

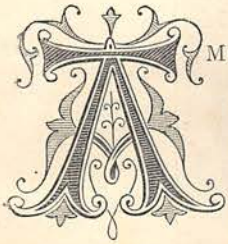
Now that their wings have grown,  
 Far from our nest  
 All the young birds have flown—  
 Dearest and best,  
 Counting the lonely hours  
 We two remain—  
 They have their crowns of flowers,  
 We loss and pain.  
 Weep out thy sacred grief,  
 Here on my heart :  
 Sweet was their stay, but brief,  
 Soon to depart ;

Still with the joy of old  
 Breathe each loved name—  
 They have but left the fold,  
 We did the same.  
 E'en though they all are gone,  
 Smile, darling, smile !  
 Think how each treasured one  
 Lingered awhile ;  
 Look up, dear wife, and say,  
 Softly with me,  
 "They have but flown away—  
 Birds must be free !"

FANNY FORRESTER.



### HOUSE-LINEN: ITS WEAR-AND-TEAR.



**A**MONG the many expensive items in our houses, that of house-linen forms one of the largest, and we are always under the necessity of keeping up the number of the various articles in our linen chests. We must have sheets for our beds, cases for the pillows, cloths for the tables, and napkins for the trays; and however carefully chosen the stock with which we commenced housekeeping, it will not last for an indefinite term of years. Time and the laundress set their visible marks upon house-linen; and as years go on, and other expenses arise and have to be met, it often becomes a difficult matter to renew the napery. Fifteen shillings was I called upon to give just lately for one pair of *cotton* sheets. For this reason I would offer my experience on this point, and show my fellow-housewives how a wise and systematic supervision will ward off the evil day much longer than would ordinarily be supposed to be possible.

I make it a rule to look over the whole of the house-linen once a year. Some time during the winter there comes a wet day, which may be comfortably devoted to this purpose. If you think that the task is too dreary and uninteresting for a cheerless day, then choose a fine one; but do not be diverted from making the inspection at one season or another. It is a tiring duty for the arms—this unfolding, and spreading out, and re-folding of so many large pieces of linen and cotton—it is also a tiring duty for the head, these considerations as to what shall be done with this, that, and the other.

First, the sheets undergo inspection. Naturally it is down the middle where sheets first show signs of wear. When I perceive that the material is getting thin, I seam the sides of the sheet neatly together, and

then cut it down the middle and hem the sides. This attention makes the sheet good for some years longer. When I again find signs of dilapidation in this sheet, I have yet another resource, and one which will keep it still in the list of sheets. Again, you see, it is the middle which is thin. This time I seam the ends of the sheet together and then cut it across the middle and hem the ends, and thus the sheet is usable for a few years more. A number of seams there are, to be sure, and when a sheet has been thus treated, of course, it must descend in the social scale. It is not now put on a visitor's bed, but so long as it is whole, the boys and the girls are none the worse for the seams.

There comes a day, however, when the sheet, having had all these changes of position, exhibits holes and rents. Now it is veritable old age, and I must bid good-bye to it as a sheet. But here and there I can abstract a whole piece, which will make a strong patch; or mayhap, if the sheet is a large one, I can contrive a pillow-case out of the good portions of it. For the rest, it is bundled up and sent to the hospital, where doctors and nurses always welcome old linen.

Now let us inspect the pillow and bolster cases. Not very much can be done to repair the former, for, as a rule, a head wanders all over the pillow, and therefore the slip is altogether finished. But it may so happen that the centre only has become thin; in such a case, a patch will prevent the mischief from increasing, and render the slip serviceable for some time longer. Our bolster slips do not give us much trouble in any way, but now is the time to see whether all the slips have their full complement of strings and buttons, and whether any old ones want replacing with new.

