

MINNIE MAY'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NIECES,—

The warm weather which has overtaken us so suddenly, makes our thoughts turn to the country; to that region of fresh, pure air, tender green foliage, and abundance of fragrant blossoms, which we townspeople can never thoroughly appreciate, an occasional drive through its precincts being the utmost we can enjoy of its fleeting pleasures.

The high value which people residing in cities and towns place on ferns, wild flowers, and all the kindred attractions of the woods, and the indifference with which they are regarded by those living in the vicinity where these woodland beauties flourish, are facts not often taken into consideration. Townspeople will walk two or three miles in search of wild flowers, and consider themselves well rewarded if they procure ever so small a bunch, carefully winding their handkerchief—previously dipped warily in some streamlet—round the stems that they may reach home with their forest trophies as fresh as possible. For the last year or so they have been sought after more ardently than ever, the reason of this increasing popularity being that fickle fashion has decreed that as long as they are in bloom they shall take precedence of their hot-house relations in all table and house decoration.

The beauty of the Canadian wild flowers has been the theme of many recent articles in the English periodicals, and prizes of large sums of money have been offered to those giving the most complete list of Canadian wild flowers, time when they bloom, where most plentiful, and other facts interesting to botanists. Now, if these flowers and ferns are so much admired by those who have not the opportunity of seeing them grow in all the beauty of their natural surroundings, how is it they are not as much appreciated by those who have that opportunity? It must be that they are so accustomed to seeing these beauties of Nature that they regard them no more than they do the many other natural beauties with which they are surrounded—all the works of Him who "clothes the grass of the field." There must be many a shady spot round the cottage garden and farm where the lovely wild flowers and graceful ferns would grow luxuriantly, and where, in all probability, nothing else could flourish. Let each of the children have a little plot for himself or herself, and encourage them to search for the prettiest and rarest varieties by offering them some little reward; they will get any amount of pleasure out of it, and—all for nothing! Not only that: if any boy or girl feels like making a little pocket money, or if the careful farmer's wife wants to add to the proceeds of her butter and eggs, let them take into town some pots of ferns and bunches of buttercups, and if they have never tried it before, I am sure they will be astonished at the amount they realize. A perfect fern (that is, one which has no broken fronds) planted in an ordinary flower-pot in the mould in which it has been found, with a little wet moss round the stems to hold the moisture and cover the mould, will easily fetch 25c. in the market, and a smaller sum would still be clear gain. The most satisfactory way to get them, is to take your pots out to the woods and plant the ferns there, where you have the moss, mould, etc., all at hand; they are then carried much more easily, the fronds being less likely to break. In bringing them to market, the pots should be packed tightly in a box, to prevent them from jolting about and loosening the plants. Your grocer would give you an old soap-box, which would be just the thing. Bunches of buttercups sell readily at 5c. a bunch; they, too, should be placed in a box with some wet moss in the bottom, the same moss serving for an indefinite number of times, and a wet cloth placed over the top to keep them fresh and free from dust.

When people know the market value of things they have previously considered worthless, they look on them with different eyes; they begin to see beauties hitherto overlooked. Let us hope it will be so with our wild flowers, that our numerous country readers will be stimulated to hunt up fresh specimens, and vie with each other in the possession of the rarest they can find; that they will no longer speak of the floral beauties of the woods as "weeds," simply because they are common and plentiful, but will rather lift up their hearts in gratitude to Him who hath so bountifully surrounded us with all these lovely and varied tokens of His care for us.

MINNIE MAY.

A Naughty Kitten.

I'm a naughty little kitten,
Though I'm almost one year old;
I steal the cream and sugar,
And don't do what I'm told.

My name is Twopenny Halpenny—
A funny name for a cat:
But I'm worth a golden sovereign—
My mistress told me that.

My fur is black and silky,
My shirt front always clean;
When there's company to dinner
I'm nearly always seen.

You'd be shocked at my behavior—
I'm in mischief all the day;
I go into other kitchens,
And with other cats I play.

But now it is my bedtime,
And I must stop my chat,
Or I will lose my supper,
And you know I shant like that.

I'm sorry for my mischief,
And for my wicked ways,
Oh! tell my mistress I repent,
And will be good these days.

Heir of Ishmael.

BY "NORNA."

