

Minnie May's Department.

DEAR NIECES,—Knowing of the busy life of farmers' wives and daughters, particularly in the spring and summer seasons, I think probably a few hints concerning the spring fashions may be of use and interest, as many of my nieces will be availing themselves of the opportunity of making their summer dresses before the approaching hurried season.

The graceful *Princesse polonaise* will be worn for house and street dresses alike. This pattern is useful for making over old dresses. Use the longest widths of the skirt for the pieces, beginning on the shoulders and extending over the hips as far down as the cloth allows; then join other pieces to fill out the length, and trim across with scarf drapery to hide the joints. Knife pleating still prevails on the newest dresses. The *polonaises* are worn so long that very little of the under skirt is seen, hence they are made very narrow and clinging. *Janares* bows will fasten the front, and many long looped bows trim the pockets and ornament the back of *polonaise*. Box pleatings and gathered flowers are also worn with knife pleating. *Basques* and over-skirts are worn much the same as last winter.

The *Princesse* dress is being made up for little girls' summer wear in gray and buff linens, white repped pique, and in dark blue linens, trimmed with white embroidery or Smyrna lace. It is fastened in front, is only half fitting, and therefore cool, and sometimes has box pleats down the front. These pretty dresses hang all the weight from the shoulders, are in one single piece, and are as suitable for the street as the house, all of which are desirable things in children's dresses.

MINNIE MAY.

Perhaps some of our readers who live in the country are not aware of the extensive floral trade carried on in New York and other large cities.

How elevating, pleasing and refining is the study and care of these little beauties, though many farmers are too apt to look upon the cultivation of flowers as an expense, and not a pleasure or profit; and though they are all able to admire a nice bouquet, or the few flowers which we in the house may have.

There is no other branch of trade in which sentiment and the hard practical duties of business are so closely blended as in this traffic in nature's loveliest and most fragile handiwork—foliage and bloom. Large as is the seeming discrepancy between the wholesale prices of flowers paid to the growers and the retail prices demanded from the public, it is in reality small when the inevitable losses, expenses and risks of the business are taken into account. The fluctuations of supply and demand are unequalled in any other business.

On Broadway, Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and the up-town cross streets near them, between Third and Forty-seventh, there are 30 large florists' establishments, each of which pays a rent of from \$1,000 to \$4,500 per annum, and does a business of from \$6,000 to \$40,000 yearly in ordinary good times. Outside these there are probably 50 small shops and parts of shops in which the sale of flowers is carried on in different parts of the city.

From 1860 to 1870 were the florists' good days. The European style of ornamenting both our homes and public places with the transitory beauty of blossom and leaf upon all public occasions. Without doubt, too, the lavish expenditures of the ill-gotten gains of the old Tweed "ring" gave an impetus to the florist's trade. Thousands upon thousands of dollars were often lavished upon single events, as, for instance, at the wedding of Tweed's daughter, when the floral designs, bouquets and parlor decorations are said to have cost nearly \$4,000. Weddings, christenings, balls, banquets, funerals, receptions, and all other occasions of public assemblage are deemed incomplete unless graced with flowers.

Few if any cities possess greater varieties of flowers than New York. First upon the list natur-

ally seems to come the rose, of which there are many varieties. There are four varieties of camellias shown. One man alone raises 50,000 choice camellias each winter. Of carnations there are 150 varieties, but only two or three are grown to any extent.

Violets are cultivated in abundance; they are worth a cent each. A great many ladies have developed a passion for growing violets. They impart a delicious fragrance to the breath, and even at a cent apiece are cheaper for the purpose by comparison with the candied ones imported from France, and sold at the rate of about \$16 a pound.

Of the 20 or more known varieties of heliotrope, only three or four are commonly cultivated here. The lilies of the valley seem to gain popularity constantly; so high have they become in favor that their price is always good. Moehrs, of Union Hill, grows 150,000 sprays of them annually. He sent one day last year, by one man, 10,000 sprays for which he received 15 cents each. Few persons would be likely to imagine that one man could carry \$1,500 worth of market flowers, but let them undertake to buy a "back load" of these choice little sprays, and they will soon be convinced of its entire practicability. Orchids are difficult to procure and very costly; sometimes \$2, \$3, or even \$5 has been paid for single flowers. Large and strong orchids are sold from \$25 as high as \$300. They belong only to the conservatories of the rich. Peter Henderson, Elliott Wilson, and others of the best informed of the large flower growers, estimate that there are in the vicinity of New York not less than \$10,000,000 invested in the wholesale florists' business, in land, green-houses and stock. There are over 45 acres under glass in one establishment. In the matter of permanent house decorations, grasses, immortelles and pressed leaves are coming into great favor.

Incidentally, before concluding, it may be confidentially mentioned to the young man of the period, as a matter of contemporaneous interest, that it will be safe for him to view with grave suspicion elegant baskets and bouquets of flowers which chance to be received by his charmer—just when he happens to be making a call upon her.

