

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—Why is our cooking, as a rule, inferior to that of the French cooks? Not because the Canadian men do not discuss and appreciate the merits of good cooking, and the pleasure of entertaining friends at their own table. It is merely because so many women seem possessed with the idea that it is not the fashion to know how to cook; that, as an accomplishment, the art of cooking is not so ornamental as that of fancy needlework or piano playing. I do not undervalue these last two accomplishments, but every young lady should also understand the accomplishment of cooking. What is more important than wholesome, satisfactory every-day living which so virtually concerns the health and pleasure of the family circle? Let the science of cooking be classed among the accomplishments of every lady. Just learn plain cooking, for that, like plain sewing, is in danger of being set aside as a lost art, and unless we learn to make something else besides "Angel Cake," "Charlotte," "Croquettes," "Loufflee," "Glace," mysterious soups, delicious salads and creams, the male population stand a good chance of becoming chronic dyspeptic grumblers. By plain cooking we do not refer to soup, for instance, that is made from a bacon rind, a few beans and a pinch of salt and a gallon of water; where the roasts are all "shin bones" boiled, and the potatoes are served in their "jackets." We refer to a good substantial sort where the soup is as the Irishman said, "both atin and dhrinkin shure," the roasts tender and juicy from frequent basting, the turkey brown, the dressing crumbly, the bread light and well cooked, porridge well boiled, the beefsteak cooked so that an epicure would relish and enjoy it; steak broiled and buttered, and not fried, with black grease from the frying-pan poured over it.

There are very few who seem to understand cooking meat properly. Put the meat rack into the baking pan, wipe the meat with a wet towel, lay it in the rack, then sprinkle well (on both sides) with salt, pepper and flour, letting the bottom of the pan get well covered with the flour and seasonings. Now, put into a very hot oven for a few minutes, and when the flour becomes a dark brown, add hot water enough to cover the bottom of the pan, close the oven door, and let the meat get well browned on one side, then baste well with gravy, dredge with pepper and flour, and brown again, thus turning and basting each side till done. A piece of beef weighing six pounds will require forty minutes if it is desired rare. Put the meat on a large hot dish, take the rack from the pan, skim all the fat from the gravy, then add a little boiling water if not sufficient in the pan, and thicken with flour and season with salt. Never reast meat without having the rack in the pan. If the meat is put into the water it becomes soggy and flavorless. Putting salt on fresh meat draws out the juice; it would not be well to use it without the flour; the flour makes a paste which keeps all the juice in the meat, and also helps to enrich and brown it. A very poor piece of meat may be much improved by constant basting. All the cheap, coarse parts of the beef are good for stews and soups, which is the most economical way of cooking all meats. I do not say let fancy cooking entirely alone, but just acquire a thorough knowledge of culinary art, then strive to be an accomplished artist in cooking.

MINNIE MAY.

Answers to Inquirers.

Eva Palmer.—you can clean your light felt hat by rubbing well with sandpaper.

J. W. M.—Charcoal is not detrimental to the teeth when used as a dentifrice if it is finely pulverized and free from gritty substances. We cannot tell subscriber how to restore "scuffed gloves" save by buying new ones.

Hilda.—Citrate of magnesia, to be purchased at any Chemist's, is an excellent purifier of the blood. An occasional dose of Epsom salts might also be taken to advantage.

J. B.—No one, who is a perfect stranger to you, can answer such a question—"how long it will take you to master music with constant practice, your age being eighteen?" Some persons have a quick ear and a keen taste, and could learn as much in six months as others could in two years. All depends on the amount of talent, the power of application, and the quickness of intelligence.

LINEN DUSTERS.—If M. F. B. will wash the dusters she speaks of in wheat bran water without any soap the color will not be affected. If the linen is dark use a clear decoction of coffee to make the starch and add to it a bit of beeswax and a bit of gum arabic. For all dark wash goods this starch is good, and especially for black calicoes, which should be plunged into scalding hot suds, then cooled and rubbed if necessary.

M. C. S. asks.—"Is it proper for a young lady to visit a young gentleman while he is sick?" That depends upon a variety of circumstances, of which the father or mother or some friend of M. C. S. would doubtless be a competent judge. "And how old should a young lady be before she receives young gentlemen callers?" That, too, depends on circumstances. But judging from the tone and composition of our correspondent's letter, we advise her to wait, and study and think a while before she indulges much in the society of young gentlemen.

George X.—In writing to a friend at Bristol, whom you are about to visit, you should say, "I am going to Bristol," and not "I am coming."

A Governess.—We are at a loss how to advise you, there are so many young ladies, tolerably well educated, who have the laudable desire of earning their own livelihood, but who do not know how to obtain a suitable position. As you are not thoroughly accomplished, you might not perhaps object to the situation of nursery-governess. You should advertise, or else consult the advertising columns of the principal daily papers.

F. G. B.—To be married by registration you must give three weeks' notice to the registrar in your own district, and both parties must call and sign their names in his book at the time of giving such notice. The fee amounts to only a few shillings. You can obtain a certificate of the marriage for an additional small fee.