My baby! Oh, my pride and joy,
Why should my heart be sad?
Why should my lovely, breathing toy
Inspire a thought not glad?

Why shouldst his little, laughing eyes,
With gladness only beaming,
Cause thoughts of woe uncalled to rise,
With thoughtful tears down-streaming?

Alas, my child! Smile on, smile on,
And crow, and croon, and creep;
Enjoy thy life's bright, sunny dawn—
Full soon, full soon thou'lt weep.

Oh, why should I dark care forebode
For thee, my bonny child,
And in my dreamings heap the load
Of griefs thou'lt bear through child?

Begone, dull dreams! Why thus oppress
And fill my heart with care?
Alas! In peace I cannot rest,
For dreams are ever there.

If woe and sorrow rule thy lot,
My boy, in days to come,
Wilt curse the day thou wert begot,
And even thy mother's tomb!

Oh, may the God above protect
Thy sweet and stainless soul,
And bring thee safe, in peace and love,
To Heaven—most blessed Goal.
Findlay, Manitoba.

"Am I Right?"

MONOLOGUE SPECIALTY.

Good evening, white folks. I would have been here sooner, but I was detained. I got in a predicament I didn't expect. I was made a godfather. I stood up for a lady in a street car, and I thought that car would never reach its destination. Street cars is a nuisance anyhow you find 'em. Am I right? Um? It was only two weeks come Wednesday before next Friday—am I right? No; it's Thursday come next Tuesday—I was in a street car, and you know how ladies will crowd in a street car when it's full, and turn up their noses at all the men that are sitting down. Well, in they came, in droves; and I was sitting with my newspaper up so (illustrating with his hands) and my eyes closed. And the conductor came up and said, "Here, young fellow, don't go to sleep in this car; it's against the rules." I told him I wasn't asleep. I only had my eyes closed, because I didn't like to see the women stand up. Neither I do. Am I right? Um? Then there was a whole lot of these society ladies got in with market baskets and bundles. One of 'em had a basketful of onions and cheese; she was right in front of me, and held that basket right under my nose for spite for twenty minutes. At last I said to her, when the cheese seemed to be getting the best of the onions—I said, said I, "Would you object to my putting a little chloride of lime on the cover of that basket?" You ought to have heard that old woman! She was hotter than pepper-sass. Was I right? Um? Then there was another old lady crowded in; she had to stand, too. She was one of those old chromos that think everybody ought to get off the car as soon as she gets on. Presently she screamed out, "See here, gemmen, I think you is the most impolitest males I ever saw. It ain't right for all you men to sit down and make me stand up!" I didn't say nothing. I knew I was as comfortable as I could expect under the surrounding circumstances—of cheese and onions. Pretty soon she made another break; she said, "The idea of you men sitting down here and making me stand up! I like this!" she said. "Well, then," I said, "If you like it, old lady, what are you kicking about?" Was I right? Um? Then she got red in the face, and commenced to swear like a real lady can when she's mad, and said, "You call yourselves men!" And I said to her, "See here, lady; do you think it becomes your sex to enjoy all the privileges of a man?" And she said, "Yes, sir; I do." Then I told her to stand up and enjoy herself like a man. Was I right? Um?

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

All communications to be accompanied by the name, age and address of the writer.

A prize will be given in July for the best short story or letter. The writer must be under age. All communications should be accompanied by the name, age and address of the writer, and addressed to "Cousin Dorothy," FARMER'S ADVOCATE, London, Ont.

This week there are five children "wanting a corner." It may be possible to find places for two; the others will have to wait. Here is a true story told by a little girl of twelve years old. She says her home is on a mountain in British Columbia.

Experiences with Two Tramps.

Quite a while ago two tramps came to our place and wanted work, they also said they were hungry and had no money, my Mother gave them something to eat and sent them to the field to see if my Father wanted them to work, he said they could help to put the hay in cocks. They came in and sat down to supper with us, after supper my eldest brother George took them to the cabin to show them where to sleep for the night. They worked for three days, the third night one of them was late for supper so Papa asked the one that was at supper where he was, he said he was fixing his shoe and would soon be in, he did come in soon and had his supper, after supper they went to the cabin to go to bed one of them went to bed while the other stayed up and walked up and down the room, the one that was in bed was soon waked up by somebody shouting, when he found out it

