

HOUSEHOLD LINENS AS CHRISTMAS GIFTS

By Emma M. Hooper

WHEN giving linen as a Christmas present select only what the person to whom it is to be sent would not be likely to buy for herself. Necessities she will certainly have, but dainty pieces or expensive sets she has probably thought impossible, consequently such ornamental pieces will be doubly prized as gifts. In buying table linens do not indulge in large patterns, and remember that all women dearly love pretty tablecloths and napkins.

The torchon and Renaissance trimmed linens are the newest shown, and embrace many pieces, from a doily six inches square to a bed-cover ninety by a hundred inches. The Renaissance lace effects wash well, and are used over white or a color, all pieces having linen centres. The small doilies retail from nineteen cents up, a handsome piece sixteen inches square, suitable for a bureau, costing a dollar and seventy-five cents. A piece fifty-four inches square, with a lace edge, and wide insertion set in five inches above the edge, is twenty dollars, or fifteen with less depth to the edge and border. These are exquisite for a five o'clock tea-table. The regular tablecloth sizes in this work are seventy-two, ninety and a hundred and eight inches square. A set of twelve plate doilies costing three dollars, if tied with a narrow white ribbon, would make a dainty gift, or a centrepiece twenty inches square at the same or a less price.

Bedspreads and Bureau Covers

BED sets include a single-size (seventy-four by ninety-two inches) bedspread with one pillow-sham, or two of the latter with a cover ninety by a hundred inches, with linen centre, border and insertion of the heavy lace. These sets sell for twenty-five dollars up to five times that amount, and are often made more beautiful by the giver embroidering the centre. One pretty set shows a wreath of blue forget-me-nots inclosing a monogram, with the pillow-shams to match.

Pretty bureau covers are made of two or three of the Renaissance centres joined together, and lined with colored silk or satin. The pincushion is covered to match, with full ribbon bows on the ends. The latest pincushions are usually long and narrow, twelve by four inches, and either round like bolsters or partly flat.

The torchon-trimmed pieces are to be found in the same sizes as the Renaissance, but as they are perfectly new this season they are more expensive than the former. These pieces are chiefly made in Vienna, and have pure linen centres with heavy lace and lace edge and insertion with heavy torchon wears well. They are finished with fancy designs and are embroidered with cut-out embroidery. A centre twenty-four inches square, embroidered in silk, lace-edged, and a cut-out pattern filled in with fancy stitches, costs ten dollars, and is pretty enough to merit being handed down as an heirloom.

Dainty Covers for Afternoon Tea-Tables

A ROUND piece sufficiently large for a small tea-table is nine dollars; for two dollars a very dainty nine-inch square may be had. The idea of using torchon lace may be utilized on other linens, and scalloped and hemstitched edges of centres embroidered at home may be finished in this manner.

The newest tray cloths are of damask linen in such patterns as small dots, ferns, acorns, floral and conventional designs with scalloped edges and embroidered. These cost from a dollar and seventy-five cents to six dollars and a half, and come in two sizes, twenty-two by thirty-four, and twenty-seven by forty-five inches, the latter answering for a small side table in the dining-room. Oval doilies are newer than the square ones, and come in all sizes from seven by nine to eleven by eighteen inches. They are usually sold in sets of four, and are of fine twilled linen embroidered in colors or pure white, in designs of cactus, ferns, chrysanthemums, clover, snowdrops, lilies, etc., and are suitable for use on the table or sideboard.

Round doilies, embroidered either in white or colors, are from three to twelve dollars per dozen, and come in four sizes from five inches and a half to twelve. All of the embroidery is in fast colors. Many persons use these doilies under each dish set upon the table, having the carver's cloth and embroidered centrepiece to match. The damask doilies are used on polished tables, round or square shapes, and are hemstitched, embroidered or scalloped, or in plain linen hemstitched, with the initial embroidered in one corner in a raised letter an inch and a half long. If able to embroider, your gift will be more appreciated if you do this part of the work yourself, buying the pieces finished on the edge with hemstitching or lace. New shapes and ideas appear every season.

