

Minnie May's Dep't.

MY DEAR NIECES:—Home is always a woman's first thought, and many anxious moments are spent in devising means and ways to beautify them. In summer our country homes are always lovely; the outlook from each window, over fields of waving grain and green pastures, is ever pleasing. But in winter, how different. Snow, snow, everywhere; bleak and desolate. So we must turn our attention to making the inside look as bright and cosy as possible. A stand of pretty, green window plants adds much to the attractiveness of a room, but it must be kept neat—all the dead leaves picked away, and the outside of the pots free from moss. The stand should be on strong rollers, so it can be moved from the window on very cold nights. When we consider the very weak quality of winter sunlight, and how many days he refuses to shine at all, we must select such plants as are beautiful in foliage, or others that will bloom even without much sun. Ferns stand first for indoor cultivation, water and light being all they ask to thrive well. Secure the roots from the woods, with as much earth as possible adhering to them. Then bring enough of the same soil to fill up the pot. Clip off all the leaves, water well, and soon they will begin to put forth their graceful fronds. Hyacinths are easily grown. Plant in pots about four inches in diameter. Water well and put in a dark cupboard or closet. Continue the watering every third day. When shoots appear about four inches high remove to the light, and soon flower knots form and expand, filling the room with delicious fragrance. Hanging baskets are objectionable because of the slop they cause in watering them properly; and if more than one sort of plant is put in some will flourish, others will not; besides, they take up too much light by being hung just in the window. Geraniums are favorites for window culture, but give but little return for all the care bestowed on them; and they positively refuse to bloom only in a very strong light, which we cannot always command; but there is a large family of scented-foilage geraniums, known as Oak-leaf, Crowfoot, Nutmeg and Silver-edge, well worthy of a place on account of the hardy nature and freedom from insects.

Begonias bloom with very little sunshine; and if their blossoms are tiny they make up for it in the quantity; for every tip of the branch has its clusters of little pink blossoms. Calla lilies will bloom well if matured freely and planted in good light soil. Remember, my dear girls, I do not advocate cultivating flowers in windows to the exclusion of air, light and sunshine; these should be admitted freely every day to every room in the house. But some of you can perhaps command an attic, or hall window, where your pets can grow unmolested; and, as they look their loveliest, bring a pot of green and beauty on the centre of your table, where all can admire and enjoy it.

MINNIE MAY.

Minnie May offers a prize of a beautiful gold brooch for the best essay on "How to make Xmas Happy." All communications must be in by the 25th November.

Mother—And the serpent, as a punishment for tempting Eve, was made to crawl all the rest of his life. Bobby—Well, mamma, how did he get along before?

Recipes.

PUMPKIN PUDDING.

Stew slices of pumpkin until soft, strain and mash fine; add three well-beaten eggs and one pint of milk, sugar and spice to taste; bake in a moderate oven, with some bits of butter on top.

CRAB APPLE JELLY.

Fill your preserving kettle with fruit, cover with water, and boil until all are broken; strain through a colander, then run the juice through a jelly bag. Weigh the juice, and for every pound of juice add one of white sugar, and boil until a drop will stiffen on a saucer. Pour into small jelly pots and tie down.

MACARONI WITH TOMATOES.

Boil one pound of macaroni until soft; cut in small pieces; add a small piece of butter, cover with grated cheese, and pour over all some tomatoes served with salt and pepper. Bake for twenty minutes.

STEWED PARSNIPS.

Scrape and slice about one inch thick; boil until soft in enough water to cover them; mix a small lump of butter with a tablespoon of flour, and stir in before removing from the fire.

CABBAGE BAKED.

Boil a nice white cabbage fifteen minutes; then change the water for more boiling; cook until tender and set aside until cold; chop fine; add two well-beaten eggs, a tablespoonful of butter, three of cream, pepper and salt. Stir all well together and bake in a pudding-dish. Serve hot.

GREEN CORN PUDDING.

Scrape from the ear, not cutting too closely, to one pint of corn; add one quart of milk, three eggs, a little suet, sugar to taste and a small piece of butter. Bake two hours.

ARTICHOKES.

Scrape one dozen artichokes; boil until tender; have ready some white sauce, flavored with just a dash of nutmeg; pour over and serve.

