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Anna M. Pankey, Words: 1780

Ennis, Montana.

Subject: America Eats.
Bran Gems.

Source: Dr. Walter S. Kyes, D.D.S.,
San Diego, Calif.
In "The Dental Digest"
for June, 1920.

***** ********** In looking over an old number, I found among other gems, a recipe for bran gems. Now, this was of practical value to me, as I had long sought such a recipe, and greatly had I felt the need of it. In fact I had consulted my physician about certain alimentary troubles, and he, with the wisdom of his tribe, had advised me to take long, meditative walks into the country. If I did not sleep, this physical exercise would make me sleep; and if I did not digest my food properly it would, in some mysterious way, furnish the requisites. He might have added with equal wisdom that if I could not withstand the prevailing temperature, and found myself unable to negotiate certain other elements that one encounters in the great Northwest in winter time, I might, in some wind-swept place, perish by the wayside. Understanding all this, I protested.

"But, Doc", I said, "it's too cold; I'll freeze and this little berg is not prepared to lose one of its influential citizens; it would never do. Can't you give me a laxative?" "Laxative, thunder!" he roared, "what you want is exercise, exercise, I say!" And then in a manner in keeping with his

profession, he waved me away.

When I read the recipe for bran gems in the Digest, I was sitting on a steaming radiator in my office. For two days, the state in which I then lived had been indulging in one of its inimitable blizzards, and even my robust clientele had wisely decided to remain indoors, leaving me to ponder over the great facts of human existence, and any lesser actualities to which my mind might turn.

My operating room was a wreck. A pleutocratic plunber, employed for the purpose of searching out certain frozen joints and split pipes seemed to me to have labored in some sort of a fantastic delirium, so completely had he demolished my semblance of order. I would have thoroughly enjoyed talking to him in an endeavor to learn just how he happened upon his trade of devastation, but the thought of the bill he would present deterred me from occupying any of his time.

Instead, however, after reading the recipe for the second time I decided forthwith to do some shopping. As a rule I leave this field of endeavor entirely in the hands of a member of my family, who, by long experience, is much better fitted for the work than any dentist I have ever known.

Donning my overcoat and leaving the busy plumber to his own joyous task, I passed out into the blinding storm. Turning the corner I went down Main Street, keeping close to the store fronts. Eventually, I was confronted by a snow bank that for rugged grandeur rivalled any mountain that Stewart Edward White

ever saw, or that Herold Bell Wright ever tried to describe. It was a block long and as wide as the street, and the crest was lost in a white, twisting haze that seemed to terminate in the clouds. I fanally made a flank attack and somewhere in the foothills of its fluffy whiteness I paused for breath, realizing that I was far removed from the banana belt. I was in the snow up to my waist line and down to the bottom of my vest. I pondered and floundered and said things that I am certain the editor of the Digest would not print. I sorely felt the need of a rotary plow, as well as that of the steaming radiator that I had so recently left. Finally, emerging, I found travel easier and I stopped at a feed store; of course it was my understanding that a feed store was the place to buy bran. But the feed store man shook his head, said he was sorry and looked my over pityingly.

"You might get it at a grist mill," he suggested.

Undismayed, I again set forth. On a cold day a grist mill is a lonely, cheerless place, filled with dust and noises. I explained to the miller, a whitish looking person with a hacking cough, that I wanted fifty cents worth of bran. He looked at me in a kindly, sympathetic manner and said, "Do you keep a cow?" "No", I replied. "Pigs?" he ventured, with a tilt of his eyelid. "No, no," I replied, "it's for gems, bran gems, you know." He gave me an odd little grin and disappeared in a maze of belts and pulleys and hoppers. By-and by he returned with a sack about as large as a sofa

pillow ans said, "Ten cents, please." I also purchased a sack of whole wheat flour and with a sack under each arm I went forth again into the storm. After a hard struggle I finally reached my home, and, like the deliverm man, I entered the back door. Dropping the sacks from my stiffened hands onto the kitchen floor, I proceeded to thaw the frost from my eyelids over the kitchen range.

My wife entered the kitchen, and, opening wide her eyes, she said, in a not unkindly voice, "What on earth, now?"

