that the carbonic acid which could be exhaled by plants enough to fill a large room would be less than the amount produced by the flame of a candle burning for the same length of time.

So far as carbonic acid is concerned, we may therefore safely conclude that, despite the alarmists, there is not the least danger to be apprehended from this source. On the contrary, for the most persons to have the sleeping-room a window-garden of such house-plants as the fuchsia, oxalis, coleus, primrose, and ferns may be rather healthful than otherwise, from the moisture they add to the air, and their purifying effect during the day.

Nevertheless, there are certain plants, especially those with heavy-scented flowers, which may fill the air with harmful vapors—harmful not only to sufferers from hay-fever or rose-cold, but in a less degree to others.

The very fact of there being many persons who are affected disagreeably by the perfume of flowers indicates that the volatile oils to which the odors of flowers are due are by nature irritants of the breathing passages; and it follows from this that prolonged inhaling of air heavily charged with intense floral odors is not desirable for anyone.

Certain flowers, like the evening primrose, the night blooming cereus, and some kinds of honey-suckle, become decidedly stronger scented at night than during the day, and are in consequence especially to be avoided.

Persons who are perfectly healthy, and at the same time free from any special sensitiveness to these irritants, may not be perceptibly affected by staying in a perfume-laden atmosphere; but let the same person be sick, and allow the flowers which friends have sent in to remain by the bedside overnight, then it might well happen that sleeplessness, or a headache, or some other equally disagreeable result, would follow as a direct consequence.

In conclusion, therefore, we may lay it down as a safe rule that plants which are free from odor, especially foliage plants, are not only harmless in the living-room, but may be positively beneficial. Very fragrant or heavy-scented flowers, on the other hand, are more or less objectionable to have in one's room, especially at night, and with persons who are sick.

An Ideal Husband.

74 One who regards his wife with the highest admiration and esteem, yet loves her with so strong and true a love that he does not consider himself too "superior" to bear with and for her, if need be, much of the daily worries and trials, which fall to woman's lot, but which so lightened lose half their burden. A wise ruler in his own household, a king of home as his wife is queen, walking heavenwards' close, true companions and dearest friends. Courteous and thoughtful, remembering that as the weaker his wife needs his love and forbearance. He should be in short a christian and a gentleman.

75 Man is very human. This thought should be foremost lest our ideal be too exalted for practical life. I would say: Heartfelt pity, a oneness of aim in life-purpose, congeniality of thought, mental attainments sufficiently superior to retain and constantly inspire respect. A loving nature with power of showing his affection in the way most conducive to his wife's happiness. A kindness not to see little faults, rather hide them. A disposition to give and invite perfect confidence in financial and home affairs, and thus make the money question satisfactory whether it be "one purse," "allowance," or other system.

76 My ideal husband is medium height and rather stout, has brown hair and blue eyes and even temper. He is always the same no matter where you meet him; loving and sympathizing, always ready to help the poor and downfallen, and to cheer the despondent and sad. Not miserly or selfish, but ready to give help and money when they are needed or required of him. He is always respectful to his wife and puts full confidence in her, also giving her full control of all household affairs and a sufficient amount of money to meet all expenses of home, etc. Kind to his children, and tries in every possible way to make them happy. When pleasure seeking always wishes his wife to accompany him, never leaving her at home alone unless she so desires or is sick, and if the latter I think it is his place to stay at home with her. Never takes any intoxicating beverages, nor offers them to others; never chews or smokes tobacco, and never gambles or uses any profane language and keeps company only with upright honest men. Keeps good hours at nights and gets up in the morning and lights the fires instead of allowing his wife to light them, as men so often do. Gives his wife credit and praise where deserving, and is not always fault-finding or grumbling and does not tell her faults before strangers or friends, keeps all family secrets and difficulties to himself, never letting other people know as much about home affairs and his business as he does himself. A sincere and active christian, always encouraging his wife and children in any good undertaking, and always attending the means of grace in company with them. Is clean and tidy at home and abroad, and helps to keep things in order. One who can wait upon and do things for himself, not wanting to be waited upon hand and foot by others.

77 My ideal of a husband. First he must be of a sanguine temperament and a philosopher; of pleasing address characterized by cultivated manners; stalwart and true with a disposition kind and affectionate, holding family sacred and their wishes paramount to other things on this mundane sphere. Learned but not pedantic, thoroughly practical, socially jocular, capable of enjoying the companionship of a few friends. Of good family and conduct regulated by the teaching of the Gospel. Temperate habits and a good business capacity.

An American Girl.

It happened in a Clifton cable car in Cincinnati. A pretty girl, faultlessly attired from the top of her bonnet to the tips of her dainty patent leather boots, jumped on the car in a great hurry at Clinton Avenue crossing. She had been busily engaged in putting on a pair of long suede gloves, which, after she entered the car she proceeded to button with that indispensable adjunct to a woman's toilet—a hairpin. This article proved refractory after a moment, and flew from her fingers. It landed at the feet of a young man who happened to be sitting beside her. He was a calm-eyed, confident young gentleman and he picked up the hairpin and instead of returning it to her, gently took her wrist in his left hand and gravely continued the buttoning process.

Every man in the car had been watching the pretty Clifton girl; some openly, others furtively, from behind their newspapers. Now all the papers dropped, every one looked aghast, and gazed at the pretty girl to see what she would do. She did nothing. Showed no consciousness of what was going on. The young man with a conscious look of triumph, finished his pleasant task, and the girl, with a preoccupied air and not a glance in his direction, opened her purse, took out a nickle and placed it in his hand. His expression changed with lightning-like rapidity; the color came to his face and he quickly murmured what was evidently an apology.

She listened with a wilfully misleading air and handed him another nickle. By this time his face had become scarlet and he began low-toned earnest protestation. The calm, cool, and collected young lady signalled the conductor and, as she rose to depart, said in a clear distinct tone, audible to every one in the car: "You must be satisfied with a dime. I never give more than ten cents for having my gloves buttoned or my boots cleaned."