

THE TABLE AND HOW TO DECORATE IT

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The Table and How to Decorate It by Mary Whipple Alexander

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PREPARED FOR A BRIDESMAIDS' DINNER.

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ILLUSTRATED



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PREFACE

A STORY has been told me to the effect that one of the most successful makers of magazines in this country, when asked if he knew the real secret of the popularity of his periodical, answered that he only tried all the while to print a magazine to suit himself, and that in suiting himself he found that he pleased thousands of other people who had about the same tastes. This story seems to apply to the making of this little book—my first. It has long been my wish to have in convenient form some ideas about the table which have been available only after a search here and there and somewhere else, and now it is my hope to find that there are many other women with tastes so much like my own that they will be glad to possess this book for ready and frequent reference.

There comes into almost every woman's life the desire to make her table look especially at-

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tractive when guests are expected. It is to meet the needs of such times that this book is modestly offered. Figuratively speaking, it has been my privilege to go into my neighbors' gardens and pluck flowers freely; so if there be any merit in this work, let it be understood that the author does not pretend to be entitled to the credit, but asks rather that it shall be bestowed upon those whose ideas she has brought together in combination with her own.

There are many women, having the desire to entertain, who hesitate when they consider the trouble or the expense involved. Trouble can not well be eliminated, if the planning and a good part of the actual work be called by that name; for much personal supervision by the hostess is demanded in entertaining according to modern ideas of hospitality, even if the household include several servants. But the spirit in which a woman undertakes and carries out her hospitable intentions in honor of a special guest or for some holiday celebration makes the work ap-

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pear light or hard, as she herself may determine. We all know those among our friends who, if they have taken any extra pains for our benefit, make us forget instantly all about the matter in the cordial reception they give us. The prettily-set table and the well-selected and well-served repast we accept as a compliment gladly paid to our presence. Such women usually possess good ideas of their own; but to those who lack originality, yet who wish to entertain, and are seeking new ideas, many of the following suggestions may be welcome.

As for expense, careful planning and the adaptation of inexpensive materials to secure certain effects often will curtail the cost in a marked degree. Simplicity is always in good taste, and many of the ideas here presented, although of the simplest order, produce some of the prettiest results.

Except in a few cases no attempt has been made to suggest bills of fare or give recipes. These matters have been left to the discretion of the hostess. Even if the luncheon or dinner

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is to be simple, let just as much thought and care be expended on each detail as if it were to be an elaborate affair. Let the cooking and serving be as nearly perfect as possible. Let there be no failure to have the hot dishes served hot, not lukewarm; and when cold dishes, as a salad, are served, have the plates well chilled. It is such little things as these that go far to make an entertainment delightful.

A word or two as to the table and its appointments may not be out of place. The table itself may be round, square, or oval; fashion is sometimes more in favor of one shape than another. The round table is, perhaps, the most attractive and lends itself better to the promotion of general conversation. Many people have made for them by carpenters round tops that can be used over their square tables.

For luncheons a beautifully polished table is prettier uncovered, save for the lace, drawn-work, or other doilies which are used under the plates, butter-plates, and glasses. A center-