Christmas Goodies

Sweets for Christmas.

At this time when we are urged and commanded to be economical in our use of sugar, it is well to prepare Christmas sweets which can be made without any, or a very small amount of that scarce article.

The fairly plentiful materials that are suitable for making sweets are syrup, maple sugar, honey, popcorn, and all kinds of nuts. Sugary dried fruits will also help. Chocolate and cocoa are always safe to use. The following are some tested recipes which call for only a minimum of sugar:

Stuffed Dates.—Stuffed dates are a most wholesome sweet, and quickly made, too. The dates must be first picked apart, washed in warm water and dried in an old napkin. Remove the seed from each with a sharp knife, slip a nut in its place, press together, and sift over with granulated sugar. Leave standing a while on oiled paper to become firm.

Chocolate Dates.—Prepare dates as described for stuffed dates. Slit each date lengthwise, just far enough to allow the kernel's being extracted without bruising the fruit. Grate one-fourth pound of good chocolate, add an equal quantity of confectioners' sugar, and two tablespoonfuls of boiling water. Boil until a soft ball forms in cold water. Before removing from the fire, add a few drops of vanilla extract. Place the pan inside a larger one, half filled with boiling water, to keep the chocolate fluid while the dates are being filled. Take up a little off the mixture on a teaspoon, open the date and pour it neatly in. When filled, press the sides gently together. Place in a cool place to harden.

Stuffed Figs.—Chop fine any kind of nuts. Mix with half the quantity of well washed and dried currants. Open figs at one side, and pack with mixture, rounding the fig to look like a pear. Close the opening, then at one end of the fig stick a clove to look like blossom end, and at the other a stick of cinnamon bark for the stem. Dust lightly with powdered sugar.

Parisian Sweets.—Pick over and remove stems from one pound of figs and stones from one pound of dates. Mix with one pound of English walnut meats, and force through a meat chopper. Work, using the hands, on a board dredged with confectioners' sugar, until well blended. Roll to one-fourth of an inch thickness, using confectioners' sugar for dredging board and pin. Cut with a sharp knife in three-fourths inch squares. Roll each piece in confectioners' sugar, and shake to remove superfluous sugar. Place in layers in a tin box, putting paper between each layer. These confections may be used at dinner in place of bonbons.

Sugared Popcorn.—Put two tablespoons of butter in a sauce pan, and when melted add two cups of brown sugar, and one-half cup of water. Bring to the boiling point, and let boil for sixteen minutes. Pour over two quarts of popped corn, and stir until every kernel is well coated with sugar.

Taffy.—Dissolve half a cup of sugar in four tablespoons of cider vinegar, mix with two cups of molasses, and cook very slowly in a kettle large enough to prevent the mass from boiling over until a little dropped in cold water hardens, then stir in a heaping teaspoon of butter, and a half teaspoon of baking soda dissolved in a tablespoon of hot water. Stir up, remove from fire, and flavor with a teaspoon of vanilla, or lemon extract; turn into a greased pan, and when cool enough to handle pull until bright with floured or greased hands. When light enough, pull into narrow strips and cut off in pieces the right size for a mouthful with a pair of greased scissors. Wrap each of these in a little twist of paraffin paper.

Fruit Cheese.—Stone a pound of dates, add to them a pound of figs, half a pound of blanched almonds, half a pound of pecans and half a pound of Brazillian nuts. Any nuts at hand may be substituted for the ones named. Put the mixture through a meat-chopper, and pack into tumblers. Keep in cold place. This may be rolled into tiny balls and dipped in chocolate, cut into blocks and used as a sweetmeat, or cut into thin slices and put between bread and butter, or crackers, to serve in the place of cake.

Conservation Dainties.

Maple Popcorn Balls.—3 cups popped corn, 1 cup maple syrup, 3 teaspoons vinegar, pinch salt, 1 teaspoon butter or substitute, pinch of baking soda. Put syrup, vinegar and butter substitute into shallow pan: bring to boil slowly; add salt and soda. Boil slowly until the soft ball stage (that is, when a drop will form if dropped on cold plate); brush plate with a little butter substitute, cover with popcorn that has been carefully picked over to be sure all has popped, then pour the hot syrup over, stirring quickly so each kernel is covered with syrup. Rub hands with a little butter substitute; take a spoonful and roll into balls at once. If small balls are desired (the size of English walnut), the corn must be chopped fine. If popcorn is not obtainable, use puffed rice.

