

SOME HINTS ABOUT MENDING.

The majority of women take genuine delight in a bargain, and they rejoice in any worthy method of making the means at their disposal do all the service possible toward the family comfort and recreation. Their ambition is to "make the most of everything," and when needful they know how to draw the line strictly between necessities and luxuries. To the shrewdly observant onlooker, however, there are many inconsistencies in the average woman's methods of managing her domestic finances; and we will mention a few of them for the benefit of those whose training has been faulty or whose minds fail to grasp in its entirety the problem of judicious household economy.

She who is happy in having secured an undoubted bargain in table or bed linens, for instance, is not infrequently so demoralized by her good fortune that she cannot realize that as much is to be gained by their proper preservation as she has already saved by their advantageous purchase. Indifference to symptoms of early rents and tatters in her household linens is seldom among the faults of a well reared English woman, while the ability to prevent or repair such defects is not always possessed by the American housewife. Although there may be no actual necessity for practising economy, this fact does not in any way lessen the housekeeper's obligation to faithfully discharge her stewardship of the domestic resources, that her family may have comfortable food, clothing and shelter, and after that such refinement and luxuries as circumstances will warrant.

"This man has a helpful wife," once remarked a well-known economist who had incidentally partaken of the hospitality of a simple household. "Why do you say that?" queried an unobservant fellow-guest. "I saw a darn in her exquisitely white table-cloth, and it was finer and more ornamental in my eyes than the most delicate embroidery."

As a matter of fact, all linen should be carefully inspected from time to time before being sent to the laundry; and after a piece is repaired, it should be carefully washed and ironed and laid aside until all the contents of the linen closet have been successively scrutinized, used and again laundered. A break in linen is almost doubled in size and is rendered much more difficult to mend neatly if the article is first washed and wrung, then dried in a windy place and lastly starched and ironed.

Linen ravellings are to be preferred for darning linen textiles. When napkins are cut apart for hemming, a few threads of the warp are always loosened, and these should be carefully wound upon spools and saved for mending. The first break in a table-cloth usually occurs at the middle fold at or near the ends of the table. By looking through the cloth the first signs of an approaching break may be detected; and as soon as the weakness is perceived, new threads should be darned into the material to take the place of those that are breaking or wearing away. The threads of the warp or woof give out first according to their fineness or the closeness with which they are twisted. By thus strengthening the material at weakened spots the threatened rent may be deferred indefinitely. The beauty of darning lies in the deftness and delicacy with which the threads are interwoven into the injured fabric; and true thrift is found in the alacrity with which the needlewoman hastens to counteract the inevitable ravages of wear and tear. Skillful mending should be ornamental, and it will be, unless it is so craftily done as to be practically invisible.

Somebody, referring to needlework repairing, has half-facetiously declared that "a girl must be caught young and put early in the harness if she is to do it as perfectly and beautifully as did our grandmothers, who were justified in being as proud of a darn in their linens as a modern woman is of her drawn-work, her *point coupé*, or her crochet lace knitted with No. 100 linen thread." This remark affords a valuable hint to mothers of girls.

Of course, linen flosses of greater or less fineness may be purchased to match the threads of varying grades of family linen, but the ravelled threads will be found to correspond more nearly with the material into which they are to be darned. Table-cloths are sure to reach a time when, even with the promptest and kindest of care, they will become unpresentable for a nicely appointed table; but their days of usefulness need not be wholly over on that account. Many a thrifty housewife divides such a cloth at the center, trims away the thinner parts, sews the selvages together with over-hand stitches and hems the cut edges neatly, when, lo! a good cloth for ordinary use is saved from what, with less intelligent care, would have been a total loss.

Sheets may be spared in the same way for a more extended term of usefulness; but if these repairs, whether in sheets or table-cloths, be not neatly done, there is a slovenliness visible that testifies to

the unwillingness of the seamstress to practise a worthy economy, to which, however, she has been forced by necessity. Everybody respects a necessity; but some so enjoy it that they take pleasure in overcoming it in an attractive way.

To darn rents in wool goods, always use ravellings of the material, even if these threads can only be obtained in short pieces; and do the work finely, evenly and closely, no matter how often the needle has to be threaded. If any difficulty is experienced in threading the needle with a soft woollen thread, touch the latter at the end with a little beeswax to stiffen it and bring it to a point. This darning should be done on the wrong side of the garment so the ends of the threads and the edges of the rents will be invisible. By using the ravellings an exact match in the color and fineness of the threads is secured, and both trouble and expense are saved.

After a wool fabric has been darned, the mended portion should be dampened on the right side (provided, of course, the color is reliable) and pressed on the wrong side with a moderately hot iron until the darn is perfectly dry. If the color is insecure, no moisture should be risked, but a piece of paper should be placed beneath the iron in pressing. Mending skilfully done in this way will be nearly if not quite invisible.

Stockings should be defended while new against the necessity for early mending. If the heels are neatly lined with pieces cut from the tops of worn-out stockings, their term of service will be nearly doubled. If such linings cannot be obtained, run the heels all over with darning cotton, wool or silk in the same shade, using the thread double and making the rows very closely together. Do this work, of course, on the inside, and make the stitches very dainty on the right side, but fully a-quarter of an inch long on the wrong side.

Closely akin to mending is the cutting down or cutting over of stockings. Only such hose as are of good quality should be made over; but when their texture is really strong they are well worth the trouble. Men's hosiery may be cut down for small boys, and women's may be cut over for their original wearers, if very long at first, or else may be utilized for little girls. The cutting and sewing must be very neatly done to produce wholly satisfactory results. Procure a suitable paper pattern, or else cut one from a new stocking of good shape, allowing for seams. The bottom of the foot must be cut from the leg of a worn-out stocking, and over-handed to place after the newly cut heel has been lined and sewed at the bottom. The seam of the heel should be opened and flatly feather-stitched to the stocking. In inserting the bottom all the edges should be over-handed or back-stitched and then cat-stitched open.

If the toes of the stockings are habitually worn through first, they may be darned or run closely on the wrong side the same as the heels.

The darning of stockings is essentially the gentlewoman's pride, and when she has leisure to do it herself, she never entrusts such of it as is fine to the hands of others. Her husband's hosiery she considers her especial charge. The proper method of darning is very simple, care and neatness being really more essential than actual skill. First lay parallel threads closely together across the broken place, and then pick them up in basket fashion with cross-wise threads, making the darn look like a piece of cloth inserted in the stocking.

No well bred woman will wear a glove with a rip or a rent in it if she can possibly procure a suitable needle and thread with which to over-hand the opening on the wrong side. In travelling it is well to have constantly at hand a skein of silks in the usual glove shades.

A hole in a garment may be patched so deftly that the defect will be scarcely visible. The patch should be fitted into the aperture with the greatest accuracy and should be overhanded to the surrounding edges.

But garment-mending is not the only branch of domestic handicraft to which women are well adapted. There was a time when the glue-pot was as exclusively used by masculine hands as the hammer and jack-plane; but this state of things has passed away, and the good, all-round housewife includes a cabinet-maker's glue-pot or a bottle of liquid glue, and also a bottle of some good cement for mending china and glassware, among those simple mechanical implements which it is her pride to handle with at least ordinary skill. A broken piece of furniture should be securely held together with cords or clamps after the parts have been carefully glued, but when the fragments of a shattered dish are to be cemented together, they must be patiently held in position with the hands until the cement has had time to become well set. Certain cements for crockery are disappointing, because at the first application they pro-