

# Designed for Living

by Myrtle Campbell

**I**N THE tiny house of the new bride or the most pretentious mansion, silver enhances the beauty and charm of the table setting. Sterling silver once bought is yours as long as you live; therefore, time and thought should be devoted to the choice of a pattern which you will love more the longer it is used.

How can one judge good design in table silver? Fundamentally, look for good proportions and contour; certain lines of harmony and symmetry will be attractive and pleasing through many generations. Good balance can be "sensed" by holding a spoon, fork or knife in the hand.

The particular design is the next point to consider. In the various periods of history, man chose different objects as his ideals of beauty. These motifs represent the periods of design, and one may choose a pattern which would be appropriate in a particular house and its furnishings.

Egyptian decorative motifs are based on plants, the palm, lotus, papyrus or the sun, animal and winged human figures. Characteristic Greek motifs are the laurel, husk, egg and dart, fluting and fret. During the prime of the Roman Empire the designers took

Greek inspiration and produced designs in a more exuberant manner. Some Roman motifs are: festoons of fruit or foliage with animal forms and winged dolphins. The Gothic influence is depicted by arches, conventionalized oak and ivy leaves and in general a sterner type of design.

With the Renaissance design burst into a more fantastic, richer beauty. Following the same trends as furniture design there came the periods of Louis XIV, XV, XVI, the Directoire and Empire; each with its individual style. From England come the graceful curves of the reign of William and Mary and the familiar cockleshell of Queen Anne's period. During the Georgian period many famous artists such as Chippendale, Heppelwhite, Adam Brothers and Sheraton influenced English decoration. Chippendale adopted Chinese motifs.

Colonial, as a term, has come to mean a period of some two hundred years, from the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620 up to 1825. Early American craftsmen, one being Paul Revere, left a definite imprint of designs which fit smoothly into the atmosphere of Early American houses. It is characterized by simplicity, by fine structural form, and by the elimination of all but functional corners, curves and details. This is not to be confused with the modernistic of a few years ago.

After securing the pattern they cherish most, many women cheat themselves out of its fullest enjoyment because they keep their sterling tucked away and bring it out for use only on special occasions. Sterling silver will not wear out; indeed, its beauty will grow with daily use. The wondrous beauty and mellow luster of antique silver is the result of daily use through many generations.

With this important secret of constant usage in mind there are a few simple things one should do to care for their silver adequately:

1. Use Sterling silver at every meal.
2. Rotate its usage; bring all pieces into use during the week.
3. Wash silver promptly after each meal, using hot, soapy water; rinse in hot, clean water and wipe thoroughly with a soft, clean cloth.
4. Special cleaning and polishing may be done with a good silver polish. In polishing the silver rub each piece briskly lengthwise, never crosswise or with a circular motion.

Silver should be kept in tarnish pre-



ventative bags and rolls. Scratching worries many housewives, but actually the minute scratches will add to the beauty of your silver, for millions of fine scratches will give the silver a more lasting finish than could ever be achieved by mechanical means. Patina is the word which refers to the soft, lustrous finish the metal acquires after years of daily usage.

The good quality of the silver is assured if sterling is purchased, but be cautious about so-called "low-priced sterling" and "bargains." Perhaps the design is inferior or soon to be discontinued. Perhaps the workmanship is poor or the silver is too thin to stand ordinary wear. It is best to buy from a reliable jeweler who is equipped to give accurate advice.

The word "sterling" is a contraction of "Easterling," the name of a North German band of traders in the twelfth century who were noted for the uniform fineness of their silver coins. Sterling is the best known and most respected marking of silver in use today.

Pure silver alone is too soft for everyday use. Copper is usually added to give the needed stiffness and wearing quality. Sterling is composed of 925 parts pure silver in every 1,000. This proportion never varies and is set by law.

China may be broken, rugs and drapery may become worn, but silver remains beautiful and enduring—a precious heirloom to pass on to future generations.

