

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—Do you always study economy of time in doing your household duties. The details of good housekeeping must be included in thorough female education, and it is very desirable that they should be acquired when young, and so practised as to become easy to be performed dexterously and expeditiously; for, important as they are, they must not be allowed to consume too much time. The ready wit and ingenuity of a woman cannot be turned to better account than in devising methods of expediting household affairs, and produce the best effect with the least expense of labor and time.

The habit of setting yourself to work quietly, promptly and resolutely helps in the business of the day wonderfully. I have seen one sister half through a task that was not agreeable to either whilst the other was lamenting the necessity of doing it, and considering how to get through it with least trouble. Those who talk most of what they do, or going to do, are not those who accomplish the most. I cannot comprehend how a woman of method and activity can have her whole attention engrossed by domestic affairs, let her household be considerable as it may; for supposing it is great, there are more persons to take part of them off her hands, with a proper distribution of employments and a small share of vigilance. The mistress of a family should superintend every thing herself. By good management every intelligent person will seek time for reading and cultivating the mind, without neglecting their little house duties. As a good means of improving time, we would advise our young nieces whatever they do to do it heartily, and to give their whole attention to it. If from any circumstance they find their mind incapable of fixed application to a book which they are reading, or a translation they are making, or a new piece they are learning, they should not sit over the task in vain, but immediately change the occupation for something they can attend to, and when they have succeeded in fixing their attention on any task however light they have managed their mind and economised time better than reading the profoundest work with wandering thoughts. I do not call pleasure's time lost or idleness; on the contrary, a certain portion of your time employed in recreation is very useful. Pray, do you be as attentive to your pleasures as to your studies. In the latter observe and reflect upon all you read; be watchful and attentive to all you see and hear, and never have it to say, as many do, of things that were said and done before their face, "That, truly, they did not mind them, because they were thinking of something else." Why were they thinking of something else? and if they were, why did they come there? The truth is, they were thinking of nothing. Remember, dear nieces, do well what you are about, be that what it will, it is either worth doing well or not at all.

MINNIE MAY.

To Maggie M.—A good wash for rose bushes is made with whale-oil soap, or with carbolic acid; pulverized charcoal is also very good.

Prejudices, it is well-known, are the most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there as firm as weeds among rocks.

We are never so well inclined to believe in a stroke of good fortune as when one has just been dealt to us.

Like as a master ought to pay the whole wages, so likewise the servant ought to do his whole work.

RECIPES.

TO CURE IVY POISON.

Poison occasioned by the running ivy may be cured by first bathing the afflicted part thoroughly with a strong solution of salt and water, and then anointing two or three times a day with sweet oil, till a cure is effected.

FOR SEA-SICKNESS.

A California paper gives this remedy for sea-sickness, which it declares "perfectly efficacious." Make a mild decoction of the bark of the wild cherry, about the strength of breakfast tea, and take a wine-glass full before every meal for three days before going to sea; on the last day take a mild aperient.

SIMPLE, BUT SURE WORM MEDICINE.

Two tablespoonfuls of pumpkin seeds peeled and pulverized, or give to a child who will chew fine. The seed does not kill, but stupefies the worm. The next day give castor oil or any other cathartic, and if worms are present in the system they will pass off.

RATAFIA BISCUITS.

Ratafia biscuits, usually served at dessert, are made as follows: Take four ounces of bitter almonds; blanch and pound them fine; add the whites of four eggs, one at a time as they are broken; then mix the mass together with sifted sugar into a light paste; roll it out and cut in shape; line tin plates with buttered paper and lay the biscuit thereon and bake in a hot oven. The paste is to be made so light that it can be taken up with a spoon.

FURS.

Lay aside your furs in the spring before the moth millers deposit their eggs. Take them in the open air and beat or whip them thoroughly with a light rod or cane to get out all the dust. Then place in their respective boxes with a small quantity of camphor-gum dropped in each. In close these in thick paper sacks; new flour sacks are excellent for this purpose, as the paper of which they are made is free from holes. Tie up tightly, or better still, paste the top edges of the bags together.

RINGWORMS.

Oil of paper, made by burning a sheet of ordinary writing paper upon a plate, will cure a ringworm, which is caused by contagion or some impurity in the blood. The oil will be seen after the paper is burned in the form of a yellow spot; this applied with the finger twice a day will in a very short time cure the worst of ringworms.

MUSTARD PLASTERS.

1. Mustard for plasters should be mixed with the white of an egg, and it will not raise a blister. 2. Take a tablespoonful molasses, more or less as desired; stir thick with mustard and having spread it on a cloth, apply it directly to the skin; it will not blister even if kept on for an hour.

VEGETABLE PIE.

