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By JESSIE E. RORKE

The Dining Table

JUST as a woman's ability to dress well is not shown by her appearance at the social function only, but in the daintiness and suitability of her breakfast or working attire as well, so our ability to set an attractive table must be judged by the ordinary, everyday meals rather than those prepared for some especial occasion. It is not entirely pride that makes us linger over our guest table, adding last touches to what we have already endeavored to make as attractive as may be, but a feeling that we owe to our guests the best that we can give. Surely we owe as much to the people who sit at our home table! True, they are more kindly critics and will make excuses that we are too tired or too busy; they may not even know that anything is lacking if we have accustomed them to this sort of service; but we are not wise if we take advantage of this kindness, and are generous neither to ourselves nor to them.

Some of my readers may object that we cannot afford to have a pretty table always, but I wonder if we have so good an excuse for our carelessness. After



JARDINIER FOR THE DINING TABLE

all, costly linen and china and silver make up only the smaller part of its dainty prettiness. Spotless cleanliness and the beauty of color and of line are there for us all, and, in the country at least, we may have flowers as beautiful as our wealthiest neighbor or those to be found in the grandest city home.

There are few housekeepers who do not delight to linger beside the linen counters in the shops and select some needed addition to the dining-room supplies from the white glossy piles, and she is fortunate indeed who may do this choosing regardless of expense, and need consider only which is the softest and finest in texture and designed most nearly to her taste. Good linen undoubtedly adds much to the beauty of the table, and it is always economical to buy the best that one can afford, as the better qualities wear the longer, and a skilful darning can fill up the first small holes so deftly that they will scarcely be seen at all; while the larger ones that will come later, where the darning frankly insists on being seen, do not seem to matter greatly against that fine glossy finish. At some of the shops where damaged table linen is sold one can sometimes find the best qualities of damask at very reasonable prices and so slightly damaged that a little clever darning will make them quite good again.

But even more important than its quality is its spotless cleanliness. The coarsest cloth if it is snowy white is not without its charm. Of course, this end is not attained without some extra labor in the laundry for the busy housewife who does not keep a maid, but with a little care even this need not be too great. The use of tray and carver's cloths will help to save the cover, and these being small and easily laundered, may be changed more frequently. These can be found in the shops at very moderate cost, but if one has time and can do even the simplest kind of embroidery, less expensive and much more beautiful ones may be made at home. These long summer days when so much of our time is spent out of doors, embroidery makes good pick-up work, while some one reads aloud or when we wish to keep our fingers busy while we talk. Almost every kind of embroidery may be used satisfactorily on the table linen, but the varying colors of the realistic designs are much less in favor. The plain white embroidery worked in fine

linen floss is perhaps most beautiful of all, but sometimes a single color is used that matches the color in the china, or it may be the prevailing color in the room. A table set in delft blue and white is pretty with centre piece and tray and carver's cloths worked in some simple conventional design in the same colors. The cool grey-greens are charming, too, for table embroidery and may be used with china of the same shade or gold and white. Plain white, however, has the merit of lasting longer as there is nothing to fade in the laundering, and it comes back from the tub in quite as good condition as it goes. A pretty centrepiece and one that is quickly made has the design stencilled in some appropriate color, and only the edge is embroidered. The button-holing may be done either in white or in the color of the design. Sometimes the tray and carver's cloths are made of hem-stitched damask and have only an embroidered initial or monogram. These are simple and pretty for the every-day table and are a little easier to iron than the more elaborately embroidered ones. A pretty idea for mats to place under the vegetable dishes is to embroider a rectangular or oval piece of linen with some pretty design, buttonholing it to an under piece of linen of the same shape on three of the sides but leaving the other side free that a sheet of asbestos may be slipped in to keep the heat from the table.

In selecting a set of china it is wise to avoid the brighter colors and more elaborate designs. While these might be very pretty in a single piece or if they were used only occasionally, one soon wearies of them when they are repeated on the whole table, and must appear day after day. The simpler designs and colors will invariably prove the more pleasing. The illustration shows a cup and saucer from a set in delicate ivory and gold, the only relieving color being the little blue flower that breaks the gold band. The design is simplicity itself, yet the effect when the table is set is very charming. For most of us there is a set of best china put away for occasions when we entertain, and an every-day set that is less perishable and usually much less pretty. But there is no reason why this should not be nearly, perhaps altogether, as pretty as the other one. Even among the less costly dishes a careful search is almost sure to be rewarded by the finding of some simple attractive design in colors that are quite as pleasing as the more expensive dishes, and equally good shapes are to be found in both qualities of china.



DINING SET IN IVORY, GOLD AND BLUE

It is very satisfactory to have both sets repeat the same color, or if that seems too little variety at least to have colors that harmonize so that the odd dishes which do service with both, such as salad bowl, olive dishes, and celery tray will look equally well with either. These odd dishes may be more elaborate in color and design, and often serve the purpose of adding a contrasting color or intensifying one that has been used sparingly in the set. We are so often tempted by a pretty piece of china in the shops and forget that if it does not harmonize with what we already have, the effect may be as hopelessly ugly as if we had bought the crudest thing upon the shelves. Silver and glass may be used sparingly or in abundance according to one's taste and one's pocket-book, but even if one must limit it to a very little it is better to have what there is good. If much silver is used grey must be counted as a