

Minnie May's Department.

Worry.

Things are pretty well balanced in this world, so far as comfort goes, and I begin to believe that, high or low, all have their tribulations. Fishes are hooked, worms are trodden on, birds are fired at. Worry is everywhere. Poor men's wives worry because the bread won't rise, or the stove don't draw, or the clothes-line breaks, or the milk burns, or the pane of glass is mended with putty, or they can't afford to hire help. Rich men's wives worry because the preserve dish is not the latest pattern, or because somebody finds out how a party dress is trimmed before the party happens, or because some grandee's wife overlooks them, or because their help sauced 'em, breaks up tea-sets, spoils dinners, gets drunk, and cuts up sheets into underclothes. Causes vary, but worry averages about the same. The scale of miles is different on different maps, and places remain just as far apart, and so do humanity and content.

Social Life Deceptions.

DEAR MINNIE MAY,—This world is full of deception. I see it every day and it makes my heart ache many and many a time. I wish the time would come when every one would do as he would be done by! Then there would be no need to doubt our neighbors or friends, but we should have full confidence in them, and feel respect and love for all. Let us, dear friends, try this plan, and who knows how much good may come of it?"

I have known some ladies who, when they met you, would press you with all apparent earnestness,—“Do, dear, come home with me to spend the day. We shall have such a good visit!” And as soon as you had passed on would say,—“I am glad she refused to come, for I really did not want her to-day. I must finish making over my old dress, and she thinks I give out all my sewing.” Now, how much better to have let her friend go home uninvited, than to act out two lies. Or she better have told the truth. Let us try to act in a straightforward manner, never asking any one we do not want to have come. This is only one little instance of deceit out of a whole multitude I might mention, did time and space permit

J. B. C.

Recipes.

STEWED KIDNEYS.

Soak the kidneys in water; dry them in a towel and cut fine; dredge them well with flour, and put them in a saucepan with a piece of butter; when it is browned in the butter put in salt, pepper, and a little boiling water; cover the pan closely, and stew till tender; add some wine and catsup. Serve hot.

FANNIE WALKER.

HARD BISCUITS.

Warm two ounces of butter in as much skimmed milk as will make a pound of flour into a very stiff paste; beat it with a rolling-pin and work it very smooth; roll it thin, and cut it into round biscuits; prick them full of holes with a fork. About six minutes will bake them. ELIZABETH HORTON.

MINCE PIES.

5 quarts meat, 10 quarts apples, 5 quarts boiled cider, 2 quarts sugar, 1 quart molasses, 1 pint vinegar, 1 cup suet or butter, 1 tablespoonful of allspice, 1 do. cloves, 6 do. cinnamon, 3 do. pepper, 2 do. salt, 1 do. ginger, 2 lbs. raisins. Then shut your eyes and throw in as many more as you like. This will make five gallons. Cook all together. Stir, to keep from burning.

GINGER SNAPS.

1 cup molasses, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of brown sugar, 1 cup butter, 1 teaspoonful soda, 1 teaspoonful ginger. Roll them, and bake in a quick oven; dissolve the soda in a tablespoonful of hot water.

FRENCH POLISH.

1 oz. of white wax, 1 oz. of gum copal, 1 oz. of gum arabic, 4 oz. gum impantine, 2 oz. linseed oil.

TO CORN BEEF.

Put into a boiler enough water to cover your meat when in barrel, and bring it to a boil. Then dip each piece of meat in it, letting it remain about a minute; after dipping meat, add to water 6 lbs. of salt and 2 ounces of saltpetre for each 100 lbs. of meat, and bring it to a boil; skim it and let it cool, then pour on meat in barrel.

Latest Fashions.

The newest veils are quite long, and have square corners below, while the top is rounded, hemmed and a string run through the hem to tie the veil round the bonnet. They are made of black Chantilly net, like fine tulle without dots, and are finished with an inch-wide hem that has a row of fine tiny gold beads at the top of the hem for bonnets that have gilt trimmings, while jet beads are used on veils for other bonnets. They measure three-quarters of a yard in length when finished. They are tied round the bonnet, fastened behind the neck to make them smooth across the face, and the right-hand corner is then thrown back over the shoulder.

The small caps that young ladies, and particularly brides wear, this season, are generally composed of very narrow old lace, which is arranged round and round on a net foundation, and then a large rosette, resembling one on a baby's bonnet, is added on the left side. This rosette is made of pink or blue pinked-out silk, and looks like an enormous cockade. This style of cap requires the wearer's hair to be cut short in front, and frizzled or curled, so as to look light and feathery. For those who adopt smooth hair over the forehead, the caps with round crowns and fan-shaped curtains are more in character; the ribbons used for trimming these is fringed out, so that, there being no sudden lines when the bow comes to an end, the effect is very light and feathery-looking.

