

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—I hope most of you are earning music in some way or other, either playing or singing, separately or in class. No art has made greater progress during the last few years than music, and a young lady completely ignorant of it is now-a-days an anomaly. Where the younger members of a family unite in cultivating this delightful art, a safeguard is given to the leisure of the brothers, and a new bond of family love and sympathy arises. Music is a decidedly domestic accomplishment, and should be cultivated by all. It is true that a decided talent for it is rare, but both the ear and touch are capable of cultivation. Of course the best and surest way of acquiring this knowledge will be to obtain the best instruction; but as it is possible that such a boon may not be attainable, from situation or circumstances, by all my young nieces, I venture to give a few hints for self-improvement. If not a very advanced pupil, it is essential to gain a separate power of touch for each finger, and to pass the thumbs smoothly and rapidly in a scale; the fingers in all exercises should rest lightly and naturally on the keys, but be sure and avoid pressing any other note down but that which you strike. It will be difficult to control your fingers at first, but with constant practice you will soon overcome this difficulty. The object being to strengthen each finger, the weakest, you know, are the third and fourth, so to them give particular attention.

With regard to the charming accomplishment of singing we must say a few words. Practice and cultivation will do as much for the voice as for the fingers, and the best method is to practice daily from twenty minutes to half an hour, taking care not to tire the voice. For example, you should begin on the C below the treble stave, and hold the note out as long as you can give it equal tone. Then, taking a good inspiration of breath, you should do the same on D, and so on up the scale, till you reach the compass of your voice, taking care that the notes are clear and true, and not above your compass. Descend in the same manner. Taste, expression and perfect intonation will go far to make a singer, but whether for vocal or instrumental music, the oral instruction of a good master is beyond all the volumes of music ever written.

MINNIE MAY.

Answers to Enquirers.

MRS. T.—“How can feathers be prepared so that they will not have a peculiar and unpleasant smell for pillows, cushions, &c.? What kind of feathers are least liable to give an unpleasant odor?” Ans.—Carelessness in preparing and drying the feathers results in the stuffy and disagreeable odor alluded to. Bits of skin or flesh adhering to the feathers give an unpleasant odor, as do feathers plucked before they are quite ripe. Feathers ought also to be thoroughly dried and lightened up by placing in a moderately warm oven after they have been securely tied in stout cotton bags. Geese feathers are preferred above all others, and ducks' feathers rank next in value among domestic fowls. The downy feathers of hens and turkeys, while they do not command a high price in market, serve a very good purpose, if carefully prepared, for cushions, sofa pillows and the like.

MRS. G.—“I have a new Brussels carpet, which having been down on the floor a few days shows large grease spots. Can you give me a recipe for removing the spots?” Ans.—Spread a thick paste of potter's clay over the spots; tack over it some thick brown paper, and at the end of a week brush off the clay; or, bruise and scatter some blue clay, such as is required to make fire-brick, which is free from sand, over the spots, and rub it in slightly with the hand. After a few days sweep off the clay. If one application does not remove all the grease, make another. If the grease comes from the floor on which the carpet is

laid, remove the carpet, and make similar applications to the floor.

R. A. C.—“I want to paper a room, one side of which has a board partition. What can I do to keep the paper from cracking?” Ans.—Tuck a covering of thin muslin over the wooden partition, taking care to stretch the muslin tight and smooth over the surface. Over this hang the wall-paper in the usual manner.

ALMENA.—The letters R. S. V. P. stand for *repondez s'il vous plait*—answer if you please. They are used on cards of invitation when an answer is desired. They are not generally used now, as it is supposed that people will be polite enough to accept or decline an invitation, without being reminded. Some circles have adopted the style of not sending answers unless to decline, in which case silence means consent; but the fashion is ungracious, and it is always more polite to answer, accepting with thanks.

JENNIE.—“What will I apply to my hands to soften and whiten them?” Ans.—Rub them with a little glycerine every night, and put on a pair of old white gloves, with the palms cut out.

RECIPES.

COOKIES.

Two cups of sugar, one cup of butter, two eggs, one-half-cup of milk, one teaspoonful of cream tartar, one-half teaspoonful of soda, flour to roll stiff.

WHITEWASH.

The following is recommended as making a white-wash that will not wash off by rain. Slack one peck of lime in five gallons of water, in which one pound of rice has been boiled until it is all dissolved. The rice water should be used hot, and the mixture covered closely until the lime is slacked. Then add one pound of salt. Have the wash heated to boiling when applied.

REFRESHING BEVERAGES.

Cold tea is one of the most refreshing and satisfactory summer drinks, provided it be not spoiled by the addition of milk and sugar. It ought to be made early in the day, and left to stand in a stone jar until thoroughly cool, and should then be flavored with slices of lemon. Milk and water, toast and water, curds and whey, or lemonade made in the good old fashion are also to be recommended.

