

Mr. Ruskin says, "make them every one sew a proper sampler, with plenty of robins in it, and any motto they like in illuminated letters, finished with gold thread,—the ground, silk."

And so, little by little, day by day, our little maidens will learn their art, and the fame of future grandmothers as trainers of needlewomen worthy of the name will equal those of the past.

A DICKENS PARTY.

There is nothing more delightful than a character party for an evening's entertainment, where the guests represent different characters from some well known author's works. It can, or it need not, be a masquerade, according to the wishes of the hostess. The disguise is oftentimes so perfect that no mask is needed. The invitations should be sent out at least a week or ten days in advance, to allow guests ample time to arrange their costumes.

The host and hostess may impersonate characters, but should never mask, and should stand near the door to receive the guests as they come in. A friend of the hostess should stand at the door and ask the different persons what characters they represent, as they come in, and then present them to the host and hostess.

Although this entertainment is appropriate at any season of the year, it is a very pleasant and pretty idea to have it during the warm summer months. It is best to choose a moonlight evening and to have the grounds well lit with Chinese lanterns. A platform can be erected for dancing, and a large tent may be used as a refreshment-room, while those who prefer to stay indoors can have the house at their disposal. The refreshments vary according to the season, and if in winter should consist of hot meats, salads, oysters in their different forms, coffee, tea, bouillon, chocolate, ice-cream, cakes, etc. While those for summer should be simpler—sandwiches, cold meats, salads, ices, fruits, lemonade, iced or Russian tea, fancy cakes, macaroons, etc.

There is, probably, no writer who has ever pictured in his writings quainter or more original characters than Dickens, who, at one moment, makes you laugh with him, and at the next cry, thus combining pathos and humor. For a tall, slender young lady there is no more effective or picturesque costume than that representing the Ivy Green. The dress, which should be of some simple dark-green cloth, and quite plainly made, should be completely covered with sprigs of the glossy ivy. A handsome wreath or head-dress should be worn—the gloves, mask, and boots should all match in color. This costume is intended for a brunette, but will answer equally well for a blonde. Dolly Varden is an easier costume to get up, being simply an old-fashioned Dolly Varden calico or cambric made extremely simple, with a round waist, shirred several times around the neck, a plain skirt and a long, broad sash of the same tied in the back.

Mr. Dick, when well represented, is very amusing. He should wear a large gray wig, white trousers, a loose, grey morning-coat and waistcoat, a tall English collar, large checked tie, and an old-fashioned, conspicuous watch chain.

Lady Dedlock should be a handsome, rather stately woman and of fine figure. Her costume a rich, brocaded silk or velvet, handsomely made and trained. She should wear a necklace, bracelets, and several rings.

Nicholas Nickleby should be represented by a long, lank and lean person, with a wig of rather long hair, and checked trousers, dress coat, white waistcoat, black necktie and a silk hat.

Wilkins Micawber, who is always "waiting for something to turn up," is pomposity itself. He wears a Prince Albert coat, checked trousers, a silk hat rather the worse for wear, which is worn tipped over on one side of his head, and carries a cane.

Mrs. Micawber, who is tall, thin and sallow, wears two little pipe-stem curls, which hang down by each ear. Her dress is a skimpy, cheap one, and very old-fashioned.

Peggotty, so well known to the public, wears a straight, full skirt, a plain waist, an old-fashioned poke bonnet, and a gorgeous shawl.

Then there is Mr. Pickwick, who is very bald; Sam Weller, Mark Tapley, Martin Chuzzlewit, Widow Bardell, Miss Betsy Trotwood, Messrs. Tupman, Winkle, Snodgrass, Job Trotter and Alfred Jingle, who are all on hand, and Barkis, Dick Swiveller, Uriah Heep, Little Dorrit, Barnaby Rudge, Dora Copperfield, Little Nell, Sairey Gamp, the Fat Boy, and many others too well known to the lovers of Dickens to need any description of mine.

A careful study of the old illustrations and a thorough reading about the characters desired, will offer many suggestions and ideas to those personating these parts. If the party is masked, all should unmask at a given hour, or before supper; the wonder, amazement and amusement pictured on the different faces when the masks are removed is a picture for an artist and well worth seeing.

MORNING CALLERS.

To many, we perhaps might almost say most housewives, morning callers are a terror.

Yet, when we consider the matter thoughtfully, who of us would wish to exclude our friends from our home at any time?

Is not the ideal home a place where all may find comfort and a warm welcome?

Still, those who run the inside machinery of that home know how comparatively easy it is to give that welcome, in the quiet of the afternoon, when every room and child is in order to receive company.

To the favored few, who have a large corps of competent (?) servants, this whole matter may seem unimportant; but to the many less fortunate housekeepers, who manage their homes with little or no help, it is often of vital interest. There! Let us re-write the last clause of the above sentence, and for less fortunate let us substitute more fortunate housekeepers, who have physical strength and moral courage enough to break loose from the iron rule of Bridgets, that has so long held sway in many of our kitchens.

It will do no good to consider any subject unless, by so doing, we make things better in the future.

In order to make a few suggestions in this connection, allow us to ask a direct question: How are morning callers a terror to the housewife?

In other words, from whence comes the principal feeling of annoyance? Is it from the thought of leaving kitchen work undone? We think usually not, as most kinds of work can be intelligently left fifteen minutes and not suffer therefrom; and if the work in hand be such that it needs immediate attention, no morning caller will object to sitting a few minutes in a comfortable, perfectly orderly sitting-room, with the morning paper or latest magazine, which has been offered for entertainment by the smiling, dainty housewife, as she assured the comer of a hearty welcome and begged to be excused a few minutes.

Honestly, we think the feeling of annoyance oftener