

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—Leaving the dust-begrimed San Francisco, with its fogs and its searching winds, I last week took refuge on a large, stern-wheel steamboat bound for Sacramento, fare, including bed, \$2. Leaving at 2 in the afternoon I arrived there the following morning at 5 o'clock, a distance of say 150 miles. There were but few passengers and little freight. Viewed from the deck of the steamer there is little to interest one for a long way up, as there is nothing but the eternal sameness of sun-baked and sun-burned hills to be seen. The green fringe of tule flags that skirt the river or embosom the islands in it lately reclaimed, is a positive relief. The country looks more desolate than usual this time of the year from the protracted drouth—at this time of the year the country always appears repulsive, from the almost total absence of rain during the summer. There are few towns all the way up, though this river drains one of the most important and fertile valleys of the State. I saw an army of Chinamen employed in grading the road-bed for another railway connecting Oakland and San Francisco; there is a road that connects the two cities that has been running for many years, but I presume that monstrous and mighty monopoly, the Central Pacific, know what they are doing in building another. The present one under construction winds its way for miles along the river front. I was much interested in visiting the Capitol, rather a fine building surrounded by beautifully-kept grounds; it has a very fine library belonging to the State, to which the public have free access—the only one worthy of the name in the State to which the public are admitted free. From its dome a fine panorama of the surrounding country is to be obtained; as the city is located on a plain, the aspect to the spectator appears rather monotonous. It is much hotter here than in "Frisco," hence linen dusters are all the go; and, again, malarial diseases are very prevalent. Ten years ago I caught it here and came near dying from it. The population of the city is but 40,000; many fine buildings, both public and private, though a long way behind Frisco I think. Here, as there, they complain, no doubt with reason, of commercial depression, a result in a great degree to be attributed to the drouth. I visited the great fruit orchard of Reeds, close to the city, containing some 160 acres. The sale of fruit, &c., amounts to about \$25,000 per annum; it was a beautiful sight to see the apple, pear and other fruit trees laden and often breaking down under their luscious loads; the largest and finest portion of their crop they wrap in paper, box them, and send them by rail East, of which, doubtless, you have often partaken. The resident portion of the city is thickly planted with shade trees of locust, poplar, fig, willow, elm and walnut, which impart a picturesque appearance as well as affording protection from the fierce rays of a semi-tropical sun. Churches are numerous. I went in the morning to a Presbyterian, in the evening to an Episcopal; able discourses at both; the Episcopal but poorly attended; the latter is neither popular nor wealthy. In returning I saw a steamer ashore, the river being so low; not uncommon this time of year. We took aboard large quantities of fruit and vegetables at various landings, grown on these rich and fertile islands, some of the most valuable land in the State, Chinamen the chief producers, and their name is legion; land lets on the islands from \$10 to \$25 per acre, but they are liable to inundation, and fever and ague. You have a plain, unvarnished story of my little trip to the Capitol, and it but remains for me to say with our Spanish fellow citizens, "Adios amego."

From yours very truly,
VIATOR.

The Farmer's Wife.

Up with the birds in the early morning—
The dew-drop glows like a precious gem;
Beautiful tints in the skies are dawning.
But she's never a moment to look at them.
The men are wanting their breakfast early;
She must not linger, she must not wait;
For words that are sharp and looks that are surly
Are what men give when meals are late.

Oh, glorious colors the clouds are turning,
If she would but look over hills and trees;
But here are the dishes, and here is the churning—
Those things always must yield to these.
The world is filled with the wine of beauty,
If she could but pause and drink it in;
But pleasure, she says, must wait for duty—
Neglected work is committed sin.

The day grows hot, and her hands grow weary;
Oh, for an hour to cool her head,
Out with the birds and winds so cheery!
But she must get dinner and bake the bread.
The busy men in the hay-field working,
If they saw her sitting with idle hand,
Would think her lazy, and call it shirking,
And she never could make them understand.

They do not know that the heart within her
Hungers for beauty and things sublime;
They only know that they want their dinner—
Plenty of it—and just "on time."
And after the sweeping and churning and baking,
And dinner dishes are all put by,
She sits and sews, though her head is aching,
Till time for supper and "chores" draws nigh.

Her boys at school must look like others,
She says, as she patches their frocks and hose;
For the world is quick to censure mothers
For the least neglect of children's clothes.
Her husband comes from the field of labor;
He gives no praise to his weary wife;
She's done no more than has her neighbor;
'Tis the lot of all in country life.

But after the strife and weary tussle
With life is done, and she lies at rest,
The nation's brain and heart and muscle—
Her sons and daughters—shall call her blest.
And I think the sweetest joys of heaven,
The rarest bliss of eternal life,
And the fairest crown of all will be given
Unto the way-worn farmer's wife.

"Semper Idem."

