

# At a Christmas Masquerade

By Marjorie Howe Dixon  
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round Ben and Margaret. Just as suddenly it broke and "Virginia Reel" they all cried.

It was a strange Virginia Reel. One had to laugh at the nonsense going on across the way where the men were generally endeavoring to trip each other and forgot to advance and bow and had to be reminded. Everyone clapped all the time. It was most satisfactory.

Refreshments Are Served

Then came refreshments—box lunches prepared by each woman. Checks were issued to the men who claimed their boxes and then found the owner. More merriment was aroused with this part of the affair. Margaret's escort declared everything in their box delightful and saw that she had hot coffee.

Ben, she saw, was equally well cared for.

Then alas, came "good nights and Merry Christmas to all." Margaret almost hated to leave. Ben drew her arm in his in the back seat of the car, into which they had been invited.

"Have a good time, dear?"

"Yes," she sighed and snuggled closer. She would dream of this party for months to come—and how fine Ben looked—why she wouldn't have believed he could be so well—really dashing! And she herself had never had so much attention, it was quite thrilling, and every one was so funny! For weeks after, she and Ben went over little amusing incidents and smiled again and again.

## Every Housewife An Artist



Now that the inventiveness of our age has removed the drudgery of food preparation from the housewife's shoulders and electrical equipment has relieved her of much household labor, the housewife can at last turn her attention to making the food served at her table as palatable and attractive to the eye as that of any French chef.

If she wants to give her family the valuable iron and other mineral salts found in spinach, she does not have to buy a peck of spinach and spend three quarters of an hour washing it through gallons of water to remove that last grain of sand. She merely heats and opens a can, slices a hard boiled egg or a tomato to garnish it with, and the dish is ready for the table.

Or if it is beef she wishes for supper, she does not need to stay home and boil the beef. She may play out shopping or visiting an hour longer, and get the can of beef at the grocer's. But that is all the more reason that she should serve her family only the best. She can turn her attention to the making of the most delicious sauces and gravies. She can learn to heat the beef to just the right shade of brownness, accompanied by the perfect gravy and garnished as if by a French chef, and serve to her family Beef a la Henriette.

Lemons may be cut in many fancy ways to make a dish more attractive. Parsley, green peppers, grated cheese, mushrooms and tomatoes are only a few of the supplies any housewife has at her command to make her dinners a sight ancient Kings would have looked upon with the greatest envy.

FIVE o'clock found Ben at his evening job of milking old Star, his head pressed against her flank and a foaming pail between his knees. With the rhythm of the splashing milk, Ben found his thought drifting. He thought of the evening coming. Margaret had been a little excited about it. He hoped she wouldn't feel disappointed. So many times she had been disappointed. He was the quiet type and so was she and so often they had seemed to sit back in the corners, and there had to depend on each other for conversation. He hoped tonight would be different for her sake.

He picked up the three legged stool the same time he rose from his work. He hung the pail of milk high on a peg away from the cat and prepared the shed for the long winter night. This done, he next inspected the boiler room for his small green-house where his sweet peas were being picked. He brought his milk through the veridant perfume aisle, observing the ventilation, temperature within and without, and the cases of flowers ready for the early morning train. Then on he went through the connecting sheds to the kitchen where his light revealed him. Ben was this side of thirty-five, the kind of an unassuming individual one would expect to be a supreme gardener. He was quite bald save for a fringe just above his ears. He was slender and gave the appearance of having worn the same clothes year in and year out.

Getting Ready for Supper

Margaret was busy with supper. She wasn't much to look at either. She, too, was slender, flat chested, her black hair unmanageable, her eyes not exactly straight, but with all one felt instantly her kindly attitude. All the neighbors' children called her Auntie Margaret. She wore a faded blue wool dress, white apron and a gray sweater.

Not much romance had touched their lives during the ten years of marriage. There had been so much plain hard work. And tonight they

sat down to supper much the same as they had day after day. But it wasn't quite the same. Both felt a thrill tonight of which they did not speak. But Margaret could follow Ben's thought, when he asked if she had finished her dress. Yes, it was all ready to put on.

A neighbor had invited them to a Christmas masquerade. And also had offered them costumes which they were glad to accept. Margaret had needed to adjust the dress a little, when she tried it on. And the reflection in the glass had been—well, so different—so, well, pretty. Ben liked to have her look pretty, but lately she had been too tired to care much about her looks.

Wears a Simple Outfit

Ben's outfit was quite simple and hadn't needed much adjustment. She helped him tie a wide gray neck sash about his waist and slip velvet steveless jacket over his white blouse. A tall scarf over his head, tied at the back, and heavy gold circles for ear rings finished his costume. She stood back and looked at him and then gave him a little hug, and went away smiling. Why, Ben actually looked dashing! Dear quiet Ben, but he did look really—like a movie hero almost.

Her dress was easy to manage with a series of little snaps down the front. She slipped into it with a little shiver of pleasure. She had had so few party dresses. And this one seemed designed to hide her angularity, and provide her an elusive grace. The skirt hung in billows of black net, and the bodice glistened with sequins of black. A very high comb stood in her hair. Over it hung a lace mantilla draped over her arms hiding sharp elbows and even hiding lines about her neck. She thrilled again at the reflection in the glass. Ben told her she looked very nice, which was his highest praise, and that he had called a cab.

Worries About Margaret

On the way over Ben wondered

# Christmas Goodies

By MARJORIE HOWE DIXON

IN the old country and in our pioneer times, too, days, sometimes weeks, previous to Christmas, were spent in preparations for the holiday. First—days of cooking and baking, days of merriment and beating with large spoons bowls, much thought and joyous planning being mixed in, with all sorts of agreeable condiments to make the festive Christmas good.

