



## MINNIE MAY'S

## DEPARTMENT.

Oakland Farm,  
May, 1874.CULTIVATION OF  
FLOWERS.

Dear Minnie May,—

I think that a few leisure hours may be spent very agreeably and very healthfully in the cultivation of flowers—that we may combine the ornamental with the useful.—Flowers, of all things, are the most innocently simple and most superbly complete objects of study. Flowers unceasingly expand to heaven their grateful odors, and to man their cheerful looks; they are patrons of human joy, soothers of human sorrow, fit emblems of the victor's triumphs and of the young bride's blushes. Flowers are in the volume of nature what the expression "God is love" is in Revelations. What a desolate place would be the world without a flower! It would be a face without a smile, a feast without a welcome.

"I deem it not an idle task

These lovely flowers to rear,  
That spread their arms as they would ask  
If sun and dew are here;  
For simple wants alone are theirs,  
The pure and common too—  
The beauty of refreshing airs,  
The gift of liquid dew."

How much flowers resemble the young heart in its bright morning, before it has showed the foliage of its sinless years. A tradition of them tells us they were once like youth, in this: that they loved and talked, and had passions like ours. How often and how fondly the poet revels in the field of flowers. Do they not talk to him? Who has ever heard the soft, low whisper of the green leaves and bright flowers on a spring morning, and did not feel gladness in his heart? Like beauty in the human form, flowers hint and foreshadow relations of transcendent delicacy and sweetness, and point to the beautiful and unattainable. From the garden favorite to the dainty wild flower of the mountain, all have an unexpressible charm, an unapproachable beauty. How sweetly and instructively the flower bows its head to the breath of night or the rude storm; thus the heart learns to bring a holier offering to the shrine of all good.

We hope our fair friends will not overlook the delightful employment of the cultivation of flowers. Every one may have a few, and when the taste is once acquired, it will not readily be relinquished. A woman destitute of the love of flowers seems to us a mistake of nature. The delicate and the beautiful should have sympathy with all in nature that possess the same qualities. The time spent in the cultivation of flowers is not wasted. They contribute to our pleasure; they add to our knowledge of nature; they unfold to us the beautiful, and tend to elevate the mind.

"They in dewy splendor, weep without woe, and blush without crime."

Although every part of a plant offers an interesting subject for study, the beauty of the blossom seems, by association, to heighten the pleasure of scientific research.

Flowers are indeed lovely; yet they are destined for a higher object than a short-lived admiration, for to them is assigned the important office of producing and nourishing the fruit. Like youthful beauty, they are fading and transient; and may our youth so improve the bloom of life that, when youth and beauty shall have faded away, their minds may exhibit that fruit which it is the important business of the season of youth to nurture and mature.

With most people the fuchsia is a favorite plant, and when fashioned in the shape of a tree, we venture to say will not lose any of its attractions. The mode of propagating and training is well understood. In the fall take cuttings from the old plants, previous to throwing them away, and plant them in well-drained, small-sized pots, filled with sand and loam, filling a pot of a sort, and

place them in a close frame until rooted, when they should be potted off separately into No. 1 pots, and kept in that sized pot until side shoots make their appearance, when they may be shifted into a size larger pot, with loose, rich earth—rich it must be, as the object is to have a very strong and rapid growth. They must be frequently shifted into larger pots until the eleven-inch size is attained, which ought to suffice for a plant of any reasonable size. The side branches should be pinched again and again, until you have a compact, bushy plant, when they may be suffered to grow and flower at random.

## AMMONIA FOR VERBENAS.

Sulphate of ammonia is an excellent manurial liquid to apply to verbenas and other flowers, giving to the foliage a dark green, luxuriant and healthy appearance. It is economical, clean and easily applied. Prepare it in the evening before using, by dissolving one ounce of ammonia in two gallons of water. It may be applied with safety about once a week.

Yours truly,  
CELESTA HEACOCK.

## TO PICKLE GREEN CUCUMBERS.

Take small ones of a uniform size, wash, put in a porcelain kettle, cover with cold water, add a little salt; set it on the stove, let it heat gradually, and boil five minutes; then drain off the water; add good vinegar; to one gallon of vinegar add one cup of molasses, one tablespoonful cloves, do. cinnamon; let boil five minutes; remove to an earthen or stone dish; pour over them the hot vinegar; cover tight; when cold they are ready for use. I never use any acids, or cook in brass to make them look green, considering both injurious to the health.

