QUERIES.

Any queries, domestic or otherwise, will be inserted free of charge. Correspondents replying to queries are requested to give the date of the question they are kind enough to answer, and address their reply to 'The Lady Editor, NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, *Auckland,' and in the top left-hand corner of the envelope 'Answer' or 'Query,' as the case may be. The* RULES *for correspondents are few and simple, but readers of the* NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC *are requested to comply with them.*

Queries and Answers to Queries are always inserted as soon as possible after they are received, though, owing to pressure on this column, it may be a week or two before they appear.—ED.

RULES.

No. 1.—*All communications must be written on one side of the paper only.*

No. 2.—*All letters (not left by hand) must be prepaid, or they will receive no attention.*

No. 3.—*The editor cannot undertake to reply except through the columns of this paper.*

QUERIES.

BRAISED BEEF.—A few instructions as to preparing this will greatly oblige.—META.

CREAM CANDY.—I fancy this must be an American recipe, as I cannot find it in English cookery books. If you know how to make it, will you be good enough to tell me?—HELEN R.

PIE CRUST.—Kindly give a recipe in the GRAPHIC for a good pie-crust, and how to roll it.—MRS MOLLIE.

ANSWERS TO QUERIES.

'Nannie.'—I have a genuine Scotch recipe for barley meal scones, which I hope will suit you. It is for boiled scones. Put on a little milk and water and a small piece of butter in a pan—say two breakfast cups altogether, and about one teaspoonful of butter. When it boils stir in barley meal like you were making porridge till it is quite thick. Take it from the fire, and take a spoonful and knead it, and roll it out quite thinly; put it on the griddle, and cut it in four; fire on both sides, a few minutes will do, then proceed to another. It is best to keep the pan with the mixture covered till all is used up.

SPONGE CAKE, LARGE SIZE (Bella Mia).—8 eggs, 1lb white sugar 1lb fine flour, ½ teacup milk, 1 large teaspoonful baking powder. Put eggs and sugar in a basin and whisk them either with a good whisk or two forks for fifteen to twenty minutes, then sift in the flower and stir very gently, then the milk, and then the baking powder. Mix all well but gently with a spoon. Butter and flour a cake-pan, and bake gently till firm.

HOW DELMONICO SETS A TABLE.

BY FOSTER COATES.

DELMONICO is a name famous the world over. Wherever lovers of good living assemble the name is known. For generations it has stood for all that is good in a gastronomical way. All the famous men and women who have visited New York during the fifty years gone by, have crossed the threshold of the world-famed restaurant and been refreshed there. Famous dinners have been given in its great white-and-gold dining-room; politicians, statesmen, editors, artists and ministers have dined there and thundered forth their after-dinner eloquence; college boys have feasted and sang there; and the big building has sheltered beauty and wealth at hundreds of great private entertainments, where rare gems have gleamed and the odour of thousands of roses made one almost believe that fairyland was a reality. Delmonico has no rival in America, if indeed in the world. Everything is on the most lavish scale—rich, rare and costly.

How many persons know how to give a dinner, set a table, and serve foods and wines as they should be served, in an orderly, appetizing way?

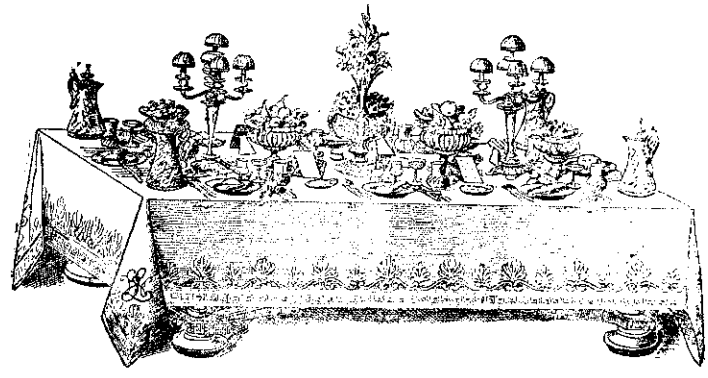
Epicureans differ as to what constitutes a perfect dinner. There are certain well-known dishes that every cook knows how to prepare, but the lack of unanimity of opinion among dinner-givers as to the service of rich viands and rare wines, is very curious.

No one will deny that a dinner properly cooked and well served is a delight, and, if the company be agreeable, it is perhaps one of the chief pleasures of life. But all people cannot have rare foods, served on gold or silver plates, and not all of us possess handsomely decorated dining-rooms, and for the lack of these we must make up in less expensive ways. And one of the most important is a well set and attractive board, snowy napery, polished glass and china, and brighly burnished silverware, if you possess it.

