

Minnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—It is our duty at all seasons of the year, particularly during the tedious winters, to make our homes pleasant and attractive. The woman who has not a tasteful, inviting home, fails because she does not care enough about it to work for it.

Beautiful art can only be inspired by pure and beautiful thoughts, and unless some elements of taste and beauty are provided for the leisure hours at home, how can the young be expected to have pure thoughts, pure hearts and a love of refinement.

It is not necessary to have costly furniture, expensive wares, fine paintings and elegant draperies, to produce pleasant effects, but there are many ways of brightening and adorning rooms that are really inexpensive.

One important point is to have the colors harmonize, and have nothing too good to use. Give your apartments expression—character. Allow nothing to look isolated, but let all present an air of sociability. Why not have some elegance and beauty even in the humblest homes? For these do not belong alone to the homes of the rich. Nothing can aid in this desirable work as easily, cheaply and effectually as flowers; they are God's gift, and belong alike to rich and poor, giving gratification beyond price.

Encourage a taste for art as well as for nature—hang pictures on your walls, and dot here and there pretty ornaments, or bits of bright color in some form. We do not mean cardboard trash of bygone days; but in almost every household there are odds and ends which may, with very little additional expense, be converted into useful, pretty articles. "Economy is itself a great income," so we should learn to make the best of everything we have. As we have already told you, a little time and very little money will transform old and common articles of furniture into new and stylish ones, by the aid of ebonizing and bronze paints, etc., which process we have given in a previous number, and as to fancy and useful articles our Work Basket furnishes many good hints.

Help, dear girls, to make your homes so easy and cheerful, that if we visit you we may be joyous and free, feeling ourselves in harmony with our surroundings.

By brightening our homes we make others happy, and an effort in this direction lifts us above ourselves, and we are indeed blessed.

MINNIE MAY.

Work Basket.

A DECORATIVE ACORN.—If an acorn be suspended by a piece of thread within half an inch of the surface of some water contained in a hyacinth glass, and so permitted to remain without being disturbed, it will, in a few months, burst, and throw a root down into the water, and shoot upward its straight and tapering stem, with beautiful little green leaves. A young oak tree growing this way on the mantel shelf of a room is a very elegant and interesting object. I have seen several oak trees, and also a chestnut tree thus growing, but all of them, however, have died after a few months, probably owing to the water not being changed sufficiently often to afford them the

necessary nourishment from the matter contained in it.

FANCY TABLE.—A table for the parlor which is the fancy of the hour, and which is pretty enough to be popular for a long time, and to be more than a passing fancy, is made of any kind of well-seasoned wood. It may have a square or diamond shaped top; it has round legs, put on each corner; there are braces also that go from one leg to the other. A beautiful covering for one is dark green velvet; this is tacked down on the under side. If economy is no object, pretty silver clasps can be put on each corner. The legs are wound with alternate bands of the velvet and of cardinal satin ribbon; the ribbon is tied in a bow at each corner; the braces are bound with the velvet alone; the wood of which the table is made is nowhere exposed to view. This is a handsome table to stand in a bay window and to hold a small piece of statuary. The color of the velvet must of course be in accord with the general tone of the parlor, but the shades of olive, so popular now, are pretty with almost anything. There is a richness about the greens of the present day which brighter colors do not possess. —[Evening Post.

TABLE COVERS.—Very pretty covers for small tables may be made of various dark rich shades of double-faced Canton flannel. A handsome and effective one is thus described: A yard square of olive-green Canton flannel was button-holed all round the edge with gold-colored silk, the stitches being taken some little distance from each other. A band of garnet flannel three inches wide was placed at a distance of four inches from the edge of the cover. This band or border, before it was placed on the olive-green flannel, was first embroidered at intervals, little Japanese fans and butterflies alternating with each other. Each fan was about the size of a silver dollar; its outlines only were embroidered with stem-stitch with gold-colored silk, their handles being worked also with the same color. The butterflies were embroidered in various colors, the upper and lower wing generally of some bright, contrasting colors with gold spots. This border was fastened with feather-stitching on the table-cover; and in each corner of the cover were embroidered with crewels, groups of field flowers, daisies, and sunflowers in two corners, cat-tails and poppies in the remaining ones. One can buy beautiful designs of flowers, etc., already worked, which require only to be sewed neatly on your material; these can often be purchased most reasonably, and at a cost less than you could procure the materials for working them, thereby saving all the time it would take otherwise while embroidering the design. A table cover of garnet flannel with a band of old gold would be very pretty, and look very handsome with groups of daisies in each corner.

GLOVE SACHET.—For a glove sachet the newest and most useful shape is long, double the width, one-eighth longer than the length of your longest gloves. Take a piece of satin or silk of the size described, line it through with fine, soft surah, and divide it into three or four divisions, rather wider than your gloves; this division should be embroidered, and a piece of sarsenet ribbon or elastic placed across the middle. Have some very fine cashmere flannel, and cut two pieces in thirds of the full

width of your material and the same length. Sew this down, when you have finished it with a little embroidery, about half an inch from each edge of the satin. You require strings to tie it when closed. The gloves are placed under the elastic, light colors together, dark colors, and so on, and the cashmere laid over them, to prevent their spotting. The sachet is then folded up and tied. The sachet can be made of more inexpensive material, if desired, and be equally useful. To preserve kid gloves and cause them to retain their freshness, the fingers should always be pulled out straight, after wearing, and they should never be rolled together in a ball.

CROCHET SLIPPERS.—Work in two colors, say light and dark blue; one skein of the light and a half skein of dark will be sufficient for a medium-sized pair; the directions are for a No. 3 cork sole.

Begin with the dark, with ten chain; turn.

1. Miss one chain, four double, three double into next stitch, four double, one chain to turn.

2. Five double taken at the back of each stitch (work the whole shoe in this stitch), three double in next stitch, five double, one chain to turn.

3. Six double, three double in next stitch, six double, one chain to turn.

4. Seven double, three double in next stitch, seven double, one chain to turn.

5. Eight double, three double in next, eight double, one chain to turn.

6. Nine double, three double in next, nine double, one chain to turn.

7. One row of double crochet without increase. Now put in the light blue and work the rest of the shoe with it.

8. Ten double, three double in next stitch, ten double, one chain to turn.

9. Without increase, one chain to turn.

10. Eleven double, three double in next, eleven double, one chain to turn.

11. Without increase.

12. Twelve double, three double in next, one chain to turn.

13. Without increase.

14. Thirteen double, three double in next, one chain to turn.

15. Without increase.

16. Fourteen double, three double in next, fourteen double, one chain to turn.

17. Nine double only, one chain to turn.

18. The same as last.

As this forms the side of the slipper, repeat until it is long enough to go all the way around the sole, and join it to the opposite side of the front. It is very simple.

TAMBOURINES are much used now for holding letters on a writing table which are ready to be posted. They are simply tied with colored ribbons and painted. They are also used for work-baskets, padded and lined and fitted with pockets. When painted they are frequently suspended on the wall by means of a long ribbon. —[Dorcas Mag.

A PRETTY PINCUSHION is made by covering a thick cushion of medium size with satin, one of the dark, warm shades of red is most effective, if it is not necessary to match a color in the other decorations in the room. Cut a triangle of sheer white muslin, and cover one corner with it; along the bias edge place a