

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES.—So many of you are complaining of not feeling well, when, if the facts were really known, I believe you have been eating too much trash at this festive season. You require more variety in your daily food. Some housekeepers, to attain this, only go a round of different kinds of pie and cake. Cake and pie do not supply much actual food, and the good material that is used in them is put in such a shape that the stomach is weary and worn out by its efforts to digest them. This accounts for much of the tiredness complained of by women and girls. They are half starved because their food is poor. The use of much poor food, called "dainties," (I don't abuse these things because I dislike them. I have "a sweet tooth," and know my weakness well enough to understand the weakness of others) spoils the appetite for substantial food. The stomach is feeble for lack of good material in the blood to repair its waste, and it takes food unwillingly because it is tired with overwork—overwork upon the concentrated conglomerations of rich cake and pastry. We must not only "cease to do evil," but "learn to do well;" not only give up the use of unwholesome food, but eat plenty of that which is wholesome. The proper variety is one made up of fruits, grain and animal food, the latter consisting of meat, eggs, or milk in its various forms. With palatable graham or oatmeal preparations, especially where milk is freely used, meat is seldom craved for or found to be necessary to high health or strength, but when starch, sugar and fat preponderate, as in the common fare of white bread and butter, potatoes, pie, etc., a little beef often seems a necessity to one who has to put forth strength. You will hardly believe until you try it, how heartily a plain and nourishing variety of food is enjoyed by those who live with reasonable simplicity? It is easier in every way? All feel better and more good-natured, with no unreasonable craving for confectionery, pickles or stimulants. It lightens the care of children wonderfully. It makes the cooking more simple and easy, and last, but not least, it saves the doctor's bills.

MINNIE MAY.

Answers to Inquirers.

M. J. W.—How can I clean the isinglass in a parlor stove, so as to make it clean? **ANS.**—This is not isinglass, but mica, a transparent kind of stone, which splits in very thin sheets and is incombustible. To make the mica clear, wash it with vinegar and water or with kerosene oil.

ED.—If a gentleman, when calling at the house of a friend, be answered by a lady who is a stranger to him, should he lift his hat? Or, if calling at a house where they are all strangers, should he lift his hat? **ANS.**—We suppose you mean that the lady who may come to the door may be a stranger; of course you should lift your hat before addressing any lady.

SUBSCRIBER.—I have some lard put up in glass cans with light covers; it had turned rancid; what can be done with it? **ANS.**—The cause of this trouble is that lard was not properly strained and cleansed. To cure it melt it in clean iron pot, add some boiling water with a tablespoonful of baking soda dissolved in it and stir thoroughly, then boil on a moderate fire, stirring frequently. Then strain into a clean pail. When it is cold cut out the lard and return it into the pot leaving the water in the bottom of the pail. Melt the lard and pour it into the jars again, which need not be closed except with paper tied over the tops.

JOHN.—What would be the proper reply to make to a lady when she says—"Miss Smith sent her love to you?" **ANS.**—A lady never sends her love to a gentleman, unless under exceptional circumstances. A lady may "desire to be remembered" or send "kind regards," you may then say "thank you" to the lady who gives the message, and add "Miss Smith is very kind, please remember me to her when you see her again." Of course

this may be varied in many ways according to circumstances—your relationship or degree of friendship with the lady, &c. In country places it is still customary to send "best respects," and it is a very good style of message, but sounds rather old fashioned.

MADGE says:—Please give a few simple rules, such as whether we should put bread, cake, &c., on the table or on the table cloth beside it, how we should place the knife and fork when we wish to lay them down during the meal, and how we should place them when we have finished, where we should put our bread when buttering it, and whether we should break the egg in the cup, or how it should be managed. **ANS.**—Bread may be laid beside the plate at dinner; at tea or breakfast it is usually put upon the plate to be buttered bread used at dinner is not usually buttered. Cake is always put on the plate. The knife and fork are laid on the table just as they would naturally fall from the hands during the meal; when finished with the course they are laid parallel, either straight in the middle of the plate or with the handles inclining to the right. Eggs may be eaten from the shell or broken into cups or glasses. When eaten from the shell the top should first be taken off with a knife, cutting clear across a good portion of the top; it is then eaten with a small spoon.

RECIPES.

ROAST QUAIL.

Rub the breasts of the quail with fresh butter; and as they roast baste often with butter. Cook twenty or twenty-five minutes with a good fire Season and serve hot.

WINE JELLY.

Soak a box of gelatine in cold water half an hour. Add a quarter of a pound of sugar, and pour over it three pints of boiling water, stirring well. When the mixture cools a little, add a pint of wine and the juice of a large lemon. Pour into moulds.

GINGERBREAD.

One cup of syrup, two tablespoonfuls melted butter, one teaspoonful ginger; mix thoroughly together; one teaspoonful saleratus in one cup of boiling water; let it cool a few moments, then put all together and stir in lightly three cups of flour.

