

Minnie May's Dep't.

MY DEAR NIECES:—Another year has almost gone and Christmas will soon be here again. Does not everyone with a heart in their bosom feel a glow of benevolence at the very mention of Christmas. We should all strive to make it brighter and happier for those around us, for we all have our home circle, our friends, or some poor or unfortunate one that we can do something for to ease the burden, or help them to forget the past. Good wishes, kind words and little gifts all contribute to make the day pleasant. I know, my dear girls, you have only a limited supply of pocket money to spend in gifts, but that is just what makes it so delightful, thinking and planning how to make it go farthest, for all my nieces are clever with needles, scissors or crochet needle, and can fashion any pretty thing from a copy, and with the variety you have to choose from in the last number of the *ADVOCATE*, it will not be difficult to select. To a house-keeper, such small things as a jar of honey, a basket of apples, a print of sweet butter, or a loaf of your own delicious home-made bread are graceful and acceptable offerings. We do not value the gift for its intrinsic worth; for who would not rather have a small gift, fashioned by a friend, than anything more costly only purchased? All these should be thought over and arranged before, long before; for our own household cares multiply at that season, and some are apt to be overlooked or forgotten. Much of our work has to be done at odd times, when no one sees us, so they take longer to complete. Our illustration describes the situation. Bessie, the maid, has come to call the children to tea. And, for the moment, they think it is some one else, by the half-worked slipper concealed behind the little girl's dress, and the hasty movement of the boy putting back the pictures into the portfolio. Evidently Bessie is in the secret by the way she guards her voice with uplifted hand, lest anything should be overheard. Where many young people live near, many pleasant parties can be organized for a dance, a drive, or, if the weather does not permit, games in-doors. I shall give you a description of one of the most popular games just now with our American cousins, and I do not know why it should not be very popular with us. It is called a "Donkey Party," and is played as follows:—Cut a donkey from brown paper, about four feet high. Any boy or girl clever with pencil can draw a sketch of one. Do not draw any tail on it. Now fasten a sheet tightly by the four corners, and paste the pattern of the donkey smoothly upon the sheet. Have as many tails cut as you have guests, with the name of each one written on it, and a pin through

one end. Place these in a little basket. One takes charge of the game, and blindfolds each one in turn, as in blind-man's-buff. Then the person blindfolded is given a tail, which they hold by the pin. They are turned around three times in the middle of the room, and left free to pin on the tail. Each one takes a turn in the same way, and it is funny to see how very wide of the place all the tails are. Whoever succeeds in pinning the tail nearest the proper place gets a prize, and the person who pins the tail farthest away gets what is called a "booby prize." The materials are so easily prepared, and the prizes need not be costly—a fan, or pretty box of bonbons, or any pretty trifle. MINNIE MAY.



SURPRISED.

Minnie May offers a prize of a beautiful silver lace pin for the best essay on "Recreation for our Girls and Boys." All communications to be in by the 25th of Dec.

It is with deep regret we chronicle the death of Mrs. John Robertson (nee Miss Jessie Robertson), a very clever writer, and for many years a contributor to our Magazine.

LIFE.—If we die to-day, the sun will shine as brightly, the birds will sing as sweetly, to-morrow. Business will not be suspended a moment, and the great mass will not bestow a thought upon our memories. "Is he dead?" will be the solemn inquiry of a few, as they pass to their work. But no one will miss us, except our immediate connections, and in a short time they will forget and laugh as merrily as when we sat beside them. Thus shall we all, now active in life, pass away. Our children crowd closely behind us, and they will soon pass away. In a few years not a living creature can say, "I remember him." We lived in another age, and did business with those who slumber in the tomb. Thus is life! How rapidly it passes.

PRIZE ESSAY.**How to Make Christmas Happy.**

BY MISS ANNIE E. SCOTT, ST. CROIX, HANTS CO., NOVA SCOTIA.

"At Christmas time, away with sorrow;
We'll have naught but jollity."

What more fitting than that this day, which commemorates the birth of the Saviour of the world, should be one of universal rejoicing. That glad burst of angelic song which fell on the ears of the watching shepherds on the starry plains of Bethlehem, seems to echo in every heart, and each one feels that it is indeed a time "of peace and good-will." How strongly the charm of this glad and gracious season is felt in our home circles. And there are so many things that go to make Christmas happy, both in sumptuous and humble homes. There are the glad reunions of families and friends; the affectionate remembrances, expressed in the giving and receiving of presents; the beauty of tasteful decorations, arranged about our rooms by busy, loving fingers; the varied and bountiful supply of tempting good things on our tables; the infinite number of amusements; and withal, jolly old Santa Claus, making the hearts of the children to sing for joy. The merry laugh and kindly wish go round; the silvery tinkle of sleigh-bells and glad voices of merry-makers on skates and toboggans, come wafted to our ears—the very spirits of mirth and jollity are holding high carnival. Even the fire seems to feel the influence of the occasion, and burns and crackles more cheerily than ever. But if we are selfish in our happiness, taking no thought of the destitute and suffering outside our own happy homes, and, in our thoughtlessness, ignoring the divine words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me," then we are not happy in the highest sense of the word. Of

course, we all know that charity begins at home; but, let me add, that it should not be allowed to stay there.

I must say a few words, in passing, to the owners of the busy brains and fingers who have been so patiently employed in the making of those presents, that mean so much to dear ones. These Christmas tokens may not be expensive. Indeed, their cost must be regulated by the length of your purses, but when they are expressions of real love and remembrance, they are powerful agents in helping to make Christmas happy. In the matter of presents, by the way, none who have the privilege of reading Minnie May's Department of the *FARMER'S ADVOCATE*, need be at a loss for suggestions as to their preparation. Those described there require but a small outlay; the directions for making are so plainly given, and withal they are so dainty and pretty, that I quite long to be working at them.