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A Christmas Romance
By Mary Graham Bonner
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MARJORIE was the first girl every boy called on when he got home for the Christmas holidays. Yes, every boy who had gone away to school or to college always came to Marjorie's house first when the Christmas holidays began, though there were exceptions, of course. Many of them, coming home at the same time, on the same train, would agree to call together. Then they would have a good time, singing, talking, laughing. Marjorie was such a good sort. The whole "bunch" liked her. She played the piano well for dancing and had the kind of voice which made others want to gather around the piano and join in the chorus. In truth, without Marjorie the "bunch" would have been oftentimes very lonely, very restless and wretched. Marjorie danced well, too, and if one wanted a girl to come up to a prom or a chass dance Marjorie would always fit in anywhere. Then, too, she wouldn't be mad if a fellow asked another girl. Marjorie was an exceptional girl. Marjorie wasn't jealous of any of them. She seemed to regard them as they regarded her—good sorts as she was a good sort. They passed the time for her merrily as she did for them. They were jolly good companions as she was a jolly good companion. So it went on. And another Christmas-time came along and Marjorie's house was the center of the gaiety. It was the night before Christmas. The "bunch" were taking around their Christmas presents. They were going to call on Marjorie last because then they would stay there for a while. They all had presents for Marjorie, typical presents from members of a "bunch" to a friend of the "bunch." There were several boxes of candy (which the "bunch" would help out), and there were some books, which perhaps some of the "bunch" later would borrow and read. One of the "bunch" has gone to Marjorie's earlier that evening, and had

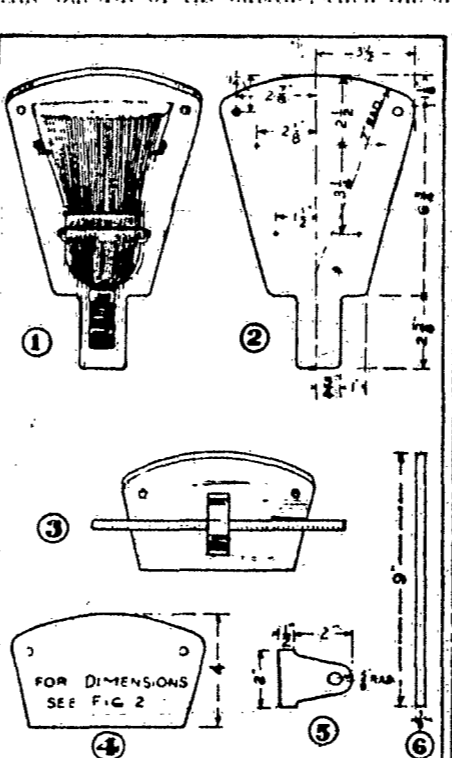


Without Marjorie the "Bunch" Would Have Been Very Lonely.

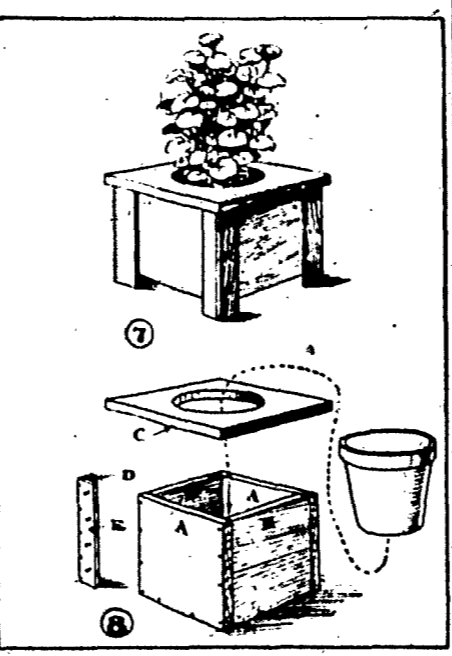
taken with him a present which could neither be divided and eaten, nor borrowed and read. Soon, soon he was going to give it to her, and soon, soon he hoped to see her wear it. "Marjorie," he began, "the other fellows all like you, of course, but you know I've been feeling for some time kind of differently about things. And before I went back to college again I thought perhaps—you know—I thought Christmas eve would be such a nice time to look back upon when we had grandchildren as our engage—" The front door burst open after a quiet and vigorous knocking, and the "bunch" came in. "What! You here, Jim! Stole a march on us, eh?" They gave their presents to Marjorie. Then they asked her to play the piano. Then they sang. Nervously Jim looked at his watch. It was almost Christmas day—and he so much wanted to be able to look back on Christmas eve as the time of his engagement, and somehow he had fancied Marjorie looked upon him a little more affectionately than upon the rest. Finally he could bear it no longer. "I say, fellows," he began, "it seems to me that as long as the 'bunch' wants to hang around the best friend the 'bunch' ever had and won't give any one fellow any more chance than another I'll just have to do my proposing before the whole 'bunch'." "I've got a little ring here I'd like Marjorie to wear, and while I always want to be one of the 'bunch' and she always wants to be a 'friend of the bunch' I know, I'd like to have her regard me as more than just a friend!" "And I'd like to be more than a friend to one of the 'bunch,'" Marjorie said. "Congratulations!" shouted the "bunch." "And Merry Christmas and lots of them!" "But to think," one of the "bunch" said to the rest afterward, "that one of us was able to 'put it over' on the rest of us—and Marjorie, too!" And the next day, which was Christmas, the "bunch" all came around to see one of the "bunch" kiss the "friend of the bunch" under the mistletoe, which favor was granted the "bunch" very willingly.

