

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES.—We are very much surprised and disappointed at the great decrease in the number of competitors in this very needful and excellent art, plain needlework. No doubt the season of the year, when some are taking their holidays, and others have extra farm duties to perform, had something to do with this, but we certainly did hope that the older girls would show as much, if not more, interest in this as in the fancy work and essay-writing competitions; but instead, there was not one sampler sent in competition for the first prize. Just think of it, my friends, are you willing to let your younger sisters carry off the palm in such a thing as hand sewing? Why this branch of industry is so much ignored by the present generation is a mystery to us.

In the second division (girls under fifteen years), the prize sampler by Miss Gertie Richardson, at the age of seven years and nine months, was remarkably well done, considering the years of the worker, and we hope that our little friend will be encouraged to persevere in this work until she attains that perfection which few reach or even attempt in this age—the chief faults in this division being that the button holes were generally unevenly cut and worked, and the hemming was not properly done, being over-seamed. Then the finishing off lacked care and attention; the ruffles should have been rolled and whipped and then sewed to the foundation, instead of leaving the rough edges.

As I have already said, the prize of \$1.00 in cash has been awarded to Miss Gertie E. Richardson, of Batteau, Simcoe Co., Ont.

A prize of the "Buckeye Cook Book" will be given for the best directions for making catsup and pickles, the recipes to be the actual experiments of the sender, and not simply copies from cook books. All communications must be in by the 25th July.

MINNIE MAY.

Work Basket.

ORNAMENTAL FIRE-PLACE.—In summer when the fire-place is not in use, it can be made exceedingly attractive by fitting in a piece of looking-glass, either with or without a frame, as a chimney-board. Then remove the fender and place in its stead a rustic one made of the knotty roots of trees which can be found in the woods, and varnished; inside this place a tin filled with pot plants in bloom; then curtains of either lace, cloth or velvet may be looped away at each side and finished at the top with a drape to correspond.

A decorative novelty consists of an ordinary school slate with a pretty painting upon it. The wooden frame is gilded or ebonised and a gilded slate pencil fastened to the top by a bow of bright ribbon. Very pretty table screens are also made by joining three slates together with small hinges, and then decorating.

A pretty tray rack is made by gilding an ordinary rolling pin and suspending it by ribbons tied on each handle and brought together at the center with a large bow. Six hooks are screwed into the middle of the pin, above which

may be painted a spray of flowers. Japanese chintz is very popular for portiers between an alcove and bed-room.

CHEAP CURTAINS.—A very stylish and graceful design for sitting room or bedroom curtains recently originated in the New York art rooms, and full directions are given here for making a pair. The curtains are inexpensive, the full cost for two deep windows being about \$3.50. The materials required are about two yards of cretonne, ten or twelve yards of cheese-cloth, and sufficient lace for finishing the front edges of the curtains and making an insertion across the top of each. Be careful in purchasing the cheese-cloth to get a piece which is evenly woven, and without black threads. Scrim may be used instead of cheese-cloth, if preferred, but it is more expensive. In buying the cretonne, get two patterns which harmonize, buying one yard of each. Cut each yard in four pieces, lengthwise. Each curtain has two of these pieces at the top, with an insertion of lace between. One curtain only will be described. Take one piece of each pattern of cretonne, stitch the lace insertion between them, turn down the edge about an inch of the one intended for the top of the curtain, and stitch the cheese-cloth on the other piece with a pudding-bag seam. Make a hem twelve inches deep on the bottom of the curtain. The lace for the curtain should be about four inches wide. Lay the lace flat on the right side of the curtain, an inch from the edge, with straight edge of the lace toward the selvedge, and the pointed edge turning backward. Stitch it on, fold down the hem on the wrong side, and catch it fast with the long stitches. Cut a V-shaped piece out of the lace at the lower corner of the curtain, seam the lace together and sew it across the bottom of the curtain.—[Ladies' Guide to Fancy Work.

