

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—How often do we complain unnecessarily about our homes; perhaps, because we have no piano, or have not our parlors richly furnished; others may think they have so much to do that they can find no time for doing fancy work, or to devote to reading. All this may be true; but work does not make one unhappy. Give us the girl who smiles at the first rays of the morning sun, glancing in at the little cottage window; who can bestow kind words and acts to all around her, and one who takes an interest in teaching and refining her little brothers and sisters. There can be as much refinement, gentility and happiness in a humble cottage as in a grand mansion. Dear nieces, it is not essential to the happy home that there should be the luxury of the carpeted floor, the richly cushioned sofa and chairs. No; it is neatness, order and a cheerful heart which makes home that sweet paradise it so often is found to be. There is joy as real, as heartfelt, by the country cottage fireside as in the most splendid mansions of wealth and refinement. What a lovely picture has Burns given us of the return of the cottager to his home, after the labors of the day:

"At length, his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
The wee things, toddling, stagger through,
To meet their dad, with fluttering noise and glee.
His clean hearth-stone, his thrifty wife's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does all his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil."

The luxuries and elegancies of life are not to be despised, though their possession does not insure happiness. The cheerful heart will arrange the most discordant materials into harmony and beauty.

MINNIE MAY.

RECIPES.

ARROW-ROOT PUDDING.

Dissolve four teaspoonfuls of arrow-root in a quart of fresh milk; boil with a few bitter almonds pounded up, or peach leaves to give it a flavor if you wish; stir it well while it is boiling, or until it becomes a smooth batter; when quite cool, add six eggs, well beaten, to the batter, then mix with it a quarter of a pound of powdered sugar (if brown is used it spoils the color); grate some lemon peel into the mixture and add a little of the juice. The pudding should be baked an hour and sent to the table cold. Quince, raspberry or strawberry preserves may be served with it, and, to add to the appearance, ornament the top with slices of preserves.

CUSTARD CAKE.

One cupful of sugar, three eggs (the whites and yolks beaten separately), three tablespoonfuls of sweet cream, one teaspoonful of soda, two of cream of tartar, and one teaspoonful of flour. Bake in two flat tins of the same size.

CUSTARD FOR THE CAKE.

One-half cupful of sugar, one egg, and one tablespoonful of flour mixed smooth in one-half cupful of milk; boil half a pint of milk, and stir in the sugar, milk and flour; just bring it to a boil, and set it off to cool; put one of the cakes upon a plate, and spread the custard evenly over the surface; then lay on the other cake. Cut as a pie.

TO KEEP HAMS.

To keep hams perfectly safe all through the warm weather, place them in canvas or cotton bags, tightly enclosed, and whitewash the canvas when the hams are enclosed. Yellow ochre is frequently used for this purpose also, but lime wash is equally as good, if not better.

BREAD JELLY FOR THE SICK.

Cut the crumbs of a penny roll into thin slices, and toast them equally of a pale brown; boil them gently in a quart of water until it will jelly, which may be known by putting a little in a spoon to cool; strain it upon a bit of lemon peel, and sweeten with a little sugar. Cleanliness is very

essential in sickness, a dirty cup, or a bit of coal on toast, or in broth, may turn an invalid's stomach.

ROCK RICE.

Boil a teacupful of the best rice till quite soft, in new milk, sweeten with powdered white sugar, and pile it upon a dish; lay all over it lumps of jelly, or preserved fruit of any kind. Beat the whites of three eggs to a stiff froth, add a little sugar, flavor with what you please. Add to this when beaten very stiff, about a tablespoonful of rich cream; drop it over the rice, giving it the appearance of a rock of snow.

SPICED MEAT.

Three pounds of raw beef or veal (second-class steak does nicely), chopped fine, one tablespoonful of salt, one dessertspoonful of pepper, the same of sage, two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, two eggs and one half-teaspoonful of rolled cracker; mix and shape into a long roll, and bake two hours. Be sure to keep water in the tin, also put in a bit of butter and baste often. To be eaten cold for tea, and very nice for picnic dinner or lunch.

TO MAKE STALE BREAD FRESH.

Lay a loaf in a steamer over a kettle of boiling water; cover it closely and steam until it feels spongy, like a fresh loaf. Wrap it in a cloth and let it get cold before cutting; it will be like fresh bread. Stale biscuit and cake may be steamed the same way. Housekeepers, try this.

TO MAKE BUREAU DRAWERS WORK SMOOTHLY.

Bureau drawers that stick can be made to work smoothly by rubbing Castile soap upon the sides and bottom edges where they bear against the frame. Furniture makers use it.

CRACKED WHEAT PUDDING.

Take one quart of unskimmed milk, add to it one gill of cracked wheat, uncooked, and one gill of sugar and a small piece of stick cinnamon. Place it in an oven of medium heat. When about half done stir in the crust already formed, and leave it to form another, which will be sufficiently brown. Try when it is done by tasting a grain of wheat, which must be very soft. This, when cold, makes a delicious cream pudding.

TO PRESERVE MILK.

If milk be introduced into bottles, well corked, and put into a pan of cold water, and gradually raised to the boiling point, and after being allowed to cool, be taken out and put in a cool place, the milk may be kept perfectly sweet for half a year.