In New York city dinner-giving is carried on to an extent only equalled in London and Paris, and many are the uses made of flowers, candelabra, coloured lights, silverware and silver and gold plate, and from the reports about these great dinners the woman who wishes to establish a reputation for good dinners may learn much.

Learn first, says Delmonico, how to set a table. A round table is better than a square table, if the dining-room is large enough to permit it. If not then the ordinary oblong extension table must be used. The round table is much more preferable, and easier to seat people at, besides it gives a suggestion of the famous 'King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.' A few prominent society women still cling to the old-fashioned long, narrow table. Mrs Astor, for example, still uses that style of dining-table in order that her famous gold dinner-set may be placed to the best advantage. Mrs August Belmont, on the contrary, prefers an oblong table, and the decorations for an elaborate dinner are carried out to make the shape more pronounced. Flowers should never be absent from the dinner-table. No matter how homely, they add to the picturesqueness of the feast; and it is important that the temperature of the room should be kept a trifle cool, than a degree too warm. An over-heated dining-room is an abomination.

Let us see how a table is set for a fashionable dinner-party. On the table is first placed a thick flannel cloth; the thicker it is the better, as it prevents noise of the dishes as they are placed on it. Over this is spread a snowy-white damask table-cloth, bearing the family crest or coat-of-arms. Sometimes over this is placed still another, of elaborate embroidery and lace, lined with pink or yellow satin, as taste dictates, or whatever colour is to predominate at the dinner. The plates are first placed upon the table. As these are to remain until after soup is served, they are always the handsomest in the gold or china sets, as the case may be. Don't crowd. Each guest should be allowed a space of two feet or twenty-six inches, if the table will admit of it, and the plates placed at equal distances apart. Place two dinner-forks to the left of each plate; also an oyster fork with prongs resting on the edge of the plate. On the right must be a dinner knife and a spoon for soup. The glasses are arranged at the right of each guest on a line with the inner edge of the plate. The water glass is set next to the plate. Then glasses for whatever other beverages are intended to be served. If wines are objectionable, any of the best mineral waters can be used, with French coffee at the close. A glass, whether of water or



A TABLE FOR EIGHT PERSONS AS SET BY DELMONICO.

any other liquid, should never be filled more than three-quarters full.

In the middle of the table is the big centrepiece of silver, and at each end handsome candelabra with coloured satin or flower shades. In between are silver compotiers of fruit, one at each end, and four low compotiers—two at each end—filled with cakes and *marron glacés*. Two other dishes of fruits glacé, are placed one at either end. These dishes of glacés are used principally at winter dinners. In the summer, different kinds of fresh fruit are substituted in their stead. Two compotiers, which stand on either side of the centrepiece, are filled with favours for the ladies, and may be anything that the fancy dictates. Six silver shells, three on each side, are filled with olives and salted almonds, to be served after soup. Six or eight handsome salt-cellars are usually placed on the table, each one serving two guests. As no individual cellars are any longer used, the salt must be taken from these large salt-cellars. The napkins to be used are large damask, over-folded so as to reveal the monogram, and each forms the receptacle for a dinner bread roll. When the roll is taken out of the napkin by each guest, it should always be placed at the left of the plate. The name-cards must be placed on the top of the napkin, and the menu-cards at the right of the plate.

If decanters are used, which are usually handsome glass jugs covered with silver, they are placed at opposite corners of the table, one at each corner, making four in all. These generally contain claret and sherry. Burgundy is sometimes decantered, but authorities differ about the advisability of doing this.

On a side table, the butler has all the extra silver and china required. The plates are of course changed, after soup, with each course, until cream and fruits, which are the last things on the menu.

The finger-bowls, which may be of gold, silver, or enamel ware, or very fine glass, are not placed on the table until after the ices and fruits have been served. They are then put on handsome dessert plates with fine embroidered doyleys.

The table decorations of flowers must always be in keeping with the colour of the dinner decided on, and consist of a large centre vase of flowers, not high enough to obstruct the view across the table. It should extend within ten inches of the inner edge of the plates. A few hostesses like to have large bouquets at each end of the table also, but this is not necessary. A pretty idea is to decorate the chandelier above with smilax and flowers.

The corsage bouquets for the ladies are placed at their right hand, just in front of the plate; while the gentleman's boutonnière is placed on his napkin, with his dinner card.

An old-time expression, 'When the cloth was removed' is going into disuse, as the cloth never is removed at the present time. In the olden days of polished tables, the cloth was taken off and fruits with coffee served on the bare table. Later side-slips were used that could be taken off after the game and thus save crumbing; but all that has been changed, and now the same table-cloth remains throughout the entire dinner.

For a dinner of eight or ten persons, two men usually serve. For fourteen, sixteen, or eighteen, four men are in attendance. While for over that, six or eight men are in charge.