LEAF EDGING IN KNITTING.—Cast on 18 stitches. 1.—Widen (which means thread over), knit 1, widen, knit 2, narrow twice, knit 2, widen, narrow, widen, narrow, knit 1. Every alternate row seam across, slipping first stitch.

3.—Widen, knit 3, widen, knit 1, narrow twice, knit 1, widen, narrow, widen, narrow, knit 1.

5.—Widen, knit 5, widen, narrow twice, widen, narrow, widen, narrow, knit 1.

7.—Widen, knit 3, narrow, knit 2, widen, narrow, widen, narrow, widen, narrow, knit 1. —[ANNIE B. STEPHEN, Trout River P. O., Que.

Answers to Enquirers.

A CONSTANT READER.—The superstitious belief that thirteen is an unlucky number to assemble at table is a very ancient one, and is said to have taken its origin from the Paschal Supper, as Judas Iscariot was the thirteenth guest.

MAY S. AND LENA are thanked for sending words of "My Heart's My Ain" for E. P.

SUSIE.—In order to have nice, thrifty geraniums that will bloom all winter, small plants should be started the last of June, and kept growing all summer, the pots sunk in the garden, the ends of the branches kept pinched to make them stalky, and not allowed to bloom. When taken into the house they like the sun

and a cool temperature, from 60 to 65 degrees, and do better in a room away from a direct fire.

T. B.—Certainly.

MRS. JOSEPH M.—You can finish your crazy patch-work quilt around the edges with border of plush a finger and a half wide, and line the quilt with old gold, blue, red, or olive shades.

T. H.—Glass may be beautifully frosted with epsom salts dissolved in hot water, and applied with a brush while hot.

M. G. G.—The tradition of the eleven thousand virgins is as follows:—When Conan with eleven thousand warriors founded the kingdom of Annorica, or Brittany, in the fourth century, Dionatus, king of Cornwall, despatched Ursula, his daughter, with eleven thousand of the elite of the British virgins to be their wives. The fair adventurers being cast ashore by a tempest among the Picts, and declining their addresses, were all barbarously murdered.

C. A. W.—The "Salvation Army," as it is styled, was originated in London, in 1865, by a minister who held open-air meetings and large public gatherings for the purpose of converting those who attended no place of worship. They first made their appearance in this country March 10, 1880, when eight members of the "army" arrived in New York city among the immigrants from London.

Queries.

Can any of our readers inform Lena Will whether our wild flowers have been cultivated to advantage?

Recipes.

ROLLED BEEFSTEAK.—This is a very good way of cooking an inferior steak. Take a round steak and pound it, and spread with a dressing such as is used for poultry. Begin at one end and roll it up neatly, tying to keep it in shape. Put in a bake-pan with a little water, and bake until the meat is tender, basting frequently. Thicken the gravy in the pan with a little flour wet with cold water; then season nicely, adding a little catsup. Cut the meat as you would a berry roll, slicing off the ends neatly.

HOW TO BOIL ASPARAGUS.—It should be cut off exactly equal lengths, and boiled standing ends upwards in a deep saucepan. Nearly two inches of the heads should be out of the water—the steam sufficing to cook them, as they form the tenderest part of the plant; while the hard, stalky part is rendered soft and succulent by the longer boiling which this plan permits. Instead of the orthodox twenty minutes allotted to asparagus, lying horizontally, which half-cooks the stalks and over-cooks the head, diminishing its flavor and consistence, a period of thirty or forty minutes on the plan recommended, will render fully a third more of the stalk delicious, while the head will be properly cooked by the steam alone.—[The Caterer.

BOILED LETTUCE.—This is a delicious vegetable, resembling asparagus or seakale, and yet not quite like either. Lettuces may be simply boiled and eaten like other greens, but they can be boiled and served as *entre-mets* in a variety of ways. Have ready some neatly-cut pieces