Small Gifts Made of Box Boards
By DOROTHY PERKINS
(Copyright by A. Neely Hall)

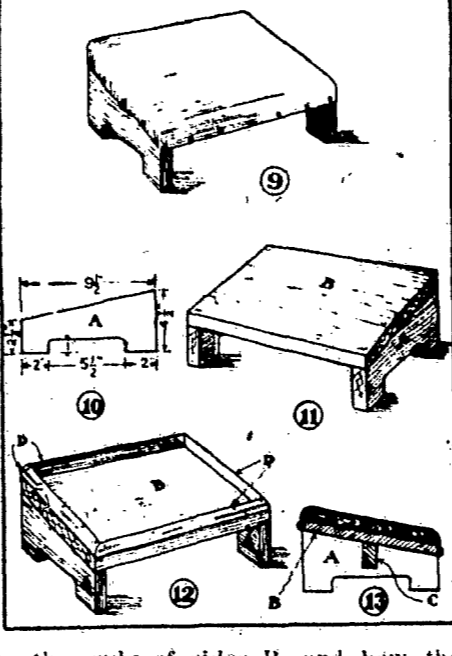
Box boards can be used in the making of practical Christmas gifts, especially small gifts. Whiskbroom holders never fail to please. The holder in Fig. 1 requires a single board of the dimensions shown in Fig. 2. Use a small saw for cutting. Cut a trifle outside of the outline, then finish



to the line with plane and sandpaper. Bore a pair of holes near the top of the board, in the positions shown, to slip over wall-hangers. Two coats of white enamel make a nice finish for a bedroom whiskbroom holder. If the wood is clear, you can shellac and varnish it, or stain and wax it. A stain can be made of oil paint thinned with turpentine. The necktie rack in Fig. 3 has a back of the dimensions of the upper part of the whiskbroom holder; therefore, if you make the holder first, you can mark out the tie-rack-board from it. Figure 4 shows the height to make the back. Bore holes for hang-



ers. Figure 5 shows dimensions for the rod bracket, and Fig. 6 shows dimensions for the tie-rod. Bore the hole for the rod through the bracket before cutting out the block, to prevent the possibility of splitting while boring. A carpenter's dowel-stick, flagstaff, or stick whittled to the diameter given, may be used for the rod. Center the rod upon the bracket, and center the bracket upon the back. The plant-stand shown in Fig. 7 is designed to conceal the earthen pot of a potted plant. The diameter of the pot will determine the inside width and length of the box. Make the inside depth an inch less than the depth of the pot. Figure 8 shows how sides A nail



to the ends of sides B, and how the bottom fits between the sides. Cut top C to fit the top of the box, with a projection of 1 inch all around. Cut the center hole a trifle larger than the pot, so the pot will slip in and out easily. After the top has been nailed on, prepare the corner strips D and E, nail them together and nail a pair to each box corner. The footstool in Fig. 9 will be appreciated by every lover of a good book and an easy chair. First prepare end pieces A by the pattern of Fig. 10, then top board B. The length of B should be 14 or 16 inches, the width will be governed by the length of pieces A. Nail top B to pieces A, then cut brace C (Fig. 13) and fasten it between runners A. To the edges of top B nail strips D (Fig. 12). Round the top edges as shown. Pack dampened excelsior between strips D (Fig. 13). Then over the excelsior stretch a piece of cloth, and tack it to the edges of top B.

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