CUBE BERRIES FOR CATARRH, ETC.

A new remedy for catarrh is crushed cube berries smoked in a pipe, emitting the smoke through the nose; after a few trials this will be easy to do. If the nose is stopped up so that it is almost impossible to breathe, one pipeful will make the head as clear as a bell. For sore throat, asthma, and bronchitis, swallowing the smoke effects immediate relief. It is the best remedy in the world for offensive breath, and will make the most foul breath pure and sweet. Sufferers from that horrible disease, ulcerated catarrh, will find this remedy unequalled, and a month's use will cure the most obstinate case. A single trial will convince any one. Eating the uncrushed berries is also good for sore throat and all bronchial complaints. After smoking do not expose yourself to cold air for at least fifteen minutes. The berries are perfectly harmless, and there is no use in going to “catarrh doctors” while you can procure this remedy. They can be got at any drug store.—*Chicago Tribune*.

WORK FOR JUNE.—In this lovely month the country usually puts on its most attractive dress. The warm weather pushes on vegetation, and there is no lack of work. Some will be so absorbed in this that they can see little beauty in vegetation as it is displayed in innumerable forms. A little better planning; a little less hard work; work for fewer hours in the day, and a knowledge of botany would make every farmer enjoy life better. The botanist sees something to admire in every plant, and plants make all or support all that there is of much interest in any country.

A youngster was sent by his parent to take a letter to the postoffice, and pay the postage on it. The boy returned highly elated, and said:—“Father, I seed a lot of men putting letters in a little place, and when no one was looking I slipped yours in for nothing.”

Farmer Ben's Theory.

“I tell ye, it's nonsense,” said farmer Ben, “This farmin' by books and rules, And sendin' the boys to learn that stuff At the agricultural schools, Rotation of crops and analysis! Talk that to a young baboon! But ye needn't be tellin' yer science to me, For I believe in the moon.”

“If ye plant yer corn on the growin' moon, And put up the line for crows, You'll find it will bear, and yer wheat will too, If it's decent land where't grows. But potatoes, now, are a different thing, They want to grow down that is plain; And don't you see you must plant for that, When the moon is on the wane.”

“So in plantin' and hoein' and hayin' time It is well to have an eye On the hang of the moon—you know ye can tell A wet moon from a dry. And as to hayin', you wise ones now Are cuttin' yer grass too soon; If ye want it to spend, just wait till it's ripe, And mow on the full o' the moon.”

“And when all the harvest work is done, And the butcherin' time comes round, Though yer hogs may be lookin' the very best And as fat as hogs are found, You will find your pork all shrivelled and shrunk, When it comes to the table at noon— All fried to rags—if it wasn't killed At the right time of the moon.”

“With the farmers' meetin's and granges now Folks can talk till all is blue; But don't yer be swallerin' all ye hear, For there ain't morn' half on't true. They are trying to make me change my plans, But I tell 'em I'm no such coon; I shall keep right on in the safe old way, And work the farm by the moon.”

What is Hoar-Frost?

The appearance with which the inhabitants of England are familiar under the name of hoar-frost is nearly allied to dew. The white incrustation which at such times ornaments the landscape is, indeed, neither more nor less than frozen dew. It is dew deposited at a time when the dew-point of the air stands lower than the freezing-point of water, and when, therefore, the moisture which is abstracted from the air at once presents itself in the form of needles of ice. The ice spicules are arranged in a somewhat confused and indefinite way, on account of their intimate association with and deposit upon of the radiating objects. The needles project from the frosted surfaces like the short, stiff hairs of a stubby brush. They are most abundantly produced and most lengthened out wherever the radiation of heat is most energetically carried on, as it is at the points and sharp edges of serrated leaves, and each different kind of plant consequently has its own pattern of frosting. Hoar-frost is very rarely seen on smooth, rounded surfaces, and it never appears where radiation is prevented. Screens expanded above and around are, on this account, quite as effective in preventing the occurrence of hoar-frost on plants as they are in obviating the deposit of dew.

“How do you like the Episcopalian service?” asked Jones. “Never heard it,” replied Fogg. “I dropped in at one of the churches last Sunday. It was quite early, and so I began reading the service. I didn't read far, though, before I found that it would never do for me. So I came out.” “Why, what was the trouble?” “Too many collections.” “Too many collections?” “Yes, on almost every page it said ‘collect.’ One collection is all I can afford to respond to. Must be awfully expensive to be an Episcopalian.”

Charles Mathews, jun., once told me (says J. C. Young) that he went into an eating-house to have lunch, and found the orders given by the visitors on the first floor were conveyed below to the kitchen through a tube. A gentleman came in and ordered a basin of ox-tail, two mock turtle, three others asked for pea soup, and one more for bouilli. The waiter, too busy to give the orders for each separately, gave them altogether, with great rapidity, in this concentrated form:—“One ox—two mocks—three peas—and a bully!”