

### Minnie May's Dep't.

MY DEAR NIECES,—Another year with its trials and worries, joys and sorrows, incidental to humanity has passed away, and let us hope we are nobler, wiser, and better for the experience, for if we have not benefited in some one way by it we have lived in vain. To me the past year has been most encouraging, for my girls have responded, in many ways, to my efforts to amuse and benefit them. In the limited space at my disposal my nieces and I have had many a pleasant chat, and the prizes offered have been competed for with much spirit. I trust the various hints on domestic and household matters have helped the weary mothers and depressed housekeepers over many a rough place. While my nieces have found something to amuse and interest them in the miscellaneous reading matter, receipts, fashion notes, and stories, it is satisfactory to feel and know that my nieces are in sympathy.

But before we settle down to every day life again, let us this bright New Year's morning turn over a new leaf—a clean white sheet—make some good resolutions, and keep them. Begin the year with a determination to do something better this year, if it only be getting control over a hasty temper or a slovenly habit; or an inclination to idleness; or maybe you have been endowed with a special talent for drawing, or painting, or music, or even plain sewing; or, perhaps, your tastes are domestic, and you love housework, or cooking. Any of these would be a great glory to any woman to know perfectly. So resolve to perfect your talent, whatever it may be, and you will be astonished how soon the point of perfection is attained. If we have only gained a victory over self, what a grand one it is. There is a word much used now-a-days, "cleverness." Well, my dear girls, when I tell you there is no such word you will feel quite jubilant. Perseverance is just the same word; for "cleverness" is perseverance, and all can exercise that if they will. Do not be discouraged by a few failures; try again, and again; nor do not sit down and weep; tears never won a battle yet, nor wont; just keep on trying, and success will crown your efforts.

Wishing my dear nieces a very bright and happy New Year. MINNIE MAY.

### Our Prize Essay.

Minnie May offers a prize of \$2.00 for the best article on "A Country Party, and How to Make it Pleasant." Essays to be in by the 20th of January.

Minnie May offers a prize of a gold thimble for the best essay on "The Cultivation of Individual Taste," communications to be in by the 20th January; also, the prize of a ladies' beautiful pocket knife for the best article on "Economy of Time," essays on this subject to be in by the 20th of February.

### Household Hints.

Massage for the wee baby is recommended as putting the darling to sleep sooner, and it will sleep longer. Just before putting on the little "nightie," gently rub the little arms, then the back, chest, legs, and feet; bye-bye the little one will "coo" and stretch its weary limbs, feeling very refreshed.

### PRIZE ESSAY.

#### School Lunches for Children.

BY MRS. M'ADAMS, TORONTO, ONT.

Much indeed might be written upon a subject of so much scope, but I am only able to give you a few practical hints concerning lunches. Children (if well) ought to have good appetites, but that is no reason why any and every kind of food should be given to them, nor why it should not be wrapped daintily in a nice white napkin or white paper and placed in a clean basket. Old linen tablecloths cut up into napkins and hemmed are splendid for lunches. But what shall we give the children for lunch is a subject too frequently neglected by busy mothers and elder sisters who, in their hurry to do up the morning's work, hardly give the children's lunch a thought until the last moment when it is just school time, then they pack up whatever comes first, without once considering whether it is wholesome and nutritious. Now, what is wholesome food? is the next question.