When we prepare them for the winter, I wash and scald my barrel to make it perfectly clean, cover the bottom with salt, wash the cucumbers in plenty of cold water, lay in a layer of cucumbers, sprinkle over with salt, and so continue putting in alternate layers of cucumbers and salt each time of putting into the barrel; cover with cold water, laying on a flat stone to keep them under water; if they are allowed to come to the top of the brine, thereby being exposed to the air, they will rot. These will keep perfectly for one, two or three years, if desired.

When wanted for use, soak in cold water, changing every six hours; keep covered while freshening, as the light has a tendency to fade them; when the salt is all drawn out, prepare as green cucumbers, except to cook them longer.

## TO POACH EGGS.

Have a pan half full of boiling water, break into it as many fresh eggs as will lie side by side without touching. Let them remain until the whites are well set. Use a perforated skimmer in taking them up.

## TO SCRAMBLE EGGS.

Put a tea-cup of sweet milk in a pan, rub a teaspoonful of flour into a tablespoonful of butter. Add this to the milk; salt to taste. Beat half a dozen eggs light; stir to the milk; when the whites are well set, pour over buttered toast. Serve hot.

## SOFT GINGERBREAD.

One cup butter, one cup molasses, one cup sugar, one cup sour or buttermilk, one teaspoonful soda dissolved in boiling water, one tablespoonful ginger, one teaspoonful cinnamon, two eggs, about five cups of flour; work in four cups first, and then add cautiously. Stir butter, sugar, molasses and spice together in a light cream, and set them to slightly warm; beat the eggs; add the milk to the warm mixture, then the eggs, soda, and lastly the flour; beat very hard. Half a pound of raisins, cut, will improve this excellent gingerbread. Flour them well before putting them in.

## COCHINEAL COLORING.

The following is a good recipe:

Cochineal, alum, cream tartar, carb. potassa, each three drachms; water, eight oz. Rub the cochineal, alum and cream tartar with eight oz. of boiling water, and when cold, gradually add carb. potassa and strain; pour water on the strainer sufficient to measure eight fluid ounces.

## TO PRESERVE FRUIT JELLIES FROM MOULD.

Cover the surface one-fourth of an inch deep with fine pulverized loaf sugar. When thus protected the jellies will keep for years in good condition, and free from mouldiness.

## BOILING CABBAGE DEODORIZED.

Throw a few pieces of charcoal into the pot where meats or strong-odored vegetables are boiling, and there will be less complaint "up stairs."

## RICE-GEMS.

Soak a cup of cold boiled rice over night in a pint and a half of milk (or water.)—Stir into this enough Graham flour to make a rather stiff batter, and bake in gem-pans.

## ENGLISH COOKIES.

One cup of raisins chopped, 1 cup of brown sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of butter, 1 egg, 2 tablespoons of sour cream,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon soda, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg.

Dear Minnie May,—

Here are some very good recipes, well worthy of your column:

## TO STARCH CUFFS AND COLLARS.

It will make them look as glossy as when first bought. Add to the starch a little gum arabic dissolved in warm water. Iron wet, with a cloth over them. To prevent the iron from sticking, stir a little salt in the starch while hot.

## LEMON PIE.

Two teaspoonfuls of flour and one of butter, rubbed together; one cup of sugar, one egg, one tablespoonful of water, and the juice and rind of one lemon. This will make the inside of one pie. Bake in a crust of pastry, either barred across the top or with plain cover.

## RUSKS.

Two teacups of sugar, two-thirds of a cup of butter, two eggs. Beat these well together; add one pint of sweet milk and one of good lively yeast, and flour sufficient to make a soft sponge. Set it where it will be warm. Next morning knead in more flour, and let it rise again; then mould into biscuits, and when light bake, them in a moderate oven.

## HATTIE HAVILAND.

## RENEWING MAROON COLORS ON WOOL.

Wash the goods in very weak lye; then rinse thoroughly in clear water; thus you have a beautiful, even color, although your goods may have been much faded and stained. Though the color thus obtained may not be the exact shade as when new, it is, however, a very pretty one. This may be new to others, as it was to me until accident led me to try the experiment. I have now tested it thoroughly, and feel so much pleased with the result that I send it for publication, hoping that it may be of use to your fair readers. The above will not answer for other than all woolen goods of a maroon color.