Thus an elaborate dinner of the present time is served, and the cost may range from one pound to five pound per person, as the host pleases.

LONDON AND PARIS FASHIONS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

(SEE FASHION PLATE, PAGE 215.)

THE very useful and becoming blouse bodice has had rather a run in fashionable circles. I learn that just now it is being extensively adopted in Sydney for the summer weather, and I suppose you in New Zealand are doing likewise. Lace is much used, put round the pointed bodices, or arranged as a wide frill over the hips. But I must try and describe one or two blouse bodices, tea-jackets, etc. I think I will take the latter first. I saw a lovely one in black striped stockingette, with deep falling lace collar and lace cuffs, also lace in a full cascade down the front, and round the bodice. This is illustrated by the sketch in the top left-hand corner. Opposite to this the artist has drawn a most useful bodice to be worn with any skirt. It is cream flannel, with bronze silk vest, closely pleated at the throat, where a turn-down collar meets it, secured by a dainty cream bow. At the waist it is covered by a Swiss belt made of pleated cream silk, with plain cream bands, embroidered with black or narrow bronze braid, the braid also edging the seemingly loose fronts. A bow of cream ribbon hides the fastening of the belt, whilst a deep frilled basque finishes the elegant bodice.

The central figure represents a very pretty, yet simple tea gown of flowered delaine, over a full front, reaching to the feet, of soft silk or sateen to harmonise with the floral design. The arrangement of the delaine at the throat is rather new, as it forms a sort of loose, coat-shaped collar, revealing the silk gathered up to the neck.

These same stylish blouses are also used for evening dress as the fourth figure will explain. This is made of palest blue silk, relieved by tiny chiffon frills round the low-cut corsage and sleeves.

The fifth figure is a very stylish blouse of black and white spotted sateen, the yoke and cuffs being of handsome white embroidery. The crossed belt is made of the sateen.

Another pretty blouse I saw was an effective combination of white surah silk and black velvet, the yoke being formed of pleated silk and velvet, and the cuffs trimmed to match. I liked a plain blouse of white flannel, with turned down collar and deep cuffs, herringboned in silk of any colour. Also an exceedingly pretty silk blouse in a delicate shade of pink, effectively trimmed with points of black velvet.

Amongst tea-gowns—which, by the way, we are all wearing whilst cosily toasting our toes before going upstairs to dress for dinner, for it is very cold in London and Paris just now—I fell in love with one or two worn by stylish and rather pretty women. One was plain, showing the lines of the waist. The materials it was made of were Japanese brocade and gauze. Wing sleeves have not quite disappeared, but I imagine everybody must be tired of them. The prettiest gowns had sleeves that were wrinkled all the way up, or slashed.

There are some lovely silks for swell tea-gowns, those used for this purpose costing over six shillings a yard, but they shimmer like satin, and look enchanting. Sicilian brocades, used chiefly in trains, wide width, only ten shillings a yard, are so lovely one wants to buy lots of them. Some sweet little frills for the edging of skirts are made of gauze, and are said to wash. HELOISE.

PILLOWS.

THE use of a pillow is not a matter of mere blind usage. It has a physiological basis. We sleep for the most part, on the side, and without a pillow the head would be uncomfortably and harmfully lower than the body.

It will be remembered that Jacob, when fleeing from Esau, took a stone for a pillow. He needed something for the purpose, and nothing better than a stone presented itself. Such practices are common in Africa at the present day. Bishop Taylor probably found it convenient, if not necessary, to take up with them in his travels in that land; for on his return to this country, he rejected the soft pillows of his friendly hosts, and, sometimes at least, substituted one of books.

Some people rest the neck instead of the head on hard pillows. In Africa extraordinary headgears make this practice necessary, and many a civilised woman has been compelled by a somewhat similar coiffure to forego both the pillow and the recumbent posture.

A consideration of the physiological reason for pillows will suggest their proper thickness. They should merely bring the head to the natural level. Some pillows are much too thick. By bending the neck unduly, they interfere with the outflow of the venous blood from the head. The pillow that just fills up the space above the shoulder best suits its end.

Again, pillows of feathers are objectionable.

It should be remembered that more blood, and hence more heat, goes to the head than to any other part of the body. Head-heating pillows are against the wholesome maxim, 'Keep the feet warm, but the head cool.' There is nothing better than the hair pillow.

Further, the pillow is for the head, not for the shoulders. To rest the shoulders on the pillow defeats the very end for which it is used.

Finally, special care should be taken of infants in this matter. We have seen their heads sunken deep in the softest and thickest of pillows, and their faces, as a natural consequence, covered with great beads of perspiration. It is no wonder that children so treated die.