I have spoken of patches—let me direct you how to set them on. This kind of work is often given into the hands of young people as being easy

to do. The sewing on of a patch is easy, but the fixing of a patch requires skill, or at any rate knowledge, and certainly judgment. The patch should not be of much stronger substance than the cotton or linen on which it is laid, or its strength will pull the older portion to pieces; for this reason, it is better to use material which has been worn than that which is quite new. Again, see that you make the patch large enough, that it covers all the thin part, and will be sewed on to that which is strong, otherwise there will soon be a rent by the side of the seam of the patch. Once more, be very particular that the patch is cut straight and sewed on straight. This should be done by the line of a thread. Nothing offends my eye more than a crooked patch, or one crookedly set on; and not only is it an ugly sight, but it fails to do all that it was intended to do; for if the threads in the material are not allowed to run straight, but are pulled crooked, this way and that, they will break much sooner than they would were they arranged in the straight lines in which they were woven. First, get the four corners even, and the spaces between will be more readily arranged. In sewing long seams, it is best to work from each end and to meet in the middle. In this way, it does not happen that one end becomes shorter than the other, as is sometimes the case when we go on and on from one end to the other. Patches are always fixed on the right side, and seamed to the material. When this part is done, the old portion, which the patch is to replace, is cut away; but mind you leave an even piece all round, enough to turn under and sew down. It is necessary to know the science of patching, for although I have not mentioned patches when speaking of the repairs of sheets, they are often required. Sometimes a hole is burnt, or medicine is spilt, or a rent is made by a thorny hedge—numerous accidents happen to the bed-linen, and when they do occur, a neat patch will always look better than the disfigurement of a hole or slit.

Now we will resume our inspection. You will find it necessary to cast your eye over the toilet-covers, for it often happens that their edges are caught by, and shut into, the drawers whose tops they cover, the result being sundry small tears. When I perceive these injuries, I take off the fringe and cut away a straight strip, and when the fringe is sewed on again the cover is once more whole and tidy.

We now come to the table-linen. A vigilant watch has to be kept over the table-cloths, those costly

daily necessities. The smallest break in the threads, or the tiniest hole, should be at once repaired and further mischief stopped, by a neat darn. Linen thread is sold for this purpose. If you supplied the place of the worn-out threads with ordinary darning cotton, the spot would look rough and, of course, would show more distinctly. The longer you leave repairs undone the larger will have to be the darn, therefore I counsel you always to take that stitch in time which often saves more than nine.

Your eye must always wander to the four corners of the cloth, for here signs of wear-and-tear are often visible. Laundresses are apt to hang the cloths to dry by their corners, and thus high winds and rough pegs damage the damask. If the edges are beginning to break, seam tape along the selvage and sew it down on the wrong side.

When the cloth has had its day, and is no longer fit to be laid out upon a large table, we have to plan and arrange how it can serve in another capacity. Probably there are pieces which are still strong; these we cut out, and make into cloths for trays, if large enough; if too narrow for this purpose they will make slips for the side-board, or they may only be fit for small tray-cloths.

In the same way we look over and repair and plan the large tray-cloths. When in their original state they become dilapidated, they can be converted into small square napkins for small trays, or into little round napkins for the cheese-dish or bread-tray.

The dinner serviettes require a careful darn when threads break, but as they usually break here, there, and everywhere, little can be done to preserve the whole for any length of time, and I am afraid that I cannot suggest any further use of which they can be made when they can no longer appear as serviettes.

I must just descend into the kitchen to look over the towel drawer. Here will be rapid destruction of property, unless a supervision is exercised, say, once in six months. Holes and rents soon appear, and rapidly grow larger, until the towel lapses into rags-and-tags, unless a stop is put to such a career. Roller-towels can be patched, and so can the others, unless they are very much torn; in that case, patches may be taken from them, or smaller cloths for knife-cloths made of the strong pieces. It is often necessary to renew kitchen towels or, at any rate, to add some new ones to the number. It will be found that the material bought by the yard is stronger than the towels ready-made.

E. C.