Popcorn, Molasses and Nut Squares.—3 cups chopped popcorn, 1 cup finely chopped nut meats of choice, 1¼ cups syrup or molasses, pinch salt and pinch of baking soda, 1 tablespoon butter substitute. Boil and test syrup as foregoing recipe. Pour over popcorn. Brush agate or china plate with butter substitute; cover bottom with nuts, then spread the popcorn over nuts; rub spatula or knife with butter before smoothing; then cover top with nuts; cut into squares before it hardens. Again, puffed rice can be used if no popcorn is to be had.

P.S.—Instead of nut meats, 1½ cups of cornflakes can be used on bottom and on top.

Old-fashioned Yellow Jack.—1 quart New Orleans molasses, 1 teaspoon vinegar, 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1 teaspoon butter substitute. Put the molasses into large saucepan so it will not boil over. Bring to boil slowly; stir continually until it spins a thread; add vinegar and soda; boil a few moments, then try a little in cold water. If it hardens, remove from fire at once: pour into buttered plate, and as soon as it is cool enough to handle, rub hands with a little butter substitute and begin to pull it. The longer you pull it, the better it will be. Draw into long strips and cut into pieces with buttered knife or scissors.

P.S.—Chopped nut meats can be added before it hardens.

Conservation Sandwich.—1 cup fresh grated cocoanut, 2 cups seeded raisins, ½ teaspoon salt, thin slices of brown bread. To the raisins that have been washed, dried, and put through food chopper, add cocoanut and mix well. If it seems to dry, add a little of the cocoanut milk so the mixture can be spread between thin slices of day-old wheat or brown bread.

No butter is used with cocoanut.

Rye Flour Gingerbread.—1 cup molasses, ½ cup shortening, ½ cup sour milk, 2 cups rye flour, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon ginger, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon soda, ¼ teaspoon clove, ½ teaspoon cinnamon. Mix the molasses and shortening in a saucepan over the fire until melted. Beat the egg and add to the sour milk. Mix the seasonings and soda, add to hot molasses, and when foaming pour into the egg and milk. Mix well, add gradually the flour and beat until smooth. Pour into a greased, shallow pan and bake in a moderate oven for 30 minutes.

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LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

"Do Your Christmas Shopping Early! !" Have you heard that before? Even last summer. But did you? Every single necessary postcard and gummed Christmas label? Then read something else.

"Oh! Well, neither did I. I meant to, but I keep remembering somebody that I want to remember, and now but two weeks remain."

There are still post-card jingles and greeting cards to be had, that will show a friend that he is not forgotten, but there are also scores of little inexpensive gifts that may be purchased or made at the last minute, and that will fit into someone's Christmas stocking. But be sure that they do fit, for nobody must know that they are last minute gifts.

For the girl who works in a dusty office or who travels much, run up a black sateen bag on the sewing machine which is large enough to hold her hat without crushing. She will think of you and thank you every working day.

For the girl who should be learning to do housework, a couple of dish-mops which cost five cents at the tencent store. Dress these up in tissue paper and label them the "Helpful Twins." Make holders of bright scraps of material for use around the hot stove.

To the flower lover or gardener send some of your own choice seeds in dainty envelopes, or an order on the seedsman, or a bouquet of cuttings from your window plants, or a promise as follows on a Christmas postcard:

"On April first, or thereabout,
If you will bring your basket out,
I'll dig for you a root or so
Of things that in my garden grow
And you may plant them in your yard
To remind you of my regard."

For the grandmother who sews but whose eyes are not so good as they once were, buy a package of self-threading needles, or two spools of No. 30 cotton, black and white, and thread a paper of common needdles onto the end of the thread on each spool. Grandmother will know how to slide the needles along and break off a length of thread with a needle upon it as she needs.

For the woman who crochets or tats find one of the books of samples of crocheting or tatting. They cost from 10 to 25 cents and give directions for doing the work which any needleworker can follow.

What child would not like a box of cookies cut into animals and wonderful men, such as old-fashioned grandmothers know how to make without cutter or pattern. The man who lives in a boarding-house will be wonderfully pleased with eatables, too—cookies, little mince pies, or big ones, or a fruit cake. Any woman who depends upon a city bakery for her bread and desserts will half with delight a loaf of new bread wrapped in a holly paper napkin.

Any child old enough to sew for her doll family will be delighted with a roll of scraps of cloth suitable for doll clothes. A paper of needles and a spool of thread will add to the completeness of the gift. A quilt maker will also like any bits of silk or cotton suitable for her needlework hobby.

