

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—Our lovely Autumn days are again with us. Oh, if we could keep them longer. The wind already whistles among the trees, blowing down their bright leaves to the ground, reminding us that winter will soon follow. Therefore, dear nieces, gather your treasures, look out for all the pretty leaves, flowers, grasses and ferns; they will brighten our homes during the winter. Let us not forget in our housekeeping that we should be homekeepers. We must endeavor to make our homes the dearest spot on earth, that the absent ones will love and rejoice to return to the cozy bright home.

There are many little things that contribute toward the beauty of a room which are not costly, more than they take time for construction. Those who sigh for costly furniture and grand houses, find that it is not in them that most comfort is found. Then let us have our plain carpets and furniture, with some flowers, vines, and hanging baskets in our rooms. Some houses are not adapted for keeping flowers during the winter, but pressed ferns and autumn leaves are something all can have, and when tastefully arranged in bouquets, wreaths, crosses, mottoes, and various devices, often produce effects as beautiful as a picture from the brush of a skillful painter. A very tasteful ornament consists of a cross made of wood, covered with a coating of mucilage and marble dust or sand sprinkled carefully over it. Fasten the base of it on a thin block of wood or thick card-board, which block cover with green moss. Form a wreath of small leaves by means of fine wire and twine up the cross. Mottoes make beautiful gifts from friend to friend, and are easily made. Gather the smallest leaves you can see, the dark maroon wild rose, bright red huckleberry, the notched miller, grape vine, clover, sorrel, in fact any that are pretty. Press carefully, draw with a pencil the outline of your letters on card-board, then carefully stick on the leaves, (with flour paste), and you will have mottoes, which, when framed under glass, are far prettier than the common chromos, now so much admired. The word "Welcome" is very pretty, made in this way, to hang in the hall or room facing it. When leaves are thoroughly dried they can be attached to a piece of coarse, flexible wire by the help of fine brown cotton covered wire, and by intermingling the varied and contrasting colors of the different maples, the oak, beech, and a few green ferns, handsome garlands can be formed to encircle picture frames, mirrors, or to hang in windows. Flower pots look very pretty with a small garland around them, or a single leaf or small clusters on the sides. Lovers of the beautiful will find much pleasure in using their lovely leaves in numerous ways, which space will not allow us to suggest this time.

MINNIE MAY.

RECIPES.

HOW TO PUT AN EGG IN A SMALL BOTTLE.

To accomplish this seemingly impossible act requires the following preparation:—You must take an egg and soak it in vinegar, and in process of time its shell will become quite soft, so that it may be extended lengthwise without breaking. Then insert it into the neck of a small bottle, and by pouring cold water upon it it will resume its former figure and hardness. This is really a complete curiosity, and baffles those who are not in the secret to find out how it is accomplished. If the vinegar used is not sufficiently strong to produce the required softness of shell, add one teaspoonful of strong acetic acid to every two tablespoonfuls of vinegar. This will render the egg perfectly flexible and easy of insertion into the bottle, which must then be filled with cold water.

A GOOD WAY TO KEEP APPLES ONE YEAR.

Years ago, when we produced large quantities of fruit, we always kept apples in excellent condition during the entire year. At a recent agricultural convention in Utica, N. Y., a quantity of fair apples were exhibited which were plump, fresh and of good flavor, quite as good as the same kind of apples are ordinarily on the approach of spring. The apples had been put up in refuse boxes the year previous, and in the following manner: A layer of dry sawdust was sprinkled at the bottom of the box, and then a layer of apples placed in so that they do not touch each other. Upon this was placed a layer of sawdust, and so on till the box was filled. The boxes, after being packed in this way, were placed on the wall in the cellar, up from the ground, where they kept perfectly, retaining their freshness and flavor until brought out.—N. Y. Herald.

TO MAKE GOOD COFFEE.

Get pure Java coffee—chicory ruins the flavor; if Java is too mild, use one-third choice Rio with it. Allow one heaping tablespoonful of coffee for every person, and allow two cupfuls of water for every tablespoonful of coffee. (It can be even stronger if desired.) Place the coffee in the steeper; if making coffee for four persons, use the white of one egg, throw it in the steeper on the dry grounds and shake it about until it is all covered with the coffee; pour on boiling water and set it on the back of the range, stopping up the spout with a soft cloth to prevent the steam from escaping; let it simmer five minutes, or not longer than ten. The yolk of the egg can be used the following morning. If the coffee is for eight persons, use one egg, white and yolk. Look in the steeper once before removing it from the range, and if the grounds have boiled up and are clinging to the sides of the steeper, push them down with a spoon. Serve the coffee boiling hot.

TAPIOCA CREAM.

Soak two tablespoonfuls of tapioca in a little water for two hours. Boil a quart of milk with a cupful of sugar in it, and, when scalding hot, add the tapioca, and let it boil up. Separate the whites and yolks of three eggs; beat the yolks, and add a little cold milk; then stir into the pudding, and set it off at once. Add a little salt, and a little flavoring if you prefer. Beat the whites to a stiff froth, and pour over top after it is poured into your serving-dish.

BAKING LARGE CAKES.

