

Minnie May's Dep't.

MY DEAR NIECES.—Winter is over and gone, and the "voice of singing birds" will soon be heard in the land. How many changes have taken place within your homes, since nature put on her winding sheet last autumn. A little cherub has been carried from the land of "No-where," and dropped down into the best and warmest spot on earth—a mother's bosom; some of my nieces have left the parent wing, and gone forth to build new nests. There has been pleasant bustle and joyous anticipation in the old homestead; and on the lips of some dear one the angel of death has laid his sword, silencing the loved voice forever; and so it is. Life comes to all of us with full hands, giving and taking; it is wisely ordered, "Our Father is at the helm." To each and all, in your joys and sorrows, your aunt Minnie offers her heartfelt sympathy—and spring is coming, every living thing feels its quickening influence. The little captive in his cage whistles and trills joyously, aware in some mysterious manner that the glad season of song and nest-building is at hand. Spring is coming; through rifts in the leaden clouds we catch far-off glimpses of intense blue, reminding us of summer and all its pleasant out-door occupations. When all around is bursting into new life, let us open our hearts to the blest influence; let us bestir ourselves and resolve to improve our minds, positions and circumstances by every honorable means, thereby adding to our independence and usefulness, not despising the "day of small things;" by turning our attention to something useful, and giving it our best care, a great deal may be accomplished. Most of my nieces are members of farmers' families; which of you will decide to have a good vegetable garden, and plant strawberries, or engage in raising fowls; if you once begin to take an interest, a real live interest, in such things, you will be sure to succeed. In her next letter your aunt Minnie intends telling you how to manage a garden with the least labor and most profit. MINNIE MAY.

Work Basket.

EMBROIDERY STITCHES—KNOT STITCH.—Is used in making ends of stamens, and the centre of flowers. The needle is brought through the material, and the floss wound around it once or twice, and it is again thrust through the material at the point where it was brought up. *Wound stitch*—is used for embroidering flowers having small petals, for small leaves and grains. The needle is first brought through the cloth, then wound with the silk many times, then the thumb of the left hand is placed firmly over it so as to hold it in place, until the needle is drawn through and the coil brought securely into place. In making each kernel, only two stitches are required the second one being one taken at the end of the kernel to give it the appearance of the barb of real grain.

KNITTED LACE EDGINGS.—Cast on 15 stitches. Knit across plain. 1st row, k 3, tto, n, k 3, tto, k 1, tto, k 6. —2d row, k 6, tto, k 3, tto, n, k 3, tto, n, k 1. —3d row, k 3, tto, n, n, tto, k 5, tto, k 6. —4th row, cast off 4, k 1, tto, n, k 3, n, tto, n, k 1, tto, n, k 1. —5th row, k 3, tto, n, k 1, tto, n, k 1, n, tto, k 3. —6th row, k 3, tto, k 1, tto, s 2, k 1, pass the two slipped stitches over the knitted one, tto, k 1, tto, n, k 11. Repeat.

CROCHET TABLE MATS.—Knitting-cotton No. 6 or 8. Make a chain of 25 stitches, dc, all around to the beginning and turn the work. There is one stitch upon the hook; put the hook back through the last loop through which the cotton was drawn, put the cotton over the hook, and draw it through that loop alone; then put the cotton over the hook and draw it through the two loops upon the hook, dc the row of loops on the back side of the mat to end. Crochet twice in each of three adjoining loops at the end, dc to the other end, Crochet twice in two adjoining loops at that end, bringing the ends of the first row around the mat together. Bring the cotton in front of the hook, which has upon it one loop, put the hook through a loop at the end of this row, where it commenced, and draw the cotton through the two loops upon the hook joining the row. Turn the work over, put the hook back, through the last loop that the cotton was drawn through, put the cotton over the hook, draw through that loop alone, put the cotton over the hook, and draw through the two loops. Crochet twice in the first loop of each of the two loops that had two stitches put in them. Proceed down the side to the other end. Crochet twice in the first of each of the three loops that had two stitches put in them, then go on to the beginning of the row, join, and turn over the mat as before. Continue until the mat is of sufficient size. For the border, pass one loop, and in the second make 5 tc stitches. Pass one loop, and fasten by one dc in the next, and so on round the mat. The length of chain in the middle of course determines the size of the mat. For coffee and tea pots, make a chain of six, and fasten together. Crochet twice in every stitch to start the six points for widening. The stitches to be crocheted at the time, are on the back of the mat.