The folks you know who like to read will enjoy the same story which has given you pleasure in your favorite magazine if you will clip it from the paper and tie or paste it together into a booklet.

After all, it is not so much the gift as the thought that goes into it which brings joy to donor and recipient. And the giver who has Christmas in his heart will find suitable gifts for all whom he wishes to remember, no matter whether he looks in the big city shops, the ten-cent store, or in his own back yard or cellar storeroom.

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Wisht my Snowman, "Merry Crismus!"
"Same to you," says he.
"Say," says I, "what did you like best
On your Chrismus tree?"

"Why! You s'prise me," says my Snowman.
"Don't you truly know?"
"No!" says I. "Ho! Ho!" says Snowman.
"Heaps an' heaps of snow!"

Christmas Maple Creams.

Take two cupfuls of shaved maple sugar and one cupful of cream. Boil to the soft ball stage, or 240 degrees Fahrenheit. Remove from the fire, add one cupful of chopped butternut meats and beat until it turns creamy. Pour into pans and cut into squares. Place a half of a nut meat on top of each square. Walnuts may be used instead of the butternuts.

LAUS DEO!

It is done!
Clang of bell and roar of gun,
Send the tidings up and down.
How the belfries rock and reel!
How the great bells, peal on peal,
Fling the joy from town to town!

For the Lord
On the whirlwind is abroad;
In the earthquake He has spoken;
He has smitten with His thunder
The iron walls asunder,
And the gates of brass are broken!

Did we dare,
In the agony of prayer,
Ask for more than He has done?
When was ever His right hand
Over any time or land
Stretched as now beneath the sun?

Ring and swing,
Bells of joy! On morning's wing
Send the song of praise abroad!
With a sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns,
Who alone is Lord and God!

A COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE

By Mabel McKay.

Most of us Beech Grove Neighborhood women would have been offended by Alice Cochrane's lecture on Christmas charity had it not been for the little school-teacher's interpretation of it.

"Of all neighborhoods that give to charity, Beech Grove leads," said Portia Young on our way home. "I can't understand why Grandma Wheeler wanted us to hear that lecture."

Then our little school-teacher, whom people outside Beech Grove Neighborhood call Anne Elizabeth Sutton, protested.

"She didn't mean to offend us I'm sure, Mrs. Young. You know charity is just a limited name for love and every neighborhood needs all the love that it can get."

Portia looked straight ahead of her, down the road toward the corner at which the little teacher would turn away from us. Stiffly she outlined the plans for the tableaux and entertainment our club was to have on Christmas Eve at the club house.

After the corner had been passed and she and I were alone, Portia told me that Anne and Clarke Anderson, who was Portia's best-beloved brother, were not to marry in the spring. "They've quarreled again," she ended.

"Meaning Clarke has quarreled," I thought to myself. I knew Clarke Anderson. Aloud I said, "Why, it will spoil our Christmas!"

However little Anne, in the way that school-teachers have of forgetting themselves, valiantly tried to forget and go on with our Christmas entertainment. A few days later she called a special meeting of the neighborhood women. Jamie brought me news of it when he came home from school.

"I think she's going to give the mothers our Christmas letters," he said wisely. "She had us write them to-day."

John laughed. "Far-seeing boy!" he remarked after Jamie had left the room. "Guess you'd better write one and give it to the teacher. Or do you know what you want?"

I shook my head. I could not tell him that I was thinking of little Anne's romance and that probably she was the only person in Beech Grove Neighborhood this year who would be lonely at Christmas time. I thought of it all the way to the club house.

"Before I give you mothers your own children's letters, I want to read one from Bennie Newton," Anne told us after Grandma Wheeler had called the meeting to order.

The scrawly little letter was handed from one to the other. Bennie Newton had so many brothers and sisters that his mother seldom could come to our meetings. This time she was absent.

"Dear Santy Klouse," he had written. "This year I want you to be square with us Newton children. There's more of us than in any other family in this nayborhood and we always get the littlest Christmas tree of all. Now if their aint enough big trees to go around won't you be square and bring everybody a little one?

"Yours Respectably,
"Benjamin Newton.

"P.S.—I doant mind the little tree myself. It's for the other kids, I doant want you to make a difference."

Grandma was wiping the tears from her eyes before the letter had gone around the room. Portia Young forgot the animosity she had seemed to feel toward the little teacher and sprang to her feet. "Let's see that that youngster has the biggest tree in the neighborhood!" she said. "He deserves it."

When Mrs. Harris tried to speak, she could not for a sob choked her. Little Anne, dry-eyed and woefully sad, talked gently to us. "We couldn't do that without hurting his mother," she said.