It should be made of the cold remains of vegetables. Have something substantial, such as haricot beans, peas or macaroni, some potatoes, and either greens, or carrots, or celery, or something of that kind; then put the substantial thing in the middle of the pie dish and across it, and put in the other things between. Moisten with melted butter or onion sauce, and cover with a crust either of potato mashed with egg, or with bread crumbs with little bits of butter on the top. Add pepper and salt to taste. Tapioca or rice soaked in milk and water, and seasoned with pepper, salt and mustard, may be used to fill up the spaces; a little goes a long way if well soaked. The pie should be baked till a golden brown color, and will be found very savory.

Home-baked Bread.

Most families used to bake their own bread, but now scarcely one. I consider this one of the greatest errors that agriculturists or other persons having families can commit. I have often thought so, and wondered at it years ago. Is it because they do not know how, or because it is too much trouble, or both? I believe laziness has a very strong hold of it, or it may be they are more refined in these last few years, and would rather buy than make their own—spend more to do less work, not considering the loss they incur. An article in an agricultural paper, which has called forth these remarks, speaks of bread being baked once a week, but I say once a fortnight. I bake once in two weeks, more or less, according to the number in the family; bake one bushel of flour at a time, and the bread we are now using is over a

fortnight old, as good as it was at three days. I do not use the best flour except as a change. Baker's bread is very well when fresh, but dry when a day or two old, requiring something extra to get it down—so I don't know how it would be if kept for two weeks. Bake your own bread, and save the extra expense and loss, besides having something substantial upon which to perform a good day's work.—[J. S. C.]

Keep the Children Happy.

Invent every possible amusement to keep your boys happy at home evenings. Never mind if they do scatter books and pictures, coats, hats and boots! Never mind if they do make a noise around you with their whistling and hurrahing! We would stand aghast if we could have a vision of the young men gone to utter destruction for the very reason that, having cold, disagreeable, dull, stiff firesides at home they sought amusement elsewhere. The influence of a loving mother or sister is incalculable. Like the circle formed by casting a stone into the water, it goes on and on through a man's whole life. Circumstances and worldly pleasure may weaken the remembrance for a time, but each touch upon a chord of memory will awaken the old time music, and her face, her voice, and her loving words will come up before him like a revelation.

The time will come, before you think, when you would give the world to have your house tumbled by the dear hands of those very boys; when your heart shall long for their noisy steps in the hall, and their ruddy cheeks laid up to yours; when you would rather have their jolly whistle than the music of Thomas or the songs of Neilsson; when you would gladly have dirty carpets—aye, live without carpets at all—but to have their bright, strong forms beside you once more. Then play with and pet them. Praise Johnny's drawing, Betty's music and baby's first attempt at writing his name. Encourage Tom to chop off his stick of wood, and Dick to persevere in making his hen-coop. If one shows a talent for figures, tell him he is your famous mathematician; and if another loves geography, tell him he will be sure to make a good traveler, or a foreign minister.

House Decoration.

Some years ago I was in a very large, elegantly furnished parlor. Carpets, pictures, mirrors, sofas, chairs, were all in exquisite taste. In front of one of the mirrors was a graceful statuette, and lightly twined around it (not, however, hiding its beauty) was an ivy spray. It was the only bit of foliage in the room, and nothing else seemed so attractive. The contrast between the pure white marble and the dark glossy green of the fern leaves over it was very pleasing. Glaring colors are not in good taste; but few of us know how the appropriate blending of harmonious tints refreshes the eye. Traveling round Quebec in the villages where French peasants live, you are astonished to find five or six different shades of color used in the outside decoration of a cottage, however poor or plain. But the tints are almost always very soft and pleasing, and the eye rests on them, both in the midst of winter snows and summer heat, with satisfaction. We are learning that glaring white paint or red brick do not please the eye. It seems almost impossible to give a furnished look to a room with walls of dead white; in winter they are especially bare and cold. Nor will plants look as well over them as if running over the soft tints of kalsomine. The glare of the sun over pure white is bad for the sight; nor will pictures and statues look as well over it. The decoration of houses within and without, and the blending of colors in harmony, is every year receiving more and more attention. In Louisville, Ky., on one of the main streets, is a doctor's office, the roof of which is a mass of green plants in floral boxes. In front, on the eaves, is a long box two feet wide going across the entire width. This box was a mass of portulaccas and verbenas, while from the corners long drooping vines float down to the lower windows. On the roof was a staging of successive strips with pots of flowers, and here and there were large pots or boxes in which grew the stately Ricinus, giving a thoroughly tropical appearance to the whole. In one tub a pumpkin seed had been planted, and the vine made a rustic arbor. Water was pumped up from below and the plants watered with hose. Many persons have only small yards, wholly paved; but if they have never tried growing plants in boxes, they have no idea of the beauty and bloom they may have around them. A green vine within, growing over a softly-tinted wall, may give the eye constant refreshment and pleasure.