PRIZE ESSAY.

Gratitude.

BY MABEL HARDY, CORNELL, ONT.

Perhaps at few periods in our lives do we feel so much in sympathy with mankind as when some needy person looks up to us with an expression of pained pleasure depicted on every feature, at the receipt of some small favor. We leave them with our hearts softened and enlarged, realizing that our slightest efforts are not in vain. If, after a hard day's work in the heat of summer, some one gives the laborer a cooling drink or some fresh, nutritious food, a hearty "thank you" is all the reward we could desire; "for words, like Nature, half reveal and half conceal the soul within," showing the pleasure we cannot express. Your heart is lightened, and you are happy in the thought that you have at least offered a cup of cold water. Gratitude may justly be termed the fountain head from which most other virtues arise, such as reverence for parents or benefactors, love for our country, and obedience to God. If a man be grateful for little acts of kindness conferred upon him, we are led to look for refinement in him; but look upon a man without that refinement, and we are almost instantly repelled, our hearts hardened, and the idea of coming in contact with him is distasteful. The ungrateful are everywhere shunned and despised as men working only evil and addicted to every vice; while, on the contrary, grateful persons are in the estimation of all men. They derive pleasure from all benefits bestowed, which is rendered more exquisite by the thought that

some one cares for them, and made happier by the knowledge of a friend.

The worthy recipient feels deeply the obligation under which he is placed, and never forgetting the gift, is always on the lookout for the means by which he may repay his benefactor; no time can blot it from his memory, and no term of years bars the payment. To feel that you have a friend is to feel that you are never alone. The question has oft been asked, "What's in a word?" We have for answer, "Friendship." How lovingly and softly it strikes the ear, made doubly sweet, if we are alone in the world, with no relatives to sympathize with or comfort us—no one to love; how we appreciate a friend then! We look upon it as one of the choicest gifts heaven can bestow. Nothing tenders the heart and opens the gushing fountain of love more than the exercise of gratitude. Like warmth and moisture applied to a seed, causing it to germinate and bloom, so tears of gratitude awaken pleasurable sensations, unknown to those who have never been forced from the sunshine and prosperity of life to the cold chill of adversity, where no warmth is felt but that of benevolence, and nothing to shed light round their rugged path but charity.

Ingratitude is an offence so humiliating and degrading, that no man has yet been found who would acknowledge himself guilty of it. When we have so many instances of gratitude shown by dumb animals, how shameful, then, for one who terms himself a *man* to be otherwise. No wonder everybody hates and shuns him. Take away a man's virtues and what is he? No longer a man living in the image of God, surely, but little above a brute. But let him go abroad with just principles, and what a different picture he presents. Not a brute, but an ever-flowing spring in a barren waste. Love animates the heart, and he is able and ever ready to sympathize with the suffering; tears of pity gather in his eyes, and flow impetuously down his cheeks. His heart is pure, so that only pure actions could come from his heart, and he is noble, pure and good, availing himself of every opportunity to return all favors tendered.

Recipes.

FRIED BEEF'S LIVER.—Cut rather thin, and pour boiling water over it; drain perfectly. Roll the liver in fine bread-crumbs, season with salt and pepper, and fry quickly in hot fat to a crisp brown.

MINCED VEAL.—Take three pounds of uncooked veal; chop fine; add three beaten eggs, butter the size of an egg, four rolled crackers and enough pepper and salt to season well; one-half grated nutmeg, mix. Press it into a crock or earthen dish, and bake half an hour. When ready to serve, turn it out and slice down on a platter. Beef is good prepared in the same manner.

POT ROAST OF BEEF.—Get four or five pounds from the rump, without bone. Cut gashes lengthwise and lay in strips of salt pork. Put in a broad pot and pour in a cup of boiling water. Cover tightly and let cook about two hours, turning once. During the last half hour baste several times. Then put the meat when done in a covered dish to keep warm, while you cool the gravy by setting it in cold water. When the fat rises, skim off every particle, return the gravy to the fire in a saucepan, thicken with brown flour, boil up and