Portia very kindly asked Anne if she knew any way to get a big tree for the Newton children without offending. Anne nodded her dusky head and stood up to talk, her dark eyes still sad but strangely alive as if with a great purpose.

"Bennie Newton isn't the only child in this neighborhood who wonders over the difference in the size of Christmas trees," she told us: "Lots of little hearts ache and are silent over smaller trees than their neighbors have. The only way for us to bring happiness to everyone is to have one big tree for us all at our club house—a community Christmas tree as some of you have already mentioned.

"But having it will not be enough. It must be the only Christmas tree in the neighborhood. We'll all have to give up our individual Christmas trees in favor of this one. Don't you see how it would look for all to have one great tree together and then after going home for some of us to have other Christmas trees? That"—there was a little catch in her throat—"that wouldn't be square either."

Grandma Wheeler's white head nodded approval. So did several others. A few hesitating ones showed signs of agreement. "That would be real charity," said Grandma.

"Love," corrected Anne gently. "Love is the word that describes what we Beech Grove people feel. We won't be giving or receiving but sharing. On the first Christmas everyone shared the same Gift. Wouldn't you like our children in Beech Grove Neighborhood to feel that way about Christmas?"

The morning after we had decided to have the community tree we awoke with a love that before had just lain dormant, now alive in our hearts. It was a love that was the basis for universal brotherhood. Without mentioning it we were all drawn together in the mysterious way that love has of uniting people.

How our tree grew! The Christmas tableaux dwarfed beside it. If the hall in our club house had not extended past the second story up to the very rafters of the building, I am afraid the tree would have outgrown it.

"At first I was a little afraid of the idea," Mrs. Newton told us as she helped Portia Young tie the balls to the tree's lower branches. "I was afraid that Bennie might not be satisfied with a tree that belonged to every one. Bennie is hard to understand."

"Caste is forever abolished by a community Christmas tree," prophesied Portia Young's husband. "It makes you people who have children all the year round, share them impartially with us."

He was helping Lucien Wheeler fasten the incandescents to the top branches of the tree. They talked all the time they were working although they had not been friends since they quarreled over a boundary fence five years ago.

That same night as John and I sat by our grate, he told me, "I'm beginning to think your tree is a wonderful thing after all. It's going to make the older people as happy as it will the children."

"All but Anne Sutton," I answered. "Clarke Anderson hasn't come near the tree. If some one could only get him there so that he could see how sad her eyes are then everything would be all right. No one can even interest him in it. Portia says it's impossible. I've a notion to try myself."

John laid his hand over mine. "No," he said firmly. "Clarke's hot-headed and stubborn. Besides I don't like to meddle in such affairs."

After that I tried not to look into Anne Sutton's eyes but whenever she talked I thought I heard a wistful note in her voice. One day John too heard it.

The next afternoon he brought Clarke home with him to supper. While I was making my yeast biscuit they sat in the living room talking.

"The trouble with you and Anne that you quarrel so much is because you are too self-centered, Clarke," I heard John say. "Mother and I used to have a great many sharp words when we thought just of ourselves and lived for ourselves. Now that we are interested in many other people, we don't quarrel. When you get to thinking of your neighbors and grow interested in their lives, there's a universal feeling comes into your heart that takes all of the selfish pettiness away. You won't quarrel then."

Clarke laughed scornfully. "I prefer a home feeling," he said. "It would be more attractive to me."

"You'll come to the tree?" John suggested.

"No." Clarke was gruff.

Yet he did come although it took all John's persuasive powers to bring him.

I did not see him until the school children began singing their carols on the first night, Christmas Eve. Then I forgot him, for the lights were flashed on the great tree and, together, every one in Beech Grove saw their universal gift. Something gripped my heart that made me feel as if I were in another world, a world in which you and I did not exist but just WE did.

Mrs. Harris, who was standing next to me, reached out and took my hand. It was as if we were renewing our friendship. Slowly I looked around at my neighbors' faces. They too were swayed by that understanding.

While the last carol was being sung I saw John again but Clarke Anderson was not with him. I turned my head and there close to my shoulder were the little school teacher and Clarke. The sad look had left her eyes and in his there was more than joy; there was understanding. He too now knew the universal feeling that was invading Beech Grove Neighborhood. I did not need to worry any longer about our romance.

While I was looking for our Jamie so that we could go home, little Bennie Newton slipped his hand into mine. "I know a secret," he whispered radiantly. "That tree ain't all a whole tree at all. It's got lots of little ones all spliced to that biggest one. I guess Santy Claus made it out of all the trees he aimed to give us kids in this neighborhood."