FURNITURE POLISH.

But half an ounce of shellac, the same amount of gumlac, and a quarter of an ounce of gum sandarac into a pint of spirits of wine, all in a stone bottle, near the fire, shaking it very often. As soon as the gums are dissolved it is ready for use. Then take a roller of woolen rags—soft old broadcloth will do it nicely—put a little of the polish on it, also a few drops of linseed oil. Rub the surface to be polished with this, going round and round over a small space at a time, until it begins to be quite smooth. Then finish by a second rubbing with spirits of wine and more of the polish. Furniture thus treated will have a brilliant lustre, equal to new.

CARPETS.

A tablespoonful of ammonia in one gallon of warm water will often restore the color of carpets, even if injured by acid or alkali. If a ceiling has been whitewashed with the carpet down, and a few drops should fall, this will remove it. Or, after the carpet is well beaten and brushed, scour with ox-gall, which will not only extract grease, but freshen the colors. One pint of gall in three gallons of warm water will do for a large carpet. Table and floor oil-cloths may be thus washed. The suds left from a wash, when ammonia is used, even if almost cold, will cleanse floor-cloths well.

A TACK IN SEASON.

If the corner of a carpet gets loose, prevents the door opening, or trips every one up who enters the room, nail it down at once. A dog's-eared carpet marks the sloven as well as the dog's-eared book.

TO CLEAN OIL-CLOTH.

If you wish to have them look new and nice, wash them with soft flannel and lukewarm water, and wipe perfectly dry. If you want them to look extra nice, after they are wiped drop a few spoonfuls of milk over them, and rub them with a dry cloth.

AMMONIA.

Ammonia is invaluable to the house-cleaner. A few drops in a pail of water will remove dirt from paint without much scrubbing. It is good to brighten silver; good to brighten carpets; it will take out grease spots from every fabric; will clean hair brushes, laces, muslins. A few drops in the bath tub will remove all disagreeable odor from the person and refresh the bather.

ASPARAGUS.

Tie the asparagus in bundles, having the heads all one way, cut off the stalks even, and put it in salted boiling water; boil till tender, which should be in from fifteen to eighteen minutes; remove from the water; spread upon buttered toast and serve.

TO FRY CALF'S LIVER.

Cut the liver in thin slices, and cut some slices of bacon. Fry the bacon first; then put in a warm dish by the fire; then fry the liver in the bacon gravy; season well with pepper and salt; dredge a little flour over it; turn the liver occasionally to prevent from burning, and when done lay it around the dish, intermixing the bacon; if liked, onions may be minced and fried to eat with it.

TO GLAZE SHIRT BOSOMS.

Dissolve two tablespoonfuls of starch in a cup of cold water, pour over this a pint of boiling water, stir it well, and let it boil two or three minutes. Add to it a small lump of white sugar, or a few shavings of white soap and a bit of butter, or a small piece of white wax, or stir it with a sperm candle. After the clothes are rinsed in blue water, starch them and dry them. Then ring bosoms and collars from this cold starch, roll tightly, let them lie awhile, and iron in the usual way; then lay the bosoms on a smooth board covered with one thickness of muslin, making it slightly damp, and polish with a polishing iron. This is a small iron with a bulge at one or at both ends. It may be bought at any house-furnishing store, and costs from seventy-five cents to one dollar.

Personal Beauty.

Next to complexion and hair, what is more beautiful than a good set of teeth? "Next!" I ought rather to have placed the teeth at the head of secrets of beauty. Yet, no; for there are no secrets respecting these to divulge. Cleanliness and a healthy digestion are the only means by which teeth can be preserved. By the same rule that I decried cosmetics for the face and washes for the hair, so do I now decrie dentos and dentrifices, many of which have caused teeth to decay years before they otherwise would have done, had nature been left to herself.

And, now I am going to take a little leap upwards, and give a touch to the eyebrows—but not with kohol, ladies. No, no; I am too great an enemy to pigments of any description to allude to them in any way but condemnation. My aim is solely to invite you to keep your beauty by all natural means within your reach and knowledge, and in some cases even to help nature; as for instance, with regard to the eyebrows. The long, arched, narrow eyebrow is the prettiest, as we all know, but it is rare; but it would not be so rare, however, if a little more care were taken in its cultivation during early youth. For instance, if a child's eyebrows threaten to be thin, brush them softly every night with a little cocoanut oil, and they will gradually become strong and full; and, in order to give them a curve, press them gently between the thumb and forefinger after every ablation of the face or hands. Simple as this may seem, I have known the most wonderful effects result from it; I have seen girls with wide, straggling eyebrows reduce them into an arch-like shape within a year solely by this means, and surely all will allow that they are permissible. Then, again, as regards eyelashes, every mother knows that she has only to clip her baby's lashes while it sleeps, and continue the process during its childhood, to render them as long and luxuriant as a Circassian's. Yet how few think of taking this precaution, which, indeed, is as necessary as cutting the hair, for those who study their daughters' future beauty. Let ladies, however, beware how they try the experiment on their own lashes, as they do not grow after a certain age. I remember a young friend of mine, who had received from nature as rich an eyelid fringe as woman could have, and who in her young wisdom thought to make it richer still by clipping it. She did clip it, and quite short. When next I saw her there was