I looked in the tell-tale mirror,
And saw the marks of care,
The crow's feet and the wrinkles,
And the gray in the dark-brown hair.
My wife looked o'er my shoulder—
Most beautiful was she,
"Thou wilt never grow old, my love," she said,
"Never grow old to me."

"For age is chilling of heart,
And thine, as mine can tell,
Is as young and as warm as when first we heard
The sound of our bridal bell!"
I turned and kissed her ripe-red lips;
"Let time do its worst on me,
If in my soul, my love, my faith,
I never seem old to thee!"

Which Loved Best?

"I love you, mother," said little John;
Then, forgetting his work, his cap went on,
And he was off to the garden to swing,
And left her the water and wood to bring.

"I love you, mother," said rosy Nell;
"I love you better than tongue can tell;"
Then she teased and pouted for half a day,
Till her mother rejoiced when she went to play.

"I love you, mother," said little Fan.
"To-day I'll help you all I can;
How glad I am school doesn't keep!"
And she rocked the babe till it fell asleep.

Then stepping softly she fetched the broom,
And swept the floor and tidied the room;
Busy and happy all day was she,
Helpful and happy as child could be.

"I love you, mother," again they said—
Three little children going to bed.
How do you think that mother guessed
Which of them really loved her the best?

Use of Music.

I am not disposed to agree with those who regret that so many girls are obliged to spend time at the piano, while so few become artists. Even though great players are seldom made, there is a charm imparted to the plainest home, in which a young girl sits at twilight or in the evening invoking simple melodies from the ivory keys, to the delight of father and mother. The piano is the household angel of the period, and though it may seldom be struck by our firesides with the potent touch of the master, yet wherever its liquid harmonies float on the air, there is a spell of refinement, a soothing element to banish discord, and a spirit of magical tenderness. I love to hear its rippling notes, as I pass little houses in back streets, and I like to see the bright-faced children going past my door with their music-rolls in hand. The hours spent in practicing are not wasted, though the performer never becomes specially brilliant. It is worth all the money paid to the professor, if the young lady only learns from his instructions, patience, persistence, exactness of sight, attention to details, and facility in the use of her fingers.

I wish boys too could be taught music, as their sisters are. But in our social economy, the boys, unless destined for professions, are usually occupied with work, while the girls are still in the school room. Consequently, there will always be more cultivation of a certain kind among the young men, though we have all lamented that the tables are sometimes turned as they grow older. Girls too often stay very nearly at the same place as they mentally reached when they left school; while intelligent young men, with far less antecedent preparation, strike out paths of enquiry and investigation for themselves, and at forty, have gained a breadth and scope of intellectual power and acquisition which casts the woman of the same age quite in the shade.

Keeping Out the Flies.

Every housekeeper knows what a nuisance flies are in summer. Two weapons are powerful against them, cleanliness and darkness. Therefore the dining-room should be kept dark between meals, and care should be taken to sweep every crumb from table and floor. But it will not do simply to shut up the room, shutting up the flies in it. Close every window and door but one, and through that drive the flies out. This is not so hard as it may seem on paper, and practice makes perfect here as in all else. We have known a housekeeper who was so expert that she had only to wave her broom and the flies dutifully swarmed out as they saw the standard raised in air. Fly nets for the windows are comfortable appendages for living and sleeping rooms. Bought ready-made they are somewhat expensive; made at home they cost only a trifle. Have the carpenter—or if some one in the family knows how to handle tools, let him—make a frame of inch-wide lath, fitting the window frame. On this stretch mosquito netting—dark green is best—and fasten with tacks to the laths. The same netting over a frame of reeds, of osiers, or wires from an old hoop-skirt, make serviceable cake and butter covers. Bend one hoop into a round of the size wanted, then on this fasten two semicircular hoops, crossing each other at right angles in the centre above the hoop. This forms the frame, which, if of wire, should be wrapped with worsted; on this the netting is sewed, and a button on top serves as handle.—*N. Y. Herald.*

A young lady was at a party during which quarrels between husband and wife were discussed. "I think," said an unmarried elder son, "that the proper thing is for the husband to have it out at once, and thus avoid quarrels for the future. I would light a cigar in the carriage after the wedding breakfast, and settle the smoking question forever." "I would knock the cigar out of your mouth," interrupted the belle. "Do you know I don't think you would be there," he remarked.

HOW TO CHOOSE A WIFE.—That young lady will make a good wife who does not apologize when you find her at work in the kitchen, but continues at her task until it is finished. When you hear a young lady say "I shall attend church and wear my old bonnet and waterproof cloak, for I fear we shall have a rain-storm," depend upon it, she will make a good wife. When a daughter remarks, "Mother, I would not hire help, for I can assist you to do all the work in the kitchen," set it down that she will make a good wife.