In making very large cakes, that require three or four hours to bake, an excellent way for lining the pan is the following: Fit three papers carefully, and butter them thoroughly; make a paste of equal parts of Graham and white flour, wet with water just stiff enough to spread easily with a spoon; place the first paper in the pan with the greased side down; spread the paste evenly over the paper about as thick as pie-crust. In covering the sides of the pan use a little paste to stick a portion of the paper to the top of the pan to keep it from slipping out of place; press the second paper carefully into its place with the greased side up, and next put in the third paper as you would into any baking pan, and pour in the cake. All except layer cakes should be covered with a paper cap when first put into the oven. Take a square of brown paper large enough to cover well the cake pan, cut off the corners, and lay a plait on four sides, fastening each with a pin, so as to fit nicely over your pan; this will throw it up in the centre, so that the cover will not touch the cake. Save the cap, as it can be used several times.

APPLE CUSTARD.

Pare and core six apples; set them in a pan with a very little water, and stew them until tender; then put them in a pudding-dish without breaking. Fill the centres with sugar and pour over them a custard made of a quart of milk, five eggs, four ounces of sugar, and a very little nutmeg; set the pudding-dish in a baking pan half full of water, and bake it about half an hour. Serve it either hot or cold, at the dinner.

RICE CREAM.—This is how I make rice cream. I put together four ounces of ground rice, two of white sugar, a few drops essence of vanilla; add a quart of fresh milk, two ounces of butter, boil from fifteen to twenty minutes, till it is smooth; pour into molds, serve when cold. Be careful and have the rice well done. Sometimes I add frosting of two eggs (the whites), and four tablespoonfuls of sugar, then put it in the oven to brown. It is very nice and cheap.

MYRA.

SHORT PASTE FOR TARTS.—Rub a quarter of a pound of butter into a pound of flour, wet it with water and two eggs, work it up to a good stiffness and roll it out once. For sweet tarts, two tablespoonfuls of sugar should be added.

PUFF PASTE.—To 1 pound of flour, take $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pound of butter; rub half the butter very fine into the flour, mix it into a paste with cold water; roll out the paste, put on the remainder of the butter, roll it up, leave it for half an hour; then roll it out for use; you may beat an egg very fine, and mix it with the water.

MRS. P.

The Uses of the Lemon.

Few people know the value of lemon juice. A piece of lemon bound upon a corn will cure it in a few days; it should be renewed night and morning. A free use of lemon juice and sugar will always relieve a cough. Most people feel poorly in the spring, and take medicine for relief, but if they would eat a lemon before breakfast for a week—with or without sugar, as they like—they would find it better than any medicine. Lemon juice used according to this recipe will cure consumption even after the doctors have given them up as not to be benefited: Put a dozen lemons into cold water and slowly bring to a boil; boil slowly until the lemons are soft, but not too soft, then squeeze until all the juice is extracted, add sugar to your taste and drink. In this way use one dozen lemons a day. If they cause pain, or loosen the bowels too much, lessen the quantity, and use only five or six a day until you are better, and then begin again with a dozen a day. After using five or six dozen, the patient will begin to gain flesh and enjoy food. Hold on to the lemons and still use them very freely several weeks more. Another use for lemons is for a refreshing drink in summer, or in sickness at any time. Prepare as directed above, and add water and sugar. But in order to have this keep well, after boiling the lemons, squeeze them and strain carefully; then to every half-pint of juice add one pound of loaf or crushed sugar, boil and stir a few minutes more until the sugar is dissolved, skim carefully, and bottle. You will get more juice from the lemons by boiling them, and the preparation keeps better.—Correspondence London Lancet.

Care of the Nails.

Parents are too often to blame for allowing their children to bite off their nails, and thus cause their little hands to become ugly. If your children follow this practice, a little strategy and kindness will generally remedy the matter. Compel them in the first place, to keep their hands from their mouths. Then carefully trim their nails for them with a proper knife, and appeal to their pride—and children are apt to have a good share of this—to keep their nails so; examine them every day until they are old enough to take care of their hands themselves, and you can be sure that the habit will, in nine cases out of ten, be effectually cured. Nails should be kept in length to the end of the fingers. When too short they give the fingers a stunted look, and if too long they are inconvenient. The nails are susceptible of a high polish. They should be well brushed when the hands are washed, and polished with a coarse towel. If dark or brown-looking dip them once or twice a day in the following, and then polish with a towel: Hydrochloric acid two drachms, soft water, one ounce. This will render them exceedingly white and handsome. When paring the nails be careful not to dig into the quick.

Rules for the Sick Room.

- (1.) Bring in fresh flowers or something new every day; even the commonest green thing is better than nothing.
- (2.) Don't talk about anything unpleasant. Talk about something that will lead the patient's thoughts away from his aches and pains, and leave him in a cheerful and restful state of mind.
- (3.) Follow the doctor's directions implicitly.
- (4.) Never ask a sick person what he wants to eat. If he asks for anything that will not injure him, get it if you can. Never bring him much at a time. A little bit in a dainty dish will sometimes tempt the appetite when a large quantity would cause nausea.
- (5.) Expect sick persons to be unreasonable. They will fret and complain, no matter what happens, and must be borne with patiently. House-keeper.