Table Linen in All Sorts of Designs

SEPARATE cloths are now considered handsomer than any piece goods. They come in the double damask from the eight-quarter size to eight yards long for a banquet table. Many are hemstitched with a border to rest on the table and another lower down. One of these cloths two by four yards, with a dozen seven-eighths napkins to match, and of excellent quality, costs sixteen dollars. The yard size of napkins rivals the size mentioned above, leaving the five-eighths for breakfast use, and the smaller fringed or hemstitched ones for tea. The damask most highly valued by housekeepers is the fine Irish linen bleached to spotless white. It may be found in such patterns as bunches of lilacs, snowdrops, dots, shaded disks, clover and shamrock leaves, ferns, oak, maple and ivy leaves, the arum lily, chrysanthemums, arabesques, the Greek scroll, Persian designs, Renaissance effects, and conventional patterns that modify a simple blossom into a cross between a scroll and a stately stalk.

Tablecloths for Square or Oval Tables

THE seventy-two-inch width table linen will fit a square or oval table. The length for a really handsome cloth should be four yards, the table which it covers seating ten people comfortably. When a tablecloth like this is laundered it should be ironed while very damp until perfectly dry, using a heavy and hot iron. The cloth should be folded lengthwise of the centre three times, and the same number crosswise. Each napkin should be folded first down the centre and then to form a square. Round tablecloths are considered a novelty as yet; they come in sizes a hundred and eight and ninety inches for a large table, down to one only forty inches in diameter for an afternoon tea-table. There are cloths to match in the oak leaf, French scroll, fern, anemone, ivy, etc., designs that may be had for eight to thirty-five dollars for the large sizes, and from three dollars upward for the smaller; the napkins are not included, as they vary according to the quality and size, five dollars being the average price for the new patterns. The round cloths, it must be remembered, can only be used upon round tables.

If the purely useful is sought after, nothing will wear like the unbleached German linen. Cloths may be had in the bleached, half-bleached or cream and unbleached shades, the latter in German or Irish goods.

The average napkins are the five-eighths and six-eighths sizes, twenty-one and twenty-seven inches square, and cost no more if they match the cloth. A good quality costs four dollars and a half for a cloth ninety by seventy-two inches, with napkins to match. It greatly improves the appearance of such a set to hemstitch all of the edges.

Table Linen Which is Inexpensive

STILL cheaper linen comes in pretty artistic patterns, and may be used for breakfast even when a better quality is kept for dinner use.

At the linen stores and department stores orders will be taken to have cloths and napkins hemstitched and embroidered for about three dollars a set. One cloth and napkins neatly folded, with a sachet bag of lavender tied on the ribbon band, is a far more sensible, and will certainly prove a more welcome gift than some trifle that will pass with the season. If hemstitched and initialed the set will be welcomed doubly by the busy housekeeper. If able to add a centrepiece the gift will be a very handsome one.

The Colored and the Fancy Linens

THE fancy colored sets are of pure linen so highly polished as to resemble satin, and may be used on either side owing to this finish. They come in the two and the two-and-a-half yard sizes, with napkins to match, and cost thirteen dollars and fifty cents a set in pink, and light and dark blue shades. White sets, having fancy brocaded borders in scarlet, pink, gold, dark and light blue, are finished with a narrow hemstitched edge done by hand. They cost from fifteen to twenty-two dollars and fifty cents a set. The cloths are from two to four yards in length. Where one can afford a variety one such set nicely boxed forms a lovely gift not likely to be duplicated. These cloths are newer than the regular colored luncheon sets. A cloth and six napkins, in pure linen, sell for thirty dollars down to ten, and of an inferior grade as low as six. All colored goods bought from a reliable dealer are warranted to be fast color. The Holbein effects are popular with a white ground, and shot thread in blue, cardinal, gold or green for the luncheon cloths. The centrepiece used with them should be of white, embroidered with the corresponding color.

The monogram on the cloth should be worked on one side in letters three inches long; on the napkins in one corner.

