

CHRISTMAS GIFT-MAKING

The theory that gifts with the personal touch, made instead of bought, are most appreciated, is quite correct, provided it is worked out with due consideration in practice. The ideal gift must express the personal taste of the recipient as well as that of the giver. If both cannot be combined, the personality of the one for whom the gift is intended should have first consideration. Because you are very fond of pale blue is not sufficient reason why you should work a set of toilet mats in that color for a friend whose room is done in yellow. The 'personal touch,' too, is better omitted unless that touch is a moderately skilful one. If one can embroider only 'a little,' which usually means badly, one might better send one's house-wifely friend some pretty china dish straight from the store than a hand-embroidered centre-piece wrought with any number of uneven stitches and atrociously shaded blossoms. If one can embroider well, or do fine needlework of any kind, there is a limitless field for selection for one's gift making.

'When in doubt choose a sofa pillow' is a fairly safe rule, for no one ever seems to have too many cushions. It is a suitable gift for man or woman, boy or girl. One girl, whose young brother has been making a collection of leather postal cards, is making them up into a sofa cushion for his 'den.' As the cards are oblong, twenty-four will make a square cushion, placed in six rows, of four each, end to end. A piece of leaf-brown canvas serves as the foundation, to which the cards are fastened. Holes are made at the corners of each card and also at the sides and ends, and through these the cards are laced together by narrow 'ribbons' or thongs of leather, the lacing passing through the canvas to hold the cards firmly in place. The back of the cushion will be of soft leather or chamois of the leaf-brown shade, the back and front being laced together in the same way as the cards. The leather back of the cushion can be made five or six inches larger all round than the front, and the surplus slashed into a fringe.

A sewing screen is an extremely useful article for any one who does even a little sewing or occasional mending. Two and a half or three feet high, and fifteen inches wide, are convenient sizes. The screen is made with two panels, fastened together at a right angle, and the uprights must be sufficiently solid to hold the article firmly in place, with no tipping over. Flowered cretonne, plain denim, or other smooth-finished material, matching the colors of the room, can be used to cover the screen. A few inches below the top of each panel is a cross piece, with spool holders inserted, on which to keep spools of silk and cotton in the requisite variety of sizes and colors. Hooks on the under side of the cross piece hold scissors, needle-book, pin-ball, etc., while the lower part of the panel can have a piece of the covering gathered on forming a bag or pocket to hold the work.

A pretty pin-cushion seen recently was very simple in the making. The cushion itself was square, covered with shell pink silk. The top was partially covered with a circle of white net, marked off in blocks with pink embroidery silk, in darning stitch. A ruffle of lace, of the kind having a net foundation, was gathered around the circle, and caught down at the centre of each side of the square, with tiny bows of pink ribbon, the corners of the square cushion serving to hold the ruffles out smartly.

A pocket apron is a useful gift for the one who does fancy work. Such an apron can be as elaborate or as simple as one pleases, and still fulfil its mission. The chief consideration in making is to cut the apron half as long again as it is meant to be when finished, turn up the lower third and stitch it at each side, and also in two other places, thus forming three pockets. It can be made of handkerchief linen or lawn, rounded, and finished

with lace-edged ruffles, with a conventional design embroidered on the pockets.

A dainty corset-cover, hand made, is a gift sure to please a girl friend, provided, of course, it is made in the proper size. A very pretty one is of handkerchief linen, with pointed yoke effect, in eyelet embroidery. A pretty house-jacket, or a dressing jacket, in a soft flowered silk, or in lawn with Valenciennes lace, is an appreciated gift, and one neither expensive nor difficult to make. Being loose it can be made from a pattern, with-



An Afternoon Gown

The princess style is still much liked for afternoon gowns. The model here shown is developed in purple chiffon velvet. The skirt is made in corselet fashion, and falls in full, graceful folds. The bolero is cut away in front over a bodice of lace with short puffed sleeves. The vest-front is of embroidered chiffon, and the velvet bretelles are finished with silk tassels.

out fitting on, if it is to be a 'surprise' gift.

Sachets are in such general use, in all sorts of places among one's belongings, that one can nearly always 'fall back upon' a sachet, as an acceptable little gift for girl or woman. Only one must find out the recipient's favorite among the host of perfumed sachet powders.

Salted almonds.—To blanch the almonds, cover them with boiling water, let stand two minutes; then drain, put into cold water, and the brown skins can be rubbed off. Dry between two towels, then fry until delicately browned in hot olive oil, or in clarified butter and lard mixed in equal parts.

Lobster Salad.—Take a freshly boiled lobster, cut out the meat in small pieces, rejecting the tough particles. Spread the meat over some fresh lettuce leaves, and pour mayonnaise over. Salmon salad can be made in the same way. Garnish with cold boiled eggs.

AFTERNOON ENTERTAINING

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hats or gloves,—and have greeted the hostess, they move about the drawing-room chatting with any one whom they know, and then pass on to the dining-room.

Big afternoon 'teas' would be much more sociable affairs than they are if women would only get it into their minds that it is not necessary to wait for an introduction before speaking to another guest. Two women, neither of whom knows half a dozen people present, or whose acquaintances are divided from them by the crowd, will stand near each other like mutes simply because they have not been formally introduced. Being together under their hostess's roof is in such cases a sufficient introduction to permit people to make a few pleasant remarks to each other.

Fancy cakes for serving with afternoon tea can be bought, assorted, at the confectioner's, but home cookery is always appreciated. Following are given a few recipes, for refreshments for such occasions.

In preparing bread for sandwiches, cut the slices as thin as possible, and remove the crust. Cream the butter, and spread it on the loaf before cutting each slice. To cream the butter, put it in a bowl, and work it with a wooden spoon until it is of a creamy consistency, pouring off any buttermilk that may exude.

Oyster sandwiches.—Fill each sandwich with two fried oysters arranged on a fresh, crisp lettuce leaf, which has been washed and wiped dry.

Nut and cheese sandwiches.—Mix equal parts of grated Gruyere cheese and chopped English walnut meats, season with salt and cayenne, and use for filling the sandwiches.

Sponge drops.—Beat the whites of three eggs until stiff and dry, add gradually one-third cup of powdered sugar, beating it in well, then add the yolks of two eggs which have been beaten until thick and lemon-colored. Add one-quarter teaspoon vanilla. Put one-eighth teaspoon salt with one-third cup of flour, and sift, then fold the flour into the cake mixture. Drop this from the tip of a spoon on to unbuttered paper. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, and bake eight minutes in a moderate oven.

Cocoanut cookies.—Beat two eggs until light, add gradually one cup of sugar, also one-half cup shredded cocoanut, one cup thick cream, and three cups of flour sifted with three teaspoons baking powder, and one

teaspoon salt. Chill the dough, toss on a floured board, pat and roll one-half inch thick. Sprinkle with cocoanut, roll one-fourth inch thick, and shape with a small round cutter, first dipped in flour. Bake on buttered pan.

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