

"A thing well-displayed is half sold. I'm told," admits Mr. Blackburn, "Although I have no heirs to carry on the business I recently enlarged the china department because," he says, "it brings me pleasure. Owning a china shop is something I really enjoy. I can't imagine anything else I'd rather do for a living than sell china. Perhaps it's because I've been brought up with the business."

Strangely enough the wealth of around 300 patterns in stock presents a problem for young brides. It is so difficult to make a choice!

IMPORTANT CHOICE

"For this reason, I always urge the girls to come in again and again before making so important a decision on a life time investment," says Mrs. Arthur Burton head of the china department, whose valued experience makes her an authority on ware that will accent a bride's future life where dear companionship will centre, ware that will serve those happy occasions: birthday parties, wedding receptions, anniversaries and other social festivities of a yet invisible world.

"The dinnerware as well as the silver, glassware and linen should set the keynote of the dining room" she tells us. "Color and pattern play such an important part, they should be carefully considered. That which looks well on display may look entirely different in another room or in another lighting. It takes time to judge, weigh the facts, and decide. So I say, do take plenty of time to make a happy choice."

Do you remember when it was the fashion to order items of china by the dozen? Such is the case no longer.

BUY PLACE SETTINGS

"The tendency today is to buy by the place-setting," says Mrs. Burton. "This is really better, for it allows a young bride to have something to show for each setting, and does not involve heavy expense all at one time."

Here are some tips on china care which Mrs. Burton suggests: warm dishes gradually; take care in the choice of detergents; use just warm water; let dishes soak if not convenient to wash soon after use; put cloth between each plate of precious china; hang cups on square hooks or stand them separately.

It is said that our present day living is founded upon the past, and good design and beauty are timeless. "All beautiful things,"

says Oscar Wilde, "belong to the same age." Lovely china is a source of pride and a symbol of quality. A china shop such as Stroud's leads one through civilization's garden, where the amenities of life are beautifully expressed. Little wonder that china's first appearance was an "epidemic that once held the whole of Europe in polite and beneficent thrall."

Belle-vignette speaking of china, at an exhibition of still life paintings by Mark O'Dea at the Brandon Inn, in Brandon Vermont, where we visited recently, we noted that Mr. O'Dea had painted some fascinating historical subjects. These included a grouping of Martha Washington's favorite china, her "blue and white"; the Boston tea party bowl and Paul Revere's silver coffee urn were displayed against a background of wallpaper from the Revere house (1735-1818); pottery, glass and tile were shown which was recently excavated in Jamestown, a city founded in 1607; and the cup which John Alden brought with him on the Mayflower. It seemed a most interesting and splendid way to show examples of rare and priceless heirlooms of a nation's heritage.