

HANDY GIFTS FROM HANDY-MEN

Imagine mother's delight on Christmas morning if she finds a really worth-while gift among her things that has been made by one of the men-folks; something that will lighten her labor and make her work about the house a bit easier. Even if it is only a homely article, such as a big wooden paddle to slip under the hot pans of bread and cake when they are ready to be taken from the oven, she will thrill with pleasure every time she uses it. For, though the boys may not have said anything, she will know they have noticed how difficult it is to remove the hot food from the oven without burning her hands and arms and that they have made this most convenient implement to aid her about the kitchen.

The paddle is a simple matter to make. A smooth piece of light board—poplar or basswood is best, as each is free from any odor—a quarter or three-eighths of an inch thick, is all that is necessary. The paddle is eighteen to twenty inches long and six to eight inches is the right width; the measurements depend greatly on the size of the pan to be handled. The edge of the paddle must be beveled off so it can slip under the utensils easily, and a small hole is put into the handle through which a string may be run by which it may be hung. Don't paint or stain the paddle, but give it a smooth finish by rubbing it carefully with a fine-grain sandpaper.

If the menfolks are not interested in working in wood, they can try making an iced-tea tray from a set of muffin pans. Any cheap pan will do. The six-muffin size makes a nice-looking tray and one that is just about the right size. Fasten a heavy galvanized iron wire or light strap-iron handle to the pan. If galvanized iron is selected it can be soldered other-

III. THE SIN OF THE SONS OF ELI, 2:11-36.

"Son of Belial," compare 1:16. The expression is literally "sons of worthlessness" or "of wickedness," and so "worthless or wicked men." Their sin is described in the verses that follow. The custom of the sanctuary was to give the officiating priest whatever portion of meat his three-pronged fork drew from the boiling-kettle; in which the flesh of the sacrificed animal was being cooked for the sacrificial meal. But first the choice fat portions were cut off and burned upon the altar with fragrant spices and bits of the sweet cane as an offering to the Lord. But the sons of Eli sent a servant to demand a portion of the raw flesh before the offering, and by their greed made the offering of the Lord to be abhorred. That they were guilty of other crimes also against common morality and decency appears from v. 22. The rebuke of the prophet in vv. 27-36 was well deserved.

IV. THE CALL OF SAMUEL, CHAP. 3.

INTRODUCTION.—The two Books of Samuel were originally one. In the ancient Greek translation they are called I. and II. Kingdoms. They tell the story of Samuel, of Saul, and of David, and cover the last years of the period of the Judges and the beginnings of the Monarchy. Like most of the other historical books of the Old Testament they have been compiled from various earlier sources, three of which are mentioned in 1 Chron. 29:20. They are of very great value, preserving for us, as they do authentic information regarding the early life of Israel; the rise of the prophets and the first kings. The character of Samuel stands out strongly in its purity, nobility, and integrity, as next to that of Moses the most conspicuous and influential in Old Testament history.

I. BIRTH AND DEDICATION OF SAMUEL, CHAP. 1.

"Mount Ephraim," or the hill-country of Ephraim, was that portion of central and western Palestine which lay between the territory of Judah and the valley of Esdræon, a considerable part of which was held by the tribe of Ephraim. The place here called Ramathaim, or the two Ramahs, has not been identified. The word "zophim" is probably a clan or family name, and "Ephrathite," which means "belonging to Ephrath," may signify the district in which this place lay. It will be remembered that a similar name is given to Eli'melch and his sons in the book of Ruth. The Revised Version reads "Ephrathite." The name "Hannah" means "grace." "Shiloh," about half way between Jerusalem and Samaria, was the place of the central or national sanctuary from the last years of Joshua through the period of the Judges (see Josh. 18:1; 21:1-2; Judges 21:19).

In v. 5 the Greek translation has "To Hannah he gave a single portion because she had no child; yet he loved Hannah." This gives, probably, the true meaning.

"Eli, the priest," and his two sons had the care of the sanctuary. Eli appears to have been a descendant of Ithamar, the fourth son of Aaron, for Ahimelech, who was probably of the same family, is so described in 1 Chron. 24:3 (compare 1 Sam. 21:1); but he is not mentioned among the high priests in 1 Chron. chapter 6. The high priests before him and from the time of Solomon on, were descendants of Eleazar, Aaron's third son.

"I will give him to the Lord." Samuel is the child of prayer and is dedicated by his mother to the service of God as a Nazarite. See the law governing the Nazarite vow in Numbers, chapter 6. The vow appears to have been taken as a protest against some of the sensual and unclean practices of religion at the Canaanite altars. Compare the story of Samson and contrast the character of Samson with that of Samuel. "I have lent him to the Lord." Hannah told Eli, and the boy was taken into the temple to be trained for the priesthood.

II. THE SONG OF HANNAH, 2:1-10.

The song makes no direct reference to the answer to Hannah's prayer, unless possibly in v. 5. It praises God for his help given at all times to his people, for his rebuke of the proud and his exaltation of the lowly, and his preserving and protecting care. Too reference to the king in 10 raises the difficult question of date, but this may be a later addition.



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When You Send Candy.

Home-made candy is always received with great glee, but it is rather hard to send through the mails unless packed correctly.

I have found that tin boxes make the best containers for candy and I save every one that comes into the house, even small coffee cans. I also buy the shallow round tin boxes, which may occasionally be found at the "5 and 10."