Miss Minnie Nash.—A simple and inexpensive toilet-set, appropriate for a Christmas gift, may be made of paper cambric of gold or peachblow color, overlaid with dotted Swiss muslin, bordered with a deep frill of Breton or Valenciennes lace. If the lace is not at hand a ruffling of the material can be substituted. The set, to be complete, should consist of a large mat to serve as a cover for the dressing-table or bureau, two smaller ones, and a pin-cushion. The effect is very pretty, as the muslin conceals the inferior qualities of the cambric lining, although sufficiently translucent to expose its color.

Aunt Addie.—You must not keep your verbenas too damp. They require, for house treatment, a very sandy soil and rather dry atmosphere; but when watered give them a plentiful supply; they must have full, strong sunlight.

Jane Crawford.—If you water your roses with root water, made by pouring hot water on the wood root, the effect is very marked in producing a rapid growth of thrifty shoots and a great number of richly-tinted roses.

RECIPES.

HICKORY-NUT CAKES.

One cup of white sugar, one beaten egg, half a cup of sifted flour and a cup of minced nuts. Drop on buttered tins.

HICKORY-NUT MACAROONS.

Make frosting as for cake, stir in enough pounded hickory-nut meats, with mixed ground spice to taste, to make convenient to handle. Flour the hands and form the mixture into little balls. Place

on buttered tins, allowing room to spread, and bake in a quick oven.

QUEEN'S PUDDING.

A pint of bread-crumbs (rolled on the moulding-board quite fine) to a quart of boiled milk, add a table-spoonful of butter, and the yolks of four eggs beaten with one cupful of white sugar, the grated rind of one lemon, and a teaspoonful of salt. Bake in a moderate oven, then spread over it a layer of jelly or strained apple. Add the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth, the juice of a lemon, and a cup of sugar; then sprinkle a little sugar over the top, and set in the oven to brown a trifle. It is very nice for dessert, or cold for tea. Half the quantity is sufficient for a small family.

SALAD.

Take bits of cold roast pork, a large quantity of celery, and the whites of two hard boiled eggs. Chop them all together very fine. Take the yolks of the eggs, and while warm mash to a smooth paste, and mix well with one teaspoonful of mustard, adding salt and pepper to taste. Mix with one teaspoonful of vinegar, three large spoonfuls of melted butter, and stir all thoroughly into the meat. Edge platter with tops of celery or lettuce and place salad in the centre. Keep in a cool place until sent to the table.

TURKEY WITH OYSTERS.

Cut up the turkey very fine, that is, cold roast or boiled turkey. Put a layer of turkey and one of oysters alternately. Season with cream, butter, pepper, salt and strew crumbs of bread and small pieces of butter on the top, and bake it.

HASTY PUDDING.

Place on the stove a pan containing six teacupsful of sweet milk. Beat two eggs well, and add one teacupful of milk, six table-spoonfuls of flour and a little salt; beat well together—then stir it in the milk on the stove just before, or as it begins to boil. When as thick as mush put in greased cups to mold. Made in the morning and eaten with sweetened cream for dinner, it is excellent.

SCALLOPED TURKEY

is prepared by chopping the cold meat fine, and filling a buttered pudding-dish with alternate layers of cracker crumbs moistened with milk, and the turkey, buttered, salted and peppered, and with bits of the dressing. The gravy left from the turkey should be poured over the top layer of meat, and the crumbs on top should be moistened both with milk, and two eggs beaten light. Put small pieces of butter over it, and bake half or three-quarters of an hour.

GOOD VINEGAR.

may be made in six weeks, by adding, to say a quarter or half barrel of vinegar, enough new cider to fill the barrel, and letting it stand, bung out, in a temperature of about 90 degrees. Where there is no old vinegar at hand, add to 30 gallons of cider, 10 of rain water, hot enough to bring the temperature of the whole up to at least 90 degrees, and then add a little yeast. It will soon be converted into acetic acid, or vinegar, if the heat is maintained, and a piece of gauze be nailed over the bung-hole.

MACARONI WITH CHEESE.

Break the macaroni into equal lengths and drop it into salted boiling water. Shake the saucepan often to prevent its sticking at the bottom. About twenty minutes will cook it tender, when it must be immediately taken from the fire and prepared for baking. Butter a pudding dish, and, with a skimmer, put a layer of well drained macaroni in the bottom of it. Add salt, if necessary, then a little butter and a layer of grated cheese, afterwards another layer of drained macaroni, then more butter and grated cheese. Continue alternate layers until all the macaroni is used, putting cheese at the top and over all a thin layer of sifted cracker-crumbs. Put half a cupful of sweet cream into the dish before arranging the top layers, and when all is done, invert a pan over the top of the dish, and put it in the oven. Cook, covered, for ten minutes, then remove the pan, and place the dish on the upper grating to brown the top. It should be served in the dish in which it is baked, and as soon as possible, as standing makes it dry and hard.

EXCELLENT GLYCERINE OINTMENT.

A very good preparation of glycerine to have always on hand can be readily prepared by any apothecary or druggist:—In two ounces of sweet