YORKSHIRE PUDDING

To be eaten with roast beef, as one would eat a vegetable, is made in this way: Stir three tablespoonfuls of flour into one pint of milk; add three eggs and a little salt; pour into a shallow tin baking pan, and put it into the oven an hour before dinner time. After it has baked about ten minutes put it under the roasting beef? When the meat is taken up, leave the pudding in the oven for five minutes, then pour off the fat and serve with the meat.

BARLEY SOUP.

Boil one pint of pearl barley in one quart of stock till it is reduced to a pulp; pass it through a sieve, and add as much more stock as will be required to make the *puree* of the consistency of cream; put the soup on the fire, when it boils, stir into it, off the fire, the yolk of an egg stirred up with a gill of cream; add half a pint of fresh butter, and serve with small dice of bread fried in butter.

OYSTER SOUP.

One quart of solid oysters, free from grit. Pour into a saucepan two quarts of boiling water; cream a large tablespoonful of flour with a half teacupful of butter, thicken the boiling water with the paste, season with pepper, boil up, add the oysters, cook until the edges curl. Have heated a teacupful of sweet cream or as rich milk as you can get, turn into the tureen, pour in the oysters and serve.

DESSERT PUDDING.

Here is a delicious pudding for desert: One pint of nice bread crumbs (not crumbs of stale bread unfit for the table) one quart of milk, one cup of sugar, and the well beaten yolks of four eggs, the grated rind of one lemon, and a piece of butter the size of an egg. Bake until done. Whip the whites of four eggs and beat in a cup of pulverized sugar in which you have put the juice of the lemon. Spread over the pudding a layer of jelly or raspberry jam, or any sweetmeat you prefer, then pour over it the whites of the eggs. Set in the oven to brown slightly. Serve with cold cream. This is an excellent dessert for an elaborate dinner, as it may be made early in the morning, and so be out of the way.

The Same Old Story.

She read until she could not see—
Did "Ivanhoe" e'er weary?—
Then dropped the book upon her knee,
And said her life was dreary.
From day to day I still must tread
The same dull round of duty—
Of darning socks and baking bread,
Without one glimpse of beauty.
From week to week my landmarks are:—
A sermon dull on Sunday;
On Friday night the Plumville Star;
The weekly wash on Monday.
And, oh! there's never a line of grace,
And never a bit of glory.
She sighed and lengthened her pretty face—
"It's always the same old story!"

She dried her eyes and curled her hair,
And went to the conference meeting—
From the garden gate to the vestry stair
The self-same words repeating.
At last the final hymn was sung,
And all the prayers were ended,
When one from the doorway crowd among
Her homeward steps attended.
They left at length the village street,
And sprang the low wall over,
To cross through Captain Peaslee's wheat
And Deacon Bascombe's clover.
The moon seemed shining overhead
To flood their path with glory;
They whispered low, but what they said
Was—Only the same old story!

A Courteous Rector.

A courteous Rector in a Northern county was in the habit of not beginning divine service until he had satisfied himself that the Squire was duly ensconced in the family pew, but happening one Sunday to omit ascertaining the fact, he had gone into the reading-desk and had commenced "When the wicked man—" when he was instantly stopped by the faithful clerk, who exclaimed, "He ain't come in, Sir!" This is a well-known story, and is perhaps apocryphal, but something similar happened to a friend of mine, who did his first duty after his ordination as deacon in a village church to which he had been appointed curate, his Rector being engaged at a second church in another part of the parish. The old parish clerk, after ringing the two bells at the west end of the church, came up to the chancel where the curate had put on his surplice behind the high-curtained end of the Squire's pew, the church not boasting a vestry, and was looking at his watch with a nervous anxiety to keep to the exact time for beginning his first service. To his surprise, the clerk, after saying to him in audible voice, "You must wait a bit, Sir, we ain't ready!" stepped into the communion area, clambered on to the communion table, and stood upon it while he looked through the east window and carefully scrutinized the churchyard path that led past the window to a door in the wall of the Squire's garden, through which his wife, who was a lady of title, was accustomed to come to church with her children. The curate was full of George Herbert's and Keble's reverence for holy places, and was aghast at the sight of the parish clerk thus standing on the communion table in full sight of the congregation, and coolly turning round from his inspection through the east window and saying to the curate in an audible voice:—"You moant begin yet. Her ladyship baint come!" "Pray come down," expostulated the curate. "I can see best where I be," replied the imperturbable clerk. "I'm watching the garden door. Here she be, and the Squire!" upon which he descended from his position, greatly to the curate's relief. As the incident excited no surprise among the rustic congregation, it probably was of frequent occurrence.—[All the Year Round.

KEEPING PLANTS.—When frost comes and you are afraid that the fire may get low, and your plants get nipped, just get a lantern and some good oil; fix your lantern nicely, and it will burn all night, and by placing it under your flower shelf, you will be pleased to find how safely your plants get along. I have tried this for some years, and find that the heat from a common railroad lantern will protect quite a quantity of plants, if the lantern is placed among or under them.