was his companion he got up and locked the door because he might want to murder him, the fellow that was shouting came to the front door and wanted us to let him in, but we would not because we thought he was crazy, then he went around to the window and begged for us to let him in, because he said, "The devils are after me," my Mother told him if he did not go away she would shoot him, soon he ran off through the field, and then off to the woods where he stayed for three days, on the third morning a farmer's wife as she got up looked out of the window and saw him walking on the ridge-pole of the barn, she went out and told him to come in and get something to eat this he did and stayed around till dinner time, when the farmer's daughter went up to see her father and mother, as soon as she got there she sent a note down to my father and mother to come up, my father was sick so only my mother could go, when they got up there they got him to get into the rig, and the farmer's daughter's husband took him to Clinton, when they were half way down the Mountain he stopped the team saying "the angels are singing," when they got him to Clinton they took him to Mr. Jones' place, and he placed him under the doctor's care, when the doctor went away Mr. Jones gave him 24 hours to leave town, the next morning he stopped the stage with a razor, Mr. Burr the constable happened to be on that time so he took charge of him, he is now in the insane asylum.

Written by ELLA M. CARSON, Pavilion Farm, B. C.

This is a most thrilling and exciting story, and very well told, considering the age of the writer. The absence of "full stops" makes the reader rather breathless, but that can easily be remedied next time. We must make a "corner" for this letter from a little maiden of "ten years old" [Are you only ten, Nellie?]

Maple Farm, April 11th, 1895.

DEAR COUSIN DOROTHY,—

I will tell this story of my home I live a half a mile from Moorefield on a farm of 100 acres with ten acres of an Orchard in the front. It looks very nice when the trees are laden with apples and the village boys like to take some of them I live in a big frame house and a large barn at the back of it. In the front of the house we have a large lawn with lots of flowers around it. In the very middle of the farm is a river with lovely trees on both sides. My cousins from the city like to spend their summer holidays with us they like to sit under the big trees and have a nice little picnic all to ourselves. On the twenty-fourth of May I nearly always go fishing with my chums we hardly ever catch any but the best fun is to take our dinner to the side of the River and eat it and have a jolly time playing all kinds of games. Last twenty-fourth three other girls and me had an old leaky boat and I kept the water out while the rest made the boat go. All at once the boat hit a log and we all fell out but it wasn't very deep and we crawled out and went home as fast as we could without even saying good-bye and that ended all our fun.

Yours sincerely, NELLIE FERGUSON.

[There is a great scarcity of "commas" in the above letter, but the writing is very good. Do you know, children, I want you all to read the stories and letters carefully, and let me know, by the end of June, which one you think deserves the prize. It is going to be a difficult question to decide, I think. Here is a little story which has been translated from the Russian; it is called

"A Russian Parable."

There lived in Russia a man named Marko, who did not himself know how much money he possessed. He was called "Marko the Rich." When any great person came to see him there was the best of food and wine on the table, but all the alms given to beggars or pilgrims were kicks and rough words. Marko had a crippled sister who lived in a miserable hut on the other side of the road, and was often in sore want; but instead of helping her, he often threatened to pull her poor little hut down. Marko the Rich grew prouder and prouder, till at last he thought, "What grandeur is equal to mine? There is no man worthy to be my guest—I will ask our Lord Himself to eat at my table." So he made great preparations, brought out his golden dishes, spread a rich carpet on the steps of his house, and waited for our Lord to come and be his guest. The sun was just going down when a poor, pale, ragged, half-starved man came slowly along the road and craved shelter for God's sake. But Marko, angry at having made so much preparation in vain, thrust him away savagely. The beggar turned silently away and went across the road to the hovel of Marko's sister, where he was given food and shelter. Next morning Marko was startled when his sister appeared—no longer crippled—straight and well, and warmly dressed. "Brother," said she, "a strange thing has befallen me. Last night I shared my poor supper with a beggar, and, as we were eating, suddenly his face was all bright and beautiful. He laid his hand on my head and said unto me: 'Whoso receiveth My poor, receiveth Me,' and immediately I became as you see me now; but when I turned to thank Him, He was gone." Then Marko tore his hair, and cried bitterly, "That was He, then! He might, perhaps, have given me some good gift, too! If I had but known Him!"

But just then a voice, exceeding soft and gentle, but very terrible stole down through the air: "Only those can know Him, who are lowly and humble like Himself."