Since really more than half the fun lies in getting ready for Christmas—to the children the holiday of the year—some suggestions are given here, in many of which the children may share the work and fun of producing them.

Children can make a number of Christmas candies with a little supervision. Dates stuffed with nuts, or fondant, are delicious and easy to make. Stomping the date and rolling them in sugar, daintier can manage, while mother prepares the fondant—the simplest kind being powdered sugar stirred into white or egg or cream. And son can crack and pick out walnut meats—though he may have to be watched a bit—they mustn't "evaporate" too rapidly, you know. Nut meats tempt us all to nibble just a little.

Old-Fashioned Candy

While mother is mixing fondant, perhaps she will make a larger amount, part of which will go into a fruit candy. Take a few dates and some raisins and nut meats and run them through the meat grinder. These should be worked into the fondant and rolled into a loaf, about an inch and a half in diameter. This little loaf can be sliced with a wet knife and the slices allowed to stand over night. For some families it is the special Christmas candy—not made at any other time of the year.

A gift box to send away to someone who will otherwise miss the home made goodies offers splendid opportunities for one to think up new combinations to surprise the loved one. A spice cake recipe will make about three small round cakes, one of which will be ample for a centerpiece for the box we are to send. White frosting with a pretty design of red candies with fresh holly leaves pressed flat into the surface will be a welcome sight to the far away one.

Spice Drops for Decorations

Around the centerpiece which is in a sturdy tin box, compartments of cardboard can be arranged, each to hold a different candy. Besides the stuffed dates, there should be nuts and figs, and more stuffed candies made of prunes and dried apricots. Spice drops scattered about among the larger

fruits will add to the gay appearance.

If one is skillful at candy-making, now is the time to hunt up recipes for those old favorites, fudge, panache and divinity. A variation of fudge can be produced by adding shredded cocoanut or walnut meats, or chopped marshmallows. Panache, the brown sugar fudge, will be improved with nuts or marshmallows as just mentioned.

Divinity, the candy made with beaten eggs—for the writer ever a most elusive dainty, it so seldom "came out right"—should be revived at Christmas time and added to our Christmas joys.

Clever Ideas with Gumdrops

A year ago all sorts of clever ideas were worked out with gumdrops fastened together with toothpicks. Little manikins, Christmas trees, nonsense of all kinds, amused us both in the construction and the receiving. A little foolish gumdrop man should certainly be added to cheer the recipient with his vacuous expression and his limp demeanor.

Decorated cup cakes would make nice flat little packages for Christmas stockings. Covered with wax paper and then gay wrappings they would be most decorative too, on the Christmas tree. Citron could be used to simulate holly, with small red candies for berries, to decorate the white frosting.

And of course, some where, some way, there must be arranged a generous supply of hard candies for Christmas, besides the other favorites, peppermint candy and striped canes.

"A little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men."

Likes Man-Made Candy

Well, you know—a box received by the writer comes to mind. Before Christmas she expressed admiration for the handsome chocolate creams, painstakingly manufactured by a neighbor's husband. When a man does make candy he usually makes it well. Then the chocolates were forgotten.

A fine large box was delivered to the writer Christmas with an apology—all the candy boxes had been sent away and only a shoe-box remained. How generous of that neighbor!

Later in the day the box was opened and a great surprise was felt, that so many of the precious creams should be spared to the writer. The lower layer had been fixed with each one carefully wrapped. The box was quite heavy. When the lower ones were unwrapped—ah! each was a lump of gold—ah—we see it all, now, as the villain cries! No wonder the box was heavy! Every one had a good laugh over it! But the chocolates were delicious for all that.



# MUSIC for CHRISTMAS

Can you imagine what Christmas would be without music? The romance—the happiness—the good fellowship would be gone entirely. "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men" become an empty, meaningless phrase and the cheerfulness of our usual greetings vanish.

Music stands forth in history as the Great Inspirational Force. Not only in war has it inspired men to great and heroic deeds, but also in peace it has inspired greater and finer achievements.

Music in the home—more use of musical instruments in the home—the development of family musical units, is one of the greatest needs of our time. Now is the time to develop the latent talent in your home.

## A Few Suggestions

MEHLIN PIANO	EDISON PHONOGRAPH	BENCH COVER
WESTER PIANO	COLUMBIA PHONO-	MAGNAVOX RADIO
PEASE PIANO	GLAPH	VIOLIN
KROEGER PIANO	EDISON RECORDS	GUITAR
PLAYER PIANO	COLUMBIA RECORDS	UKULELE
BENCH	HARMONY RECORDS	PIANO
		BRIDGE LAMPS

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# Gifts That Appeal To Every Woman

AMONG this year's gifts be sure to include some electrical appliances. Universal and electrical appliances such as Toasters, Percolators or a Waffle Iron are sure to appeal to the feminine heart. They make both a practical and beautiful gift and will help lighten the household work. We carry a great variety of styles—each handsomely designed and highly efficient.

## Electric Coffee Urn Sets

An electric 4-piece coffee urn set is a gift that will beautify the table at any meal at which coffee is served. It consists of coffee urn—milk jug—sugar bowl and tray—coming in a great variety of patterns. The donor of a gift like this need have no fears that his gift will not be appreciated.

## Electric Toasters

An electric toaster is another suitable gift for the morning breakfast table—will toast two large slices at once. This would make one of the most prized gifts.

## Electric Irons

An electric iron will lighten many weary hours of labor—and will be a gift useful the year round.

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