To make Water-Proof Cloth out of thick ducking, the following French recipe is given:

Take two pounds four ounces of alum, and dissolve it in ten gallons of water. In like manner dissolve the same quantity of sugar of lead in a similar quantity of water, and mix the two together. They form a precipitate of the sulphur of lead. The clear liquor is now withdrawn, and the cloth immersed one hour in the solution, when it is taken out and dried in the shade, washed in clean water and dried again.

## YEAST.

A Minnesota housekeeper furnishes the N. Y. Tribune a recipe, which she says makes the best yeast known to civilized women.—She has kept it three months in the hottest weather and much longer in cool weather, and never had any sour. The flour should be thoroughly dried by the fire before being made into sponge, an important item of which many young housekeepers are ignorant. The sponge should be set at noon, mixed at night and moulded next morning. Stirring the sponge after it begins to ferment makes the bread white. Now for the recipe:

One quart of hops put lightly in the cup, one quart of potatoes pared and sliced, one pint of corn browned like coffee; put the hops in a small bag, add three quarts of boiling water; boil two hours. Strain through a colander, add one cup of white sugar, half a cup of salt, and water to make five quarts of the mixture. When lukewarm, add one pint of the same yeast to ferment it. If that is not at hand, use potato yeast without meal or flour, as that might sour after a while. Half a cup is enough for a baking, large or small. The yeast must be made in tin or porcelain. Let it stand 24 hours in a warm room, then bottle or can tightly and keep in a cool cellar. Half the ingredients will do for a small family.

## VOICES OF SPRING.

How sonorous the voices of spring, proceeding from every living thing in the air, and among the reeds of the brook. There is an old bullfrog on the margin of the stream, with one leg in the water by way of a cooler. How he thrums away on his bass viol—"thung-thong-thong-thung-pout-chong!" That little froggy opposite plays the treble to a charm, without scarce opening her mouth: "te-weet-te-weet-hirr-irr-te-weet-gosh!"—and down she darts into the water, her dainty little foot terribly mangled by a stone from some cruel boy; but, boy, this is wrong. And there's the old leader—that "green-eyed monster" dressed in yellow breeches, with a white sash round him. Hear him as he stands up so majestically against that reed—"Paddy got droonk-Paddy got droonk-coonk-unk," and down he goes to wet his whistle.

Then flutters a chanting chorister overhead, calling upon his tribe to go and watch their sick mates: "Bobolink-bobolink-stingy; go and see Miss Phileas-Phileas-so sweet-sweet; she'll die soon—oh! dear." "Pshaw-pshaw-chuck" thrills the thrasher. "Miew-miew-miew" squeaks the cat-bird. "Who-whip-poor-will," cries one; "Katy-did, Katy-did" thrills another. "Ill come and see—I will—I will—will" sings the yellow bird.

And so sing they all in their unwritten music, without, perhaps, a discordant note, except from some unsoaked bullfrog, who has lain so long out of the water that his pipes are out of tune. A superannuated old mare, who was quietly nibbling the grass nearby, is so much affected by this concert of comical sounds, that she is forced to throw up her head and gallop off a dozen or twenty yards to keep from bursting into a horse laugh.

Goderich, July 7th, 1874.

Dear Minnie May,—

They are talking strongly in this township of starting a Grange, and they want me to join it. What shall I do? Are you a Granger? If so, why so? And if not, why not? Pardon me for being so inquisitive, but there are a great many farmers' wives and daughters who believe that you are working for their benefit, and therefore wish to follow your advice and example.

Your friend,

MRS. ADDIE H. MC—.

In reply to Mrs. Mc— and other inquirers, I have much pleasure in saying that I am a Granger. My reasons for being one are: 1st—I believe that they are going to do a great good to the farmers, their wives and daughters. 2nd—Because I wish to receive the advantages of buying what I want at the reduced rates which the Granges have secured, and are now securing for their members. 3rd—Because I wish to meet and know the other farmers' wives through Canada, and have social and friendly relations with them. 4th—Because my husband is a Granger, and I wish to go with him to the meetings. 5th—It prevents the necessity of his keeping secrets from me.

If all these reasons are not sufficient, I can give you as many more. I am satisfied that the Granges will benefit us both socially and financially, and I hope that both Mrs. Mc— and all good and true farmers' wives and daughters will aid in extending their power and usefulness. If there is no Grange in your neighborhood which you can join, obtain the signatures of at least eight farmers besides your husband, and at least three wives or daughters besides yourself, and send the signed paper to me and I will see that it is attended to.

MINNIE MAY.