



The Home Department

The Vision of Little Bess

'Twas Christmas Eve; the bells rang out

Proclaiming Christ the King,
And sounding o'er and o'er again
The song the angels sing,

While many peaceful children slept,
Tucked up in beds so small
And dreamed that Santa Claus had come

With pretty gifts for all.

But little Bess and Baby Will
Decided not to sleep.
A watch beside the chimney-piece
For Santa, they would keep.

And so when all the house was still,
And they had said their prayers,
In great excitement children two
Crept softly down the stairs.

They settled down upon the rug
Before the glowing fire,
Intending when dear Santa came,
To tell him their desire.

But Baby Will was very tired,
So closed his big blue eyes,
And snuggling close to Bess, he slept,
To sister's great surprise.

Then all at once she thought she saw
A sight so very queer;
The key was lighted as with fire,
And yet she felt no fear.

A throng of angels there appeared
In whitest raiment clad;
And as she gazed at vision fair,
Her little heart was glad.

Soft music sweet came floating down
Into her childish soul,
And ever as the words she heard,
The sound did onward roll.

The song was "Peace, good will to men,"
It echoed straight from Heaven—
Then Bessie woke to hear the clock
Just pealing off "Eleven."

And yet the child remembers still
The dream she had that night,
And Heaven always seems to her
A place of song and light.

—Ex.

The Secret of Success

Some years ago I had a stenographer who came into the office for a few days to do some temporary work, and I noticed that across the front page of her notebook were written the words: "All things are possible to him that believeth," says a writer in the Christian Herald. I was interested to hear the meaning to her of these words, for she had already told us that she had a large work in view and could only work in our office a few days.

"Has the text anything to do with your future work?" I asked.

"Yes," said the girl. "Strangely enough, it has all to do with it. I have always wanted to be a court stenographer, not simply for the pay, but because it represented to me success in my chosen work. One day as I was working in a downtown office a Salvation Army lass threw a leaflet into the office, and as I picked it up, the words, 'If thou canst,' caught my eye, and then I read the rest of the passage. It all flashed over me instantly. 'That is your trouble—you have been trying to get

your ambition all alone. You haven't really believed you could reach the goal, because you have lacked confidence yourself. Why not let God help you? He has said he would if you could believe.'"

We asked the girl what belief meant practically, as she took that promise.

"Why, I just went ahead as though it was a sure thing," said she. "I wrote that text on all my notebooks, and I had it framed for my room, and I repeated it hundreds of times each week. Well, tomorrow I am to become a court stenographer. I've been a year and a half learning to really believe. It has paid."

Old Fashioned English Plum Pudding

With the coming of the holidays, the housekeeper's thoughts turn to that delicious accompaniment of the Christmas dinner—the rich and savory plum pudding. The following recipe is an old-fashioned one that has stood the test of over a hundred years, and if the directions are followed carefully a delicious pudding will result:

Clean one pound currants by washing in warm water, dry on a towel, pick them over, toss them in flour and turn into a large mixing bowl. Add one pound raisins, stoned, slightly chopped and floured, then half a pound of brown sugar, one pound of very finely chopped fresh beef suet, four ounces of shredded citron, four ounces each of chopped candied lemon and orange peel, one teaspoonful salt, one grated nutmeg, half a teaspoon of ginger, one teaspoon of cinnamon, half a teaspoon of cloves, half a teaspoonful of allspice, four ounces of chopped and blanched almonds, one and a half pounds of sifted flour and one and a half pounds of stale bread crumbs. Mix these ingredients thoroughly, using the hands; then add eight lightly beaten eggs, a small cupful of boiled cider and enough sweet milk to mix to a very stiff batter.

One of the secrets of success in making a good plum pudding is to have it well mixed. Long ago in England it was part of the mixing ceremony that every one in the household should stir the pudding until his strength gave out, so there can be little doubt that the pudding was stirred until it was lightness itself.

Cooking the pudding is no less important than the mixing, and to have it genuinely English it must be round and show the creases where it was boiled—or, rather, steamed—in a cloth. Take a strong piece of white drilling, dip it in boiling water and rub it on one side thickly with flour. This forms a crust on the cloth which the water or steam can not soak through. On the floured side lay an enameled bowl well buttered. Turn the pudding into this, cover with a well buttered paper and gather the cloth together loosely, allowing one-quarter of space for the pudding to swell. Set the pudding on a trivet or stand in a kettle of boiling water, and have the water only come up half way on the side of the bowl.

Let it boil six hours, keeping the water replenished with actively boiling water. If it stops boiling for one moment the pudding will be sticky when un moulded. Store the pudding when cooked in a cool, dry place, and

reheat by steaming for one hour just before serving.

The quantity given makes a very large pudding, and half the quantity will make one sufficiently large for a small family. As this delicacy seems to improve with age and is always better when reheated, it will be economy for the housewife to make enough to last for "company desserts" during the winter months. A very attractive way to serve the pudding for the Christmas table is to set it on a base of lump sugar, insert a sprig of holly in the top and surround with a border of holly.