"Bran gems my dear, for dinner tonight," I said. "Here is the recipe that I found in the Dental Digest. The are unreservedly recommended by Dr. George Wood Clapp, of New York." She took the recipe and after reading it laid it on the kitchen cabinet.

I removed my overcoat and, seating myself on the radiator, I entered into a discussion of the climate of California as compared with our own state, and had about decided to locate in San Diego when the maid volunyeered that there was no sour milk in the house, but that the resipe said that buttermilkm would do. This information rather dashed my hopes for gems for dinner. Of course I might have known that the weather was not productive of sour milk, because ferments are not as a rule prolific when the thermometer registers thirty degrees below zero.

Our local manufactory of "Golden and Frozen Prodicts" was located just eight blocks northwest of my home, in the teeth of the storm, so to speak; and it was with misgivings that I

set forth on what proved to be a rather perilous and painful expedition.

It is my candid opinion that the fellow who went in search of those historic Golden Apples was surrounded by an atmosphere of comfort and luxury as compared with me and, while I was not called upon to support the world, there were times when I felt as though a considerable portion of it was being flung in my face.

Snow banks innumerable added to the rigor of my way, and occasionally they seemed to stand on end and fall upon me, engulfing me in their fluffy whiteness. The wind screamed in a wild fury, and when I reached the corner of Main and Third streets I was surprised to note that the Rural National Bank was not in its accustomed place. It occurred to me that perhaps the owners had taken it in out of the storm, but finally a shift in the wind revealed its substantial lines.

Eight blocks are none too far to be removed from a creamery during the hot fermentative days of summer, but in winter, to the pedestrian in search of the "makins" of bran gems, it i is different.

Although not raised in the lap of luxury, that journey satisfied me that I was not physically fitted for pioneering. I was mightily worn out when I reached my destination and, feeling the need of warmth and companionship, I went into the office with the little tin pail on my arm and said to the manager, "Hello, Bill." Bill gazed at me in open-eyed wonder

for a minute and then said, "What the -------are you doing out in this sort of weather?"

"Bran gems, Bill. I want a pail of buttermilk."

"Buttermilk! Holy smoke, man, do you know that about an inch of your nose is frozen and is as white as a tallow candle?"

" I don't doubt it, Bill" I remarked, rubbing it thoughtfully.

Bill was a kind hearted, sympathetic man, and going out into the storm he soon returned with a snowball about the size of a goose egg and, handing it to me, he said, "Here, Doc, stick your nose in this until it thaws out." Being in a submissive mood, I promptly obeyed.

It was rather an odd situation sitting there by the fire with my nose plunged into a snowball up to my eyes. From time to time Bill would inquire how it felt. Then he discussed briefly the good qualities of bran gems. He was strong for them, saying that he liked them steaming hot, with butter and a dash of New Orleans molasses, which he claimed gave them a touch of Southern romance.

On the way home I stopped at the office to once more v view the ruin that the plumber had wrought. I also called up my wife and asked her to check up the recipe with our larder to make sure that there was nothing else missing.

"Bring a quart can of molasses" she said.

Locking up my office, which now resembled the back room of a hardware store, I went down to the street where I consulted the thermometer. It registered twenty below. I

I was happy to note that it was getting warmer. I felt warmer.

That night at dinner I had an appetite worthy of an lumberjack. I ate bran gems aplenty, finding them all that Bill had claimed for them.

I retired early and slept like the proverbial log, only awakening once when "Buddie", turning over in his sleep, dropped a tiny fist on mu frost-bitten nose.

I have not written this because of any subtle urge to improvise near-literature, but rather because I realize that many good things, including the recipe for bran gems, have been published and overlooked or forgotten. My sympathy is stirred when I think of the innumerable headaches that our profession endures and, realizing the inadequacy of the 18th amendment to eliminate them all, I am happy to awaken anew the interest of my profession in bran gems as an article of diet. Like "Bill", I am <u>strong</u> for them.

R E C I P E

Mix together three cups of bran, 1½ cups of whole wheatt flour, 3 level teaspoons of soda, 1½ level teaspoons of salt; add 1 cup New Orleans molasses, 1½ cups of sweet or sour milk (or buttermilk) raisins and nuts to taste. Bake in gem pans. makes 16 gems.