Young women are becoming terribly sharp in these days, and they have taken a wrinkle from the old dodge of the actresses who buy flowers to be thrown to them on the stage. It is now by no means an uncommon thing trip into a florist's store, order a \$10 basket of flowers, and be very precise in directing that it may be sent, with a card bearing her name, to her residence, exactly at 4.30 p. m., or 8.30 p. m., or some other especially chosen moment. Why so particular? Simply because she knows that at that precise moment some one will be with her, whose jealousy she hopes to stimulate with fantastic vision of a rival flower-sending adorer to such a height that he may rashly propose, and receive the acceptance which has been hanging like the sword of Damocles over his head for perhaps a twelve month. Ah, that cunning device has proved fatal to the guidance of many a nice young man. There was one girl, well known last summer in a certain Broadway flower store who kept it up for seven months, and conquered at last. It is, indeed, not every one who love flowers for their own sakes, like the poet who, with devout tenderness, born of true love, sung:—

'Neath cloistered boughs each floral bell that swingeth,
And toils its perfume in the passing air,
Makes Sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer.

Recipes.

PARSNIPS.

Boil them till tender, in salt water; remove the skin and mash them; for every cup of parsnips add half a cup of bread crumbs, and one egg, with pepper and salt to taste. Form them into cakes, and fry till brown in butter; serve hot. Or, when boiled tender, pour off the water, cut into pieces lengthwise, add butter and milk, and boil a few minutes; then stir in a little flour mixed smoothly with water. Serve hot.

A NOVEL WAY OF MAKING JELLY CAKE.

Take the whites of six eggs, one cup of white sugar, same of flour, one teaspoonful of butter, two tablespoonfuls of sweet milk, two teaspoonfuls cream tartar and one of soda. Bake in a large oblong dripping pan, so the cake will be very thin; meanwhile stir another batch, making just the same, with the exception of using the yolks instead

of the whites; when both are done, spread while warm with jelly, or preserves of any kind; put together, bring the largest side of the cake toward you, and roll immediately; or cut in four or eight parts, put together alternately, putting jelly between each layer, and frost lightly over the top. Another method is to make three pans, making the third layer of one-third red sand sugar, proceeding the same as for the other layers; in putting together let the first layer be the yellow, made of the yolks, then the red, and lastly the whites. Nicely frost the top, and you have a beautiful as well as a delicious party cake. They are very pretty made into rolls.

TO CLEAN BRUSHES.

Hair brushes, or any other brushes which become oily, dirty or greasy, may be cleaned in a few minutes by washing in moderately warm water, into which a few drops of spirits of ammonia have been dropped; after washing, shake out the water, and leave the brush in the sun to dry. The ammonia is not only very cleansing, but the bristles will not be softened as when washed in soap and water.

ICING THAT WILL NOT BREAK.

The whites of three eggs beaten very stiff, add one pound white sugar, with one tablespoonful corn starch, flour the top of the cake as soon as taken from the oven, put on the icing with a steel knife wet in warm water.

BAKED INDIAN MEAL PUDDING.

One quart sweet milk, boil and stir into it one teacup meal; let it cool, and add four eggs, one-half cup butter, one cup sugar; bake three quarters of an hour; eat with sauce; very nice.

DELICIOUS BROWN PUDDING.

One cup Graham, one of meal, one of sugar, one of cream, one of raisins, one-half of sweet milk, one egg, one teaspoonful soda; stir all together and bake one hour; with sauce this is a delicious pudding.

BLACK SILK.

Do not iron black silk. Peel about two potatoes, slice them thin, and pour one pint of boiling water on them. Leave it standing four hours. When ready for immediate use, put in about a quarter of a teacupful of alcohol. Sponge the silk well on the worn side, rubbing any shiny spots with care. Then roll it tightly around a thick pole. This renews its freshness, and cleans it well.

HOME-MADE CREAM CANDY.

To a coffee-cupful of white sugar, add two tablespoonfuls of water to dissolve it, and boil, without stirring, in a bright tin pan, until it will crisp in water like molasses candy. Just before it is done put in a teaspoonful of extract of vanilla, or lemon or peppermint essence, and a quarter of a teaspoonful of cream tartar; when done, pour out into a buttered pan, and when cool enough to handle work it as you would molasses candy, until it is perfectly white, then stretch and lay on a marble slab or moulding board; with a chopping knife cut into mouthfuls and lay it on buttered paper on a plate. When children want candy, by all means let them have that made at home, and they will not eat plaster of Paris, chalk, starch, and poisonous compounds, which derange their stomachs and ruin their teeth.

A RECIPE FOR SORE LIPS AND EYES.

One teaspoon level full of sulphate of zinc, or white vitriol, dissolved in one pint of rain water. Moisten your finger with the liquid and apply it to the part affected, two or three times a day, until a cure is effected.

The above recipe I know to be a good one for sore eyes. It cured me of sore lips after being badly troubled with the same for eighteen years during warm weather.

I would not be without this simple remedy for \$10 per year. It is now one year since I have been cured of sore lips. I still occasionally use the remedy to prevent my lips getting sore.—*Ex.*

BLANC-MANGE.

Put on to boil a quart of new milk, adding four tablespoonfuls of sand sugar. As soon as it is up once, remove from the fire, and when cold, stir into it one ounce of gelatine, which has been dissolved in as small a quantity possible. Flavor with almond or vanilla into a mould to stiffen.