The variety of hard sauce par excellence to serve with the holiday pudding is made by following these directions carefully. First, if possible, use unsalted butter and powdered sugar—never granulated or confectioner's sugar. Beat half a cupful of butter until very creamy, and then add gradually one large cupful of powdered sugar. Beat until very light, fold in the stiffly whipped white of one egg and flavor with half a teaspoon of vanilla extract. Set it on ice to chill and serve heaped in a glass dish and dusted with grated nutmeg.

Making Mince Meat

Homemade mincemeat is always to be preferred to the very best varieties that can be purchased. As cleaned currants and raisins can now be purchased by the package, the work of preparing it is greatly simplified.

With the conservation of sugar that is now being so strongly urged, honey, "corn syrup," maple or brown sugar may all be used in place of white sugar in making mincemeats. There are a number of recipes for preparing mincemeat, from the richest—which is rather costly—down to the green tomato mincemeat and the vinegar mock mincemeat. Both of these substitutes are excellent if properly made, and give a delicious pie filling at a very small cost.

Although cooked beef has generally been used as the basis of the regulation mincemeat compound, beef tongue is really to be preferred. Boil the tongue until tender, chop finely and use in the same manner in which you have used beef.

It is also best, when making mincemeat from the most costly formula, to prepare a quantity, as it requires no more fuel and but little more time and labor to prepare six jars than are required for one. Either veal or lamb's tongue may be substituted for the beef. If economy must be closely considered, plain boiled mutton will form a good substitute. Exact proportions or weight should be used in the making, although in the matter of spices, sweetening and other flavoring the individual taste may be followed. Two good recipes are given below:

Old-Fashioned Mincemeat—Two bowls chopped apples, one bowl meat, one and one-half cups molasses, one pint old cider, one pound raisins, one pound currants, one cup sugar, two pounds suet, chopped fine, one quart water in which beef was cooked, salt, one-fourth pound citron, chopped fine. Mix ingredients, heat gradually, stir occasionally and cook slowly two hours over a low flame. Add ground spices to

taste after mincemeat is cooked or when making pies.

New England Mincemeat—Mix together two pounds of cooked tongue and one pound of fresh beef suet, both finely chopped; four pounds of Baldwin apples, that have been quartered, pared and cored before chopping; two cupfuls of thick honey, one small cupful of molasses, one quart of cider, two pounds of raisins, seeded and cut into pieces; one pound and a half of currants, a quarter of a pound of finely shredded citron, a quarter of a teaspoonful of paprika, salt to taste and two ounces of minced candied lemon peel. Turn into a kettle, add half a cupful of liquor in which the tongue was cooked and simmer for about one hour and a quarter. Half an hour before it is cooled stir in half a tablespoonful of mixed ground cinnamon and mace, one ground nutmeg, half a tablespoonful of powdered cloves and one pint boiled cider. This is a rich and delicious mincemeat, the recipe for which has been in use for over 100 years.

Contributed Recipes

Oatmeal Cookies—Two cupfuls sugar, one cupful butter or lard, two eggs, two cupfuls sour milk, one teaspoonful soda. Raisins or currants may be added if desired. Make a batter that will drop from spoon, using one-third flour and two-thirds rolled oats. Sweet milk can be used by omitting soda and using three teaspoonfuls baking powder.—R. N. A.

Seed Cakes—One cupful butter and two cupfuls sugar, stirred smooth; add three eggs, one large spoonful anise seed. Stir all together, then add flour enough to roll out. This makes seventy cakes. Must be rolled thin. Will last indefinitely if not eaten.—Mrs. J. M. H.

"Rocks"—One and one-half cupfuls granulated sugar, one cupful butter, three eggs, three cupfuls flour, one teaspoonful soda in one tablespoonful hot water, one pound dates, one pound English walnuts, one teaspoonful cinnamon, one-half teaspoonful cloves.—A. R. T.

Sweet Rusks—Two teacupfuls of light bread sponge, one teacupful granulated sugar, two-thirds cup soft butter or clear fryings, two eggs well beaten, one level tablespoonful salt, one nutmeg, grated, one teacup warm water, or fresh milk scalded and let cool, enough flour to make stiff dough. Knead well and keep in a warm place, allowing dough to rise once. Knead again and form into small rolls placed close together, or make a long loaf. The addition of raisins and nut meats when you make a loaf gives delicious, rich, sweet bread for the children's school sandwiches.—Mrs. R. D. S.

California Mince Pie—Two cups chopped apples, one cup chopped English walnuts, one cup chopped raisins, one cup sugar, one-half cup fruit juice (any kind), juice of one lemon, pinch salt, spice to taste.—Flora M.

Cheap Layer Cake—Cream one-fourth cup of butter and one cup of sugar. Add two eggs well beaten, two cups flour with two teaspoonsful of cream of tartar sifted with it, one teaspoon saleratus, two-thirds cup sweet milk. Bake in long, shallow pan. When done, spread with jelly and roll carefully. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, before serving.—M. H. T.

Creamed Salmon—One cupful salmon (shredded) one pint milk, one teaspoonful nutmeg, one-half tablespoonful salt, dash of red pepper, one teaspoonful butter, one teaspoonful flour. This will serve from four to six people and is a splendid lunch