

used to wash them, and hand me each article dripping to be rubbed, rubbed, rubbed on a coarse towel till it was dry. In the country, you know, people often do a good deal if not all of their own work, and all the family have to help; so the never-ending, still-beginning business of wiping dishes fell to my share, and I really believe I began to wipe spoons before I could walk."

"Speaking of coarse towels," proceeds Miss Kitty, "puts me in mind of a novelty, as fashion-writers say. The cook told us we were all out of dish-towels, and I proposed to go down town and buy a whole piece, just as mamma always does. But cousin Jane objected. The stuff that comes by the yard don't last at all, she said, so she went to the grocers and bought three large empty salt-bags for twenty-five cents a piece. I was disgusted with the dirty things, all stiffened up with salt; but she ripped them up and had them washed, and then cut each one into three towels. I thought the cook would turn up her nose, but she is delighted with them—says they grow softer and thicker all the time."

"That's an excellent idea," says Miss Lucy Little, making an entry in her little note-book.

"Yes, I think it is economical," says Miss Kitty, "for the towels seem seven times as strong as the ordinary stuff. They are a little harsh at first, but they soon get soft. Cousin Jane says she always buys them before they are needed, and uses them first as kitchen hand-towels, to hang on the roller, and then, when use and washing has made them soft and pliable, she cuts them into dish-towels. It is funny, but there is a tear in every bag; I believe it is where they stick a hook in to lift it up when it is full of salt."

"I suppose the towels can be cut to avoid the holes?"

"I presume so; but Cousin Jane darned them in ours, after the bags were washed, with coarse linen thread. She likes to darn, strange to say, so I believe she enjoyed the opportunity."