



PRIZE BABY SHOWS.

The managers of a church society or charitable organization who are puzzling over what to give for a real money-taking entertainment can hardly do better than to try one of the ever-popular baby shows. These affairs have been the subject of a certain amount of adverse criticism on the ground that they might start an epidemic of infantile diseases, but testimony is not lacking to show that such fears are practically groundless. One prominent church worker of the writer's acquaintance asserts positively that no case of contagion has ever yet come under her observation from such a source, and she is certainly in a position to know, having been one of the chief promoters in a series of successful enterprises of this nature. No mother would think for an instant of taking an ailing child into a gathering of little ones, whether public or private, and, viewed in the light of common sense, it is hard to see why a baby-show should be any more dangerous to the participants than a children's social party.

The ladies' aid society of a comparatively obscure branch church in a suburb of one of our New England towns gave one of these exhibitions some ten years ago, and the result was such a tremendous success that the entertainment has now become an annual institution of never-failing attraction. Everyone is interested, irrespective of sex or sect, and babies are assembled from all the surrounding suburbs as well as the city itself, where the event takes place, in undergo comparison and compete for the list of prizes. The society in charge is under no expense except for the rent of the hall, which is always engaged with the proviso that if the afternoon set should prove stormy, the affair may be postponed to the first fair day. Committees are appointed to manage all the details, and it costs nothing to enter a baby for competition except that each mother pays her own fifteen or twenty-five cents admission fee, as the case may be. About twenty prizes are offered, which are given by friends of the society and the different merchants in the city, and embrace everything pertaining to babyhood, from a rubber rattle to a handsome christening robe. There are prizes for the most popular baby, the prettiest, the blackest eyes, the largest and smallest, the blackest hair and the reddest hair, the one who comes from the farthest distance, the youngest who can walk, and so on throughout the list. The three judges appointed to decide the awarding of these prizes are professional men, one of them usually being a minister, but never the pastor of the particular church under whose auspices the en-

tertainment is given. Fortunately for his peace of mind it is understood by the members of his congregation that no man in his position could possibly be expected to discriminate fairly without showing partiality toward the offspring of his own flock.

As each baby arrives, it is presented with a tag bearing a number and this is pinned to the dress, the idea being to prevent, as far as possible, any charge of favoritism on the part of the judges. In spite of every precaution, however, these inoffensive gentlemen have much to answer for, and all three are usually on the verge of nervous prostration by the time the afternoon is over. The hall is always packed, for not only do the relatives and admirers of the separate candidates flock to the scene, but nearly every friend or speaking acquaintance of the judges is on hand to smile over the frantic efforts of these worthies to acquit themselves without disgrace. As for the little tots themselves, they are good-natured and happy as a rule, for the novelty of their surroundings suffices to keep them amused, while, if one begins to fret, it is easily quieted with a sip of milk or a cracker to munch on.—[Adeline.]

[To be concluded Jan 15.]

FROM BREAD DOUGH.

English Buns: An English friend gave me this recipe, and said that, eaten with coffee, these buns were a great breakfast relish with her family. Take enough raised bread dough to make six or eight large biscuits. Roll each piece out separately with a rolling pin to one-fourth inch in thickness. Place on a smoking hot griddle, and cook on both sides until slightly browned.

Fried Bread Dough. When your bread is ready for the baking pans, reserve one quart of the dough, and let it get very light. A few moments before dinner is served, put 2 tablespoons lard into a skillet, and heat very hot. Cut the dough into small pieces, handling it very carefully, so as not to pack it, and drop into the hot lard. Fry a delicate brown, serve immediately, and you have a dish that will bear repetition.

Cinnamon Rolls: One quart raised dough, rolled thinly, and spread generously with butter, sugar and ground cinnamon. Roll up evenly, and cut into slices one-half inch in thickness. Arrange in a baking pan, set to rise one-half hour, then bake 15 minutes.

Dough Cake: One pint bread dough when ready for the final kneading, 1½ cups sugar, ½ cup butter, 3 eggs, ½ nutmeg, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon soda, 1 cup fruit. Beat the dough, sugar and butter to a cream, add the spices, soda, eggs, and the fruit (dredged in flour). Add more flour if necessary, and bake immediately, making two loaves.

Pancakes: Housewives, if your bread sponge sours, do not throw it away. Simply add water to thin it, if too thick, allowing one teaspoon soda to every quart of sponge, and fry like any pancake. They have a delicious flavor resembling that of the best buckwheat cakes, for which they are sometimes mistaken.—[Marion T. Searl.]

Parker House Rolls—Two qts flour, 1 pint of sweet milk, 3 tablespoons sugar, 1 large tablespoon butter. Heat the sugar and butter in the milk, when cool, add ¼ cup soft yeast. Make a hollow in the flour, pour in the mixture and let stand over night. In the morning mix all together. After it rises, chop a few minutes with a knife, then roll till half an inch thick, cut into round shapes, place on each round a small lump of butter, double over and when they rise to twice their thickness, bake in a moderate oven.—[A. R. A.]

Lemon Custard Pie—The juice of one lemon, yolks of 3 eggs, 2 spoons flour, ½ cup sugar, 1 spoon melted butter, 1 cup sweet milk. Fraying, whites of 3 eggs beaten to a stiff froth and 3 spoons sugar.—[Reader.]

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