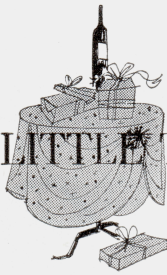


OUR LITTLE TABLE



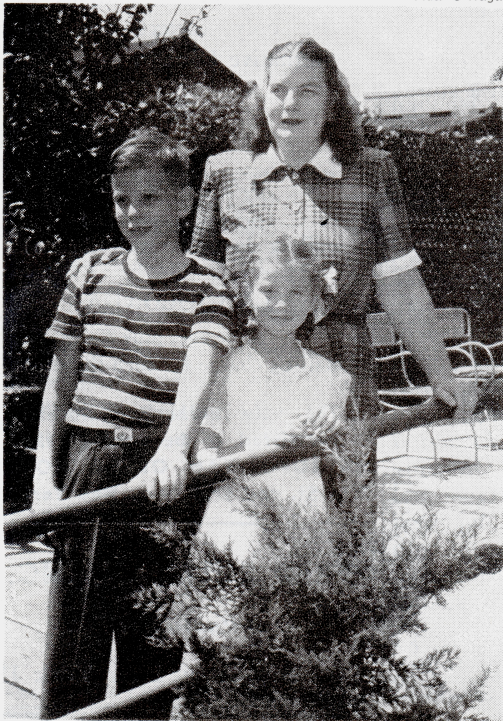
• No priceless antiques grace Margaret Harshaw's comfortable New Jersey home, for, says the soprano, "my hobby is my children."

Remembering that her children started her on her china collection, the soprano tells of her first acquisition, a green and white English bone-china cup and saucer which were the gift of her fourteen-year-old son Oscar. "I think I'm going to start a china collection," the soprano had said one day. Her son took her at her word.

Since that day, Margaret Harshaw has acquired nearly thirty cups and saucers, eight teapots, sugars and creamers. Early in her collecting life, she added some Royal Crown Derby. A handsome orange, blue and gold creamer and sugar with a huge, ten-cup teapot

Below: Oscar and Margaret Eichna with their mother, Margaret Harshaw between Cincinnati operas

Ada O'Hagan



in the "Royal Mandarin" pattern are among her most frequently used pieces.

From Berlin, the singer brought a Rosenthal cup, saucer and plate and a *Berliner Stadt* coffeepot in pure white china as flawless as a pearl.

Singing in England, Margaret Harshaw spied a splendid set of Royal Doulton in the "Blue Willow" pattern. Home came a sugar, creamer and teapot, bought between rehearsals for one of the ten *Don Giovanni*s she performed in Glyndebourne.

Recent additions to the collection are a paper-thin Irish Beleek cup and saucer; a very old Chinese wood cup and saucer, lacquered in black and gold; and a tiny Russian cup with a thin handle.

Extending her hobby a bit, Margaret Harshaw bought three pieces of Sèvres "for seventy-five cents," as she proudly tells us, at one of the many stalls along the Seine.

The "why" of Miss Harshaw's collection? "Well," the soprano says, "I just like to collect something that is both pretty and usable. In fact, I started with teacups simply because I thought they were pretty."

Collections are everywhere in the soprano's New Jersey home. Young Oscar collects everything from stamps, coins, books, minerals and telescopes to radio kits, of which he has five, and some dead mice—discovered in an owl's stomach—which he brought home only once!

Little Margaret, although not quite a model child, is not so much a threat to household peace: she collects only pictures of baseball players.

In a house which is characterized by casual ease rather than any special decor, Margaret Harshaw keeps everything "plain and comfortable—just family style. We have everything ready for living, not for showing."

Thus a fine solid brass samovar, which Margaret bought in Greenwich Village one year before her marriage, has been restored by the soprano's husband Oscar Eichna, who took off layers of black paint to find Russian seals stamped "St. Petersburg." The samovar is used by the Eichnas, as is a Paul Revere silver bowl which Margaret calls the "centerpiece of my collection."

Urging her children to go ahead with their recently begun collection of rare foreign dolls, Margaret has brought home French porcelain figures, English palace guards, Bavarian peasants and miniature Mexicans—"even with babies on their backs."

"We have everything," Margaret Harshaw says, "but best of all, we have a life we enjoy, because we just live!"