

### Minnie May's Department.

**MY DEAR NIECES.**—A beautiful behavior is the finest of the fine arts. It is better than a fine form and beautiful features. Rudeness and gruffness will bar doors and shut hearts against us, while kindness and gentle behavior are acceptable everywhere.

A person's manner is indicative of his tastes and temper, as well as the society to which he is accustomed, and must come from the heart or it will make no lasting impression, for no amount of polish will disguise the truth.

The cheapest of all commodities is politeness, but it goes a long way. Dr. Johnson says: "A man has no more right to say an uncivil thing than to act one; no more right to say a rude thing to another, than to knock him down."

It is needful, then, for parents and the older members of every household to set a good example to the children, to whom *example* is much better than *precept*, which fact is too easily forgotten, or we would order our actions and our lives as we would have them order theirs. The eyes of the child "are ever on the parents, not to criticise, not to censure or blame, but to try and imitate."

Purity and excellence of character are far nobler than great power, intellect or genius. Without sterling goodness, all the grace, elegance and art in the world will fail to save or elevate any individual. Let us look to ourselves, then, for the children are more apt to grow up—acting, not as we have told them to act, but the same as they have seen us act.

MINNIE MAY.

### Work Basket.

A SUMMER CLOUD may be crocheted of Shetland floss wool worked in shell pattern. A recent specimen intended for seaside wear was of a light blue, nearly three yards long and about two feet wide, and was edged all round with a plain row of scallops, each containing nine trebles. A chain of 361 stitches was first made. This allowed for sixty shells; each shell formed of six trebles. The second row was begun by a double crochet (D. C.) exactly in the middle of the first shell of the first row. It was ended by fastening the last shell of the second row in the middle of the last shell of first row, and finishing with three chain. The third row was begun by making 3 chains precisely in the same hole in which the second row started, and working in the same spot a shell of six trebles, finishing it with a D. C. on the top of the last shell of the second row. At the end of this row, after making a D. C. on the top of the last shell of the second row, another shell was worked in the opening at the base of the 3rd chain, and was finished with a D. C. on top of this three chain. The second and third rows were repeated throughout. The cloud was worked with a hook, about No. 8, and took twelve ounces of the floss. A fair worker stitching steadily at it should do it readily in two days. Using only odds and ends of time it would take a week or a fortnight.

**PLASTER FIGURES IMITATING MARBLE.**—There are two methods by which plaster figures may be converted into very excellent imitations of marble, both very simple.

1st. Into a quart of soft water put one ounce

of white soap; let the soap be grated and dissolved, and the water must be at least milk-warm, using also a glazed vessel rather than one of metal. Add to this mixture one ounce of white beeswax cut into very thin scales or slices, and by heating it slightly the whole will become well incorporated. Now take the figure, and having made sure that it is perfectly clean and dry, suspend it by a twine string, and then dip it all over in the compound, which will probably be absorbed immediately. In a few minutes stir the mixture, and dip a second time; this will generally be sufficient to coat it well. Put it away in a clean place where it can dry and harden for a week or longer, and then rub it in every part with a soft rag until it is sufficiently polished.

2nd. Prepare a wash by soaking a small quantity of plaster of Paris in a strong solution of alum; bake this in an oven, and then grind it to a fine powder. When you are ready to use it, mix a little of this with water, and spread it evenly and quickly over the surface of your subject. This should be a thin wash, and will set like a coat of marble, taking a high polish. If one coat is not satisfactory, let another be given in like manner.—[Harper's Bazar.

**PARLOR ORNAMENT.**—An exchange says: "We saw, in the parlor of a friend, a very beautiful conceit. It is, of course, the fancy of a lady, and consists of the burr of a pine tree placed in a wine glass half full of water, and from between the different layers of the burr are shooting forth green blades—bright, beautiful, refreshing. For a little thing, we have seen nothing that so pleased us, by its beauty and novelty. And the secret is this: The burr was found dried and open; the different circles were sprinkled with grass seed, and it was placed in a wine glass with water in as above. In a few days the moisture and nourishment gave the burr life and health, the different circles closed and buried within themselves the grass seed, and a few days more gave to the seed also life, sprout and growth, and now a pyramid of living green, beautifully relieved by the sombre hue of the burr, is the result—as pretty and novel a parlor ornament as we have for a long while seen. We do not know whether the idea was original with the lady, but we do know that its success is beautiful."