Linen and Muslin Sheets and Pillow-Cases

LINEN pillow-cases that answer for both day and night use are made with one row of hand hemstitching, and embroidery on one side only, with the initial in the centre just above the hem on the embroidered side, using a letter two inches long. These cost from five dollars and a half to seven dollars and a half per pair, and are thirty-six inches long and twenty-two to twenty-seven inches wide. Without any embroidery, but hemstitched and of a good grade of linen, the cases are excellent at two dollars and fifty cents a pair. These may be used under a sham during the day.

Muslin pillow-cases may be had in all widths, the yard always being the limit in length, and are plain or hemstitched.

Bolster-cases have not much sale; they are usually twice the price of pillow-cases and are two yards long; as housekeepers' fancies vary regarding the size of bolsters it is better to make these with a two-inch hem, hemstitching them if time permits.

Exquisite Pillow and Sheet Shams

REALLY handsome linen pillow-shams cost from ten dollars a pair upward, and are trimmed with hand embroidery, hemstitched edges and drawn-work border. These are in beautiful patterns of graceful vines and sprays of clover and ivy leaves, scrolls, blossoms, etc., and are as pretty as any one can desire. All shams are thirty-two inches square where a monogram is used. It is placed in the middle, though the best are minus its owner's stamp. Less expensive shams are hemstitched and lace-edged, with a row of inserting as a border; others have the trimming of Hamburg embroidery, and when the monogram is added look very well for an outlay of from two or three dollars upward. Shams made at home that are a mass of drawn-work are handsome over colored silk, but if bought are most expensive.

Each season more linen sheets are sold, as the prejudice against them is gradually passing away. They are delightful for summer use. The trouble with ready-made muslin and linen sheets is that the manufacturers try to save in the length. A sheet will not tuck in well if it is not two yards and three-quarters long. In linen the reliable hemstitched goods cost from four dollars a pair upward, and in muslin from a dollar. If hemstitched, the latter usually cost about fifteen cents apiece more. A single initial marks sheets in the centre of the width and an inch above the top hem, which is about two inches and a half deep.

Embroidered Linen and Lace Bedspreads

THE embroidered linen bedspreads are novel and expensive, but they wear well and are the prettiest covers known, except the more expensive and frailer Renaissance lace designs. They cost from seventeen dollars and fifty cents to thirty dollars, and come in two sizes, ninety by a hundred inches and seventy-two by a hundred. They have wide hemstitching and three rows of drawn-work about twelve inches apart, with the embroidery twenty inches from the hemstitched edge, and running all around, in such attractive patterns as grapevines, ferns, clover leaves, fancy scrolls, etc. Linen sheets are often made into handsome covers by hemstitching all the edges, finishing with a border of heavy linen lace, and ornamenting the centre with drawn-work and embroidery in white or a color, or blossoms in the natural coloring; a very large monogram ornaments the centre of all linen bedspreads. White lawn spreads are made at home with a lace ruffle and hand embroidery, but they are quite as expensive as those of linen. Dotted Swiss bedspreads and shams lined with delicate shades make pretty Christmas presents.

The Pretty New Hemstitched Towels

HALF a dozen handsome towels form a graceful remembrance that becomes more valuable when the initial is worked above the hem and in the centre. Embroider in white rather than colors. The hemstitched towels are preferred to those with fringed ends, and a medium weight of huckaback for actual use, though housekeepers like a few damask for the guest room and to afford a variety on the towel-rack. An excellent towel of good size costs three dollars a dozen; at four dollars much better ones may be procured, and at ten dollars grass-bleached huckaback towels that would ornament any linen-closet may be found with hemstitched edges. Even ordinary hemmed toweling is now preferred to the fringe, that soon pulls out and is seldom ironed. Lovely soft or hard finished bath towels should be given in pairs, with the initial worked as on the other designs. Turkish wash-rags to match should be hemmed and have a smaller letter in one corner. The latter cost five cents each, and the towels from a dollar a pair upward.

When making a Christmas present of linen much thought should be expended in its selection, so that the recipient may feel that her house has been the particular one the generous giver had in mind. When sending it the package should be neatly wrapped, and in it placed a little note full of wishes for a "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Editor's Note—Miss Hooper's answers to her correspondents, under the title of "The Home Dressmaker," will be found on page 46 of this issue of the Journal.