BAKED PEARS.

One dozen pears, wipe clean and set in a baking dish, large end down; put a little water in the pan to prevent burning. Bake until tender, and eat with cream and sugar.

STEWED CELERY.

Wash well one head of celery; cut the tender part into one-inch lengths; stew until tender in as little water as possible; when done, thicken with a tablespoonful of butter, rubbed into half an ounce of flour; give it a boil up and serve.

WAKEFIELD PUDDING.

Cut the crust from four slices of bread, and place one of them in the bottom of a deep pudding dish. Spread over this a tablespoon of raspberry jam, then another slice, until all the bread is used. Beat two eggs, and add half a pint of milk; stir one ounce corn starch in; pour over the bread and bake for half an hour.

BOILED ONIONS.

Choose them all one size; peel and boil in two waters until tender; drain and put in the dish from which they will be served; pour over a few spoonfuls of melted butter or white sauce; or they can be baked as potatoes are, and peeled before serving.

STEWED CHICKEN WITH CREAM DRESSING.

Cut up a fowl (an old one will do), as for a fricassee, partly cover with water and stew slowly until tender, take out, pour in the pan a cup of cream, a tablespoonful of bread crumbs and half a chopped onion parboiled. Heat and pour over the chicken.

CABBAGE.

Cut in quarters; pick all the coarse leaves; cut out the stalk; wash well and boil until tender in a wire basket, being careful to change the water. Drain well and add a little butter, salt and pepper.

MILK SOUP.

Four potatoes, two onions, two ounces butter, one-quarter ounce salt, pepper to taste, one pint of milk, three tablespoonfuls tapioca. Boil slowly all the vegetables with two quarts of water. Strain through the colander. Add milk and tapioca. Boil slowly and stir constantly for twenty minutes.

QUINCE PUDDING.

Put one tablespoon of butter into one pint of flour; add a teaspoon of baking powder; mix to the consistency of biscuit dough; roll thin and add quinces, sliced and pared; sprinkle with sugar; roll over and over, put into a mould and steam two hours. Serve with sweet sauce.

FIG PUDDING.

Chop fine half a pound of suet, chop half a pound of figs, and mix with it. Add half a pound of bread crumbs, half a pound of sugar and a teaspoonful of salt, and three eggs. Steam for two hours.

HUNGRY CAKE.

One pound flour, three-quarters pound sugar, half pound butter, one pound currants, four eggs, one cup milk, or cream, two teaspoonfuls baking powder (Royal). Beat up well first the butter; then put the sugar in, then the yolks (well beaten), then the milk, eight whites beaten stiff, fruit and flour last; bake in shallow tin; a few raisins with the currants are an improvement; or use citron peel without fruit.

H. M. COLDWELL.

Answers to Inquirers.

PERPLEXED.—What is the most courteous way for a young lady to invite a young gentleman, with whom she is corresponding, to spend Christmas with her and family at their residence? You do not require a certain form of invitation for that, especially when you are now corresponding with him. Of course you can only invite him with your mother's consent, and the invitation should come from her, either writing herself or you writing for her. No gentleman would think of accepting any girl's invitation to her home without being assured of the approval of her parents.

M. G.—Arkansas is pronounced Ark-ahn-sah with the accent on the last syllable. The name is Indian, and was written phonetically by the early missionaries, so that there can be no mistake about it.

THE MAN FROM CHICAGO'S OPINION.—"In the train between London and Dover," writes Mr. G. A. Sala, *en route* for the sunny South, "I had the advantage of conversing with a gentleman from Chicago, who inquired my destination. I replied that it was Rome. 'Rather risky just now down there, ain't it?' he rejoined. I answered that I had travelled a good deal in earthquake lands, and that in the matter of earthquakes, tempests, fevers, and so forth, I held with the old poet that 'there is no armour against Fate,' and was accustomed to take my chance. My companion from Chicago cogitated for a while, munching the end of his cigar, and then again broke silence. 'Wal,' he remarked, 'maybe you'll be as safe in Rome as anywhere else, for all the old buildings look as if they'd been earthquake over and over again, and the new ones ain't worth earthquaking.'"