When making candy—I find fudge, penuche and divinity the most satisfactory kinds to send—I beat the mixture until it is very stiff and then pour it directly into the tin boxes, having lined them first with waxed paper. Then when the candy is hard on top I cut it, cover the top with waxed paper, put on the lid of the box, and the candy is ready to travel without breaking or drying out.

When using the small round boxes I cut the candy just as one would a pie, otherwise it is cut into cubes. If possible I always add a few chopped raisins, figs or dates immediately upon taking the candy from the stove. This helps to keep it soft and greatly improves the flavor whether it is to be sent away or kept at home.

When packing a large round box in which you wish to put several varieties I have found a pleasing arrangement to be: First, line the box with waxed paper, then set a round basin greasing it first on the outside—in the middle of the box, so as to leave a two-inch space between the pan and the edge of the box. Into this space I pour the first batch of candy, and when it has hardened I remove the basin. Then I set a smaller basin in the box, leaving a space all around for the next variety of candy, proceeding as before.

The third time a cup is set in the middle of the box and the third variety of candy poured around the edge. When the cup is removed the last space is filled with nut meats, stuffed dates or tiny bright-colored candies. The candy is then carefully cut with a sharp knife and over the top of the box a lace-paper doily is placed.

I. R.

Keep steers full. The feed eaten over and above maintenance is what puts on flesh. Nervousness, excitement, mud, discomfort and injuries from horns of other steers all increase maintenance requirements and reduce gains.

Christmas Gifts.

Christmas is coming! It soon will be here!

But oh, I have so little money this year!

Yet I have two hands and a heart full of love.

I have scraps laid away in the chamber above,

And pieces of linen all stamped to embroder.

For which I can crochet a dainty lace border.

I will get them all out; for each friend I will plan.

A gift, then I'll work just as hard as I can.

Of time I will put in—oh, any amount;

I shall try to make every spare minute count.

Such pains and such care I will take

that they'll be,

I trust, when they're finished, a pleasure to see.

Oh, no costly present this year can I send.

To one single neighbor, acquaintance or friend—

But maybe my labor and love will about

Make up for the money I have to leave out.

—Ida M. Thomas.

HOLIDAY PLUM CAKES AND PUDDINGS

BY CAROLINE B. KING

Whether we select turkey, goose, duck or chicken for the main dish of the Christmas feast, or whether we eventually decide to eliminate all fowl from the menu and substitute a crisp and delicious crown roast of pork with tiny savory onions tipping each rib, or even a simple but well-cooked roast of beef or lamb, we cannot omit the plum pudding if we have any respect for the season's traditions.

And the fruit cake, the plum buns and all the other plummy good things that add to the cheer and jollity of the season; not one of them must be overlooked if we are to satisfy all the Jack Horners, little and big, who will be waiting eagerly to pull out their Christmas pums.

The Christmas pudding should have

first consideration, as it is the most

important feature of the dinner. Per-

haps everyone will not care to under-

take the manufacture of a large, rich

old-time plum pudding. I have found,

however, that this work may be done

very nicely in the evenings; also that

it is a good plan to enlist the help of

other members of the family, and

make a real party of the work.

When all the ingredients for the

pudding are prepared, it is almost no

trouble at all to assemble them; and

everyone, of course, takes a hand at

stirring the pudding, thus insuring a

year's good luck.

Then the stout pudding cloth is dip-

ped in boiling water, well-greased and

floured, and the pudding is securely

tied within its sturdy depths, leaving

room, of course, for expansion, and

finally it is immersed in a great kettle

of rapidly boiling water, and left to

cook for five or six hours. It is well

to place a heavy earthenware plate at

the bottom of the kettle to prevent

possible sticking; and never permit

the water to cease boiling even for an

instant, if it requires replenishing,

use boiling water.

Now for the recipe—this one is for

a real Christmas pudding.

I usually

make the entire recipe and cook one

half of it in the traditional canon-

ball style, and the balance in bowls of

various sizes. These smaller puddings

make welcome gifts, or they may be

stored in a cool place for use all

through the winter. We need:

One pound seeded raisins, 1 pound

currants, 1/2 pound of mixed candied

peels, 1/2 pound of figs, 1/4 pound of

blanched almonds, 1 pound soft bread

crumbs (about 4 cupsful), 1 pound of

suet, 8 eggs, 1/2 teaspoonful each of

grated nutmeg, ground cloves and cin-

namon, 1 teaspoonful of saffron, 1/2 tea-

spoonful of soda, 1 1/2 cupfuls of brown

sugar, 1/2 cupful of cider or grape

juice, 1 cupful of flour.

Scatter the whole cherries and al-

monds over the tops of the cakes,

cover with buttered paper and bake

in a very moderate oven—275 degrees

for about three hours, or until thor-

oughly done. If preferred, the cakes

may be steamed for two hours, then

baked for two hours in a very mod-

erate oven.

Plum Gingerbread is so satisfying

at Christmas time; make it by the

following recipe:

One-half cup butter or other short-

ening, 1/2 cup brown sugar, 1/2 cup of

sweet or sour cream, 2 eggs, 1 1/2 cup of

molasses, 3 cups flour, 1/2 tsp. soda, 1

tbsp. ginger, 1/2 cup milk, 1/2 cup chop-

ped raisins.

Sift all the dry ingredients together,

cream the shortening and sugar,

and add the well-beaten eggs, sift the

flour, reserve one cupful and then

measure it and sift again with the

spices, soda and cream of tartar.

Wash and dry the currants, chop the

raisins and shred the candied peels,

and dredge with the reserve flour. Mix

in paper-lined and buttered tins.

Scatter the whole cherries and al-

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