**PRETTY HOME-MADE NAPKINS.**—Get two and a quarter yards of white drilling, or any kind of white goods preferred, and cut a dozen napkins, making them large enough so that a margin can be raveled for fringe. Hunt a pretty corner braiding pattern from some old magazine, get some tough smooth paper, cut it square, the size you want the napkins, place it on a table with a folded cloth under it, place the braiding pattern in one corner of the square paper, take a pin and punch holes all along the lines of the pattern, through both papers. Do the same at the other three corners. For a center, take a pretty leaf from some shrub, lay it on the center of the paper, and trace all round the edges of it with the pin, and as many of the ribs and veins as you like. You will now have a pattern which I will tell you how to use in the absence of a knowledge of stamping.

If you have no chrome yellow or any kind of powder, take a soft burned brick and pound a piece of it to a fine powder. Place the pattern

on the napkin, take a woolen cloth, dip in the powder, and rub over the pin-holes, having the rough side of them up. After all have been carefully rubbed over, lift the paper, and the pattern will be found on the napkin with the powder. Now take a lead pencil and follow the lines, making a permanent line. Get ten cents' worth of red table linen, ravel the red threads and chain stitch the napkin, using the threads double. When done, ravel the edges of the napkins for fringe. If there is no old magazine available that contains a corner braiding pattern, you can make that of leaves also. Try them and see if they are not pretty. They need not cost more than thirty cents, not counting the time spent upon them, and after you have succeeded with them it will stimulate a desire to ornament many other articles. A vine with leaves and tendrils would be pretty, traced upon a blue flannel skirt of white yarn. Such work will develop a taste for drawing, and cultivate a love for copying from nature.

Light lap robes for babies' carriages are of linen scrim with borders of drawn-work and a scant ruffle of Irish point around the edges, or of Madras muslin, trimmed with a gathered frill to match. The latter is finished with deep scallops button holed with silk corresponding to the darker color in the Madras fabric.

**SUMMER CURTAINS.**—A very stylish, graceful design for sitting room or bedroom curtains recently originated in the New York Art Rooms, and full directions are given here for making a pair. The curtains are inexpensive, the full cost for two deep windows being about \$3.50. The materials required are two yards of cretonne, ten or twelve yards of cheese cloth and sufficient lace for finishing the front edges of the curtain and making an insertion across the top of each. Be careful in purchasing the cheese cloth to get a piece which is evenly woven, and without black threads. Scrim may be used instead of cheese cloth, if preferred, but it is more expensive. In buying the cretonne get two patterns which harmonize, buying one yard of each. Cut each yard in four pieces, lengthwise. Each curtain has two pieces at the top, with an insertion of lace in between. One curtain will only be described. Of each pattern of cretonne take one piece, stitch the lace insertion between them, turn down the edge, about an inch, of the one intended for the top of the curtain, and stitch the cheese cloth on the other piece with a pudding-bag seam. Make a hem twelve inches deep on the bottom of the curtain. The lace should be four inches wide.

Lay the lace flat on the right side of the curtain, an inch from the edge, with the straight edge of the lace toward the selvedge, and the pointed edge turning backward. Stitch it on, fold down the hem on the wrong side, and catch it fast with long stitches. Cut a V-shaped piece out of the lace at the lower corner of the curtain, seam the lace together, and sew it across the bottom of the curtain.

A pretty and useful rug can be made of a piece of stair carpet. Put fringe on each end. Often when the stair carpet is so much worn that a new one is necessary there will be a yard or more that is good enough to use for the rug. If you choose you can put the fringe all around it.