Good bread and butter, of course, and preserve us from bread and butter that is not good. Sandwiches made (without mustard) of good boiled or roasted meats, such as ham, tongue, corned beef, lamb or mutton, roast beef, chicken, etc. The wings and legs of cold fowl are very acceptable as they can be nicely managed with the fingers. I would never give fried meats of any kind, but for a change hard boiled eggs cut into slices and placed between the pieces of bread and butter, or honey or jam, is very good. So far we have bread and butter and sandwiches of some kind. Biscuits are not a good luncheon eaten alone, and, indeed, I allow my children very little cake and never any pie; believing that most of the headaches and much of the complaint of indigestion arises from the pie and unwholesome food eaten. I would not deny gingerbread or any kind of plain cake or cookies or corn bread. Always give ripe fruit in season, or a few figs, dates or raisins in season. In the way of sweets it is well to be cautious. As Canadians we go in too much for them, a little is very good but too much is sadly injurious to both mind and body. I would caution you about giving pickles or sauces of any kind as being very injurious. To make a luncheon complete I would recommend that the children carry a small bottle or self-sealing pint jar of fresh milk every day; milk is so highly recommended by all the best physicians now-a-days, and besides the water in many of our school sections is not good. Now, however simple the fare may be, it can always be made to look neat and tempting. Many ideas will suggest themselves if one only takes the time and trouble to carry them out, and really it is worth it; food tastes so much better if nicely served, you know; besides we owe it to our children. You must remember we are bringing up the future great men of this Dominion of ours; for, you know, nearly all our great men usually begin life at the common schools.

The term spinster, in law, is the common title by which a woman without rank or distinction is designated; or the general term for a girl or a maiden woman.

The bride's veil originated in the Anglo-Saxon custom of performing the ceremony under a square piece of cloth held at each corner by a tall man over the bride and bridegroom to conceal the bride's blushes. If the bride was a widow this veil was dispensed with.

### Fashion Notes.

Evening cloaks are made of satin plush fur or silk, short or long, as the purse or taste of the wearer decides.

The ugly Empire veils have entirely disappeared; and if any is worn it just tips the nose and is tucked under the bonnet at each side.

There is nothing remarkable in the styles of mantle worn. Short seems to be slightly in favor; but many who possess handsome long ones wear them.

Our climate has a fashion of its own in boots; and that is, the feet should be comfortably booted and protected from cold and wet by rubbers or overboots.

The Newmarket or close long cloak is received with an increased measure of popularity, and will be worn with a shoulder cape of the goods or fur throughout the winter.

Skirts are worn a neat walking length, apparently plain; but in reality they are most artistically draped, and the trimmings on the bodice are heavier and richer than ever.

Bracelets of silver, from four to six inches wide, are worn, but they look too suggestive of fetters; when these are worn the glove wrists must be shortened. Wide bands of black velvet are pretty and inexpensive on the wrists.

Furs of all sorts and kinds are worn, from the soft, dyed rabbit skin to seal, beaver, otter, and even mink is sometimes seen. The fancy furs are more worn by girls and children. A grey boa, cuffs and muff, gives a very fresh tint to a young face.

Bodices remain very fanciful in trimming still. The buckle waist is a favorite with rather young ladies. The shoulders are trimmed with lappels of broad ribbon, and the ends are crossed both in front and at the back, and drawn through elaborate buckles of gold or silver.

Crotched rings enter largely into the decorations of the holiday season, they make a rich and beautiful decoration for scarfs, etc. Ribbons of all shades are twisted, tied and folded into all sorts of fantastic ways for the adornment of fancy articles, and often form entire articles that are both useful and handsome.

Bangs are still worn, but no longer heavy. The lighter and fluffier they are, the more fashionable. One soft curl worn in the middle of the forehead, so long the fashion in Paris, is wonderfully becoming to oval faces. The soft French twist is still a favorite style for doing the back hair, and is suited to the shape of most heads.

Velvet seems to be the favorite trimming for dresses. Any girl handy with the needle and thimble can make her own bonnet. Two different materials are often worn, and the shapes are so simple, that, when neatly covered, a few loops of ribbon or velvet trim them. Some really pretty little bonnets have been made from a bit of the material of which the dress was made. Do not make your bonnet bulky; make all the trimming on top. Take long stitches in sewing a bonnet; small ones pucker and give a drawn look. Broad strings should be worn longer than narrow ones. Yellow looks well on a brown or black bonnet, and white looks very stylish. Some women venture upon veils down to their chin, but, as a rule, they are unbecoming and uncomfortable, catching the moisture of the mouth and nose in frosty weather, and chapped lips are the results.