Everyone in Beech Grove Neighborhood was happy!

Glory In the Highest!

When Christ was born of Mary free,
In Bethlehem that fair citie,
Angels sang there with mirth and glee,
In Excelsis Gloria!

This King is come to save mankind,
As in Scripture truths we find;
Therefore this song we have in mind,
In Excelsis Gloria!

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THE BABY'S CHRISTMAS

Several years ago a train in the Canadian mountains was snow-bound a few days before Christmas. Within a day or two the passengers had eaten all the food in the dining car. Nine miles farther on there was a town, but no one would volunteer to make the trip.

"It's almost sure death to start in this blizzard," everyone said. "Relief will come when the snow stops; within forty-eight hours anyway. Human beings can do without food two days."

Some of the passengers had gathered in one of the sleepers. Darkness was falling; it was bitterly cold, and the snowy gale whstled outside. Fortunately, there was coal enough to keep up steam in the engine and to warm the cars a little.

A negro porter came through the car. "There is a little child in the day coach," he said. "its mother is dead, and its grandmother is taking it to her home in Winnipeg. The milk they brought with them is all gone. They're afraid the baby may die of hunger."

The effect of those words on the passengers was electrical. Several men jumped to their feet.

"Who'll go with me to get that baby some milk?" one big fellow asked.

Every man in the car except an elderly invalid volunteered. The invalid drew some bills from his pocket and offered one to the man who had called for volunteers.

"Take this" he said. "I'm not able to walk, but I want to be in on this. Get the baby's milk with my money. If you need help coming back, hire the men and I will pay them."

The party eventually was reduced to six, including the locomotive engineer—men who were experienced in "bucking snow." Those who stayed behind watched the six plough their way through the drifts in the darkness. There were four high bridges to cross before they could reach the town. A gust of wind might send them to death at the bottom of a gorge. But they started.

Morning dawned clear and cold. The blizzard had abated, but the flying particles of frozen snow cut like knives when they hit the uncovered hands and faces of those who ventured out. Just as the sun began to brighten the tops of the highest mountains the milk party returned. Each man carried a can, so that if one fell and lost his burden there would be enough left for the baby's needs.

The milk was warmed and the baby had his breakfast, while the passengers crowded round and enjoyed the little one's satisfaction as much as if they themselves had been eating.

Two of the men who made the trip froze their feet; but when the relief train came the next day and took them to a town where they could have their feet treated, one of them remarked to the other:

"Did you ever see anything that made you feel better than when that little fellow began to draw on the nipple?"

For the Christ-child was a little babe!

Bethlehem in 1917.

At Bethlehem, at Bethlehem,
Dark forms go to and fro.
Can they be shepherds with their sheep,
Shepherds that nightly vigils keep,
As shepherds long ago?
What gleams there in the hands of them
At Bethlehem, at Bethlehem?
No shepherds these—ah, no!
For Bethlehem, that Bethlehem
Which saw the angels draw
The veil from heaven's gate aside,
Keeps now the strangest Christmas-tide
That Bethlehem e'er saw.
All night the tramping feet go by,
All night the creaking guns go by,
Grim-faced the weary gunners ride,
Where shepherds knelt the Babe beside
And Christ lay in the straw.

Is there no light in Heaven's high face
At Bethlehem, at Bethlehem?
Those men that guard the holy place,
Is there no word of joy for them?
The sentries walk their watchful round
Where shepherds lay upon the ground,
At Bethlehem, at Bethlehem,
Where holy Mary's Child they found,
And angels sang, by God's good grace.

Ah, yes! the wide sky spread above
Still holds the silent waiting host.
The sentry stands upon his post,
And laboring columns forward move:
But all the mighty ranks on high
Wait, while men strive and bleed and die,
For Christ's command of peace to them,
At Bethlehem, at Bethlehem.
For his command—oh! wait not long,
Lord of the lowly and the strong!
Speak thou the word, and Bethlehem
Shall hear again the angelic song.
Thy healing power, O Lord, release—
Good will and peace, good will and peace—
And fill the amazed sky above
With the triumphant song of love!

Xmas Thank-You Note.

The easiest time to write thank you notes for Christmas presents is immediately after Christmas. The longer one neglects this little courtesy the harder it is to find time for it. There is no law of etiquette which says "wait a little while before acknowledging the gift." The most perfect good form in this case is to answer as soon as ever

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