Let the ladies erect a monument to the inventor of the polonaise! After being cast into the shadow for a year or more by its French neighbors, the basque and overskirt, the polonaise has reappeared, more beautiful and more useful than ever before, with its new names of “Princesse” and “Marguerite.” Let the economical take a good, wide, old-fashioned skirt, place upon it a paper pattern of either of these two shapes, and thereby secure an excellent and useful garment to wear with a black skirt or whatever color it may match. Many a good skirt of silk or Cashmere consigned to the family piece-pag, may thus be resuscitated in the polonaise. Particularly does this advice apply to the little people's costumes. Otherwise there is no change in children's fashions, except in material. For outside wraps, little girls from 8 to 15, wear the fashionable French sacque, princesse dress, kilt skirts and long pelisses. Great simplicity is observed in making these graceful wraps. The dark cloth colors used are no longer overloaded with masses of embroidery and other trimming. It is considered more stylish to have the edges simply bound, hemmed or corded. The favorite fabrics for costumes are Cashmere, Spitzbergin cloth, and any variety of camel's hair, with silk or wool sleeves and skirts. Another style is the long, half-fitting sacque, with broad back and square side pockets, resembling boy's coats. It is either single or double-breasted, and is trimmed with wide Titan braid or fur. The princesse dress is worn by mother's as well as their young daughters. The front has the waist and skirt in one, may be either single or double-breasted, and is buttoned its entire length. The upper part of the back is a long-waisted Marguerite basque, with a sash across the end of it, under which the kilt skirt is added.

An Improvement on Jute.

Perhaps many of our readers do not know how useful the hair is that falls from the head when combed, and would be surprised to find how soon they could accumulate an ounce by carefully saving it. In doing so they should shake the dust from it, and have a little box placed on their toilette table, and will find it just as easy to put it in that as to throw it away. When they have two or three ounces gathered take to the hair-dresser and have it made into a nice switch, curls, prim puffs or braids for 50 or 75 cts. an ounce. When done they will dispense with that horrible jute which not only looks untidy but is injurious to the head.

Soap on the Face.

There is rarely, if ever, any need of using soap on the face, except for very dirty people, or where there is much oil secreted by the skin. Pure soft water is generally quite sufficient. As a rule, avoid the very free use of soap on the skin, except the mildest kinds. Face powders injure the skin just as dirt does, by obstructing pores. If there is any poison in the face powder, as there often is, it only adds poison to dirt, and makes the matter so much the worse.

How to Spend our Winter Evenings.

The pleasure of winter evenings is mostly connected with friendly gatherings, and the delightful interchange of interest and sympathy. Though it is very desirable that something useful and worth having should be got out of the winter evenings it must not be forgotten that enjoyment may be gained as well. “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” I take great pleasure in relating to you how we spent evenings last winter:—About a dozen or more of us would manage to meet on a particular night once a week, at each other's houses, when we made a rule of wearing our ordinary dresses, and the refreshments provided were limited to sandwiches and cake, with a glass of wine or something.

We would break up our meeting at a stated hour. We would have all sorts of amusements to suit the various tastes, such as music, dancing, games, discussions, recitations, charades, reading and spelling. We constantly varied the programme of the evening—one night we would relate the most peculiar incident that happened in our own individual experience. On two or three occasions we chose a particular author, and each one gave an opinion of him and his works and illustrations. Another night we held a discussion upon the *Advocate*, which was read by many of our number. Altogether, we had some very interesting and beneficial evenings, and we are eagerly looking forward to a repetition of them. Now, I hope some of your young readers will inaugurate the new year by uniting in circles and spending the long winter evenings in this amusing and instructive manner.

J. W. MILLS, Bosanquet.

Importance of Reading.

In connection with the above correspondent's good suggestions on “spending the winter evenings,” a few words on the importance of reading will be to the point:—No matter how obscure the position in life of an individual, if he can read, he may at will put himself in the best society the world has ever seen. He may converse with the greatest heroes of the past; with all the writers in prose and poetry. He may learn how to live, how to avoid the errors of his predecessors, and to secure blessings, present and future, to himself. He may reside in a desert, far away from the habitations of man; in solitude, where no human eye looks upon him with affection or interest, where no human voice cheers him with its animating tones, if he has books to read he can never be alone. He may choose his company, and the subject of conversation, and thus become contented and happy, intelligent, wise and good. Young people should heed these truths, but not forget to guard yourself against fruitless reading.

Nine tenths of the reading done is, probably, to pass time, or procure a pleasant excitement for unoccupied hours. Few who read do it with any definite purpose of increasing their stock of knowledge or ideas, and few, therefore accomplish any useful purpose by reading. On the contrary, it becomes to them a kind of dissipation, the reaction from the interest of which leaves them more dull and unsatisfied than before. Few stories but possess some motive worth tracing, some character with points of interest, if we read it carefully and with the intention of finding out what there is in it deserving of praise or blame. But the army of story readers stop for nothing till they get to the end of the volume, and know nothing in regard to what they have read, except that all the troubles came to a happy termination, and the hero and heroine were married at last. Descriptions of natural scenery, details of individual character, the careful working out of results from the incidents and individualities grouped together—all these are “skipped,” overlooked, never thought of; in fact, the book itself is forgotten, or, at least, no clear idea of its features is retained after forty-eight hours have passed.

Such reading as this is worse than useless—it wastes valuable time, and furnishes the brain with nothing in return. If a book is not worth reading with care, if it adds nothing to our store of knowledge, if it supplies no food for thought or discussion, it is not worth reading at all. Indeed, this is a very good test to apply to a book, and one which, if it could be properly applied by the class of readers who would be most benefited by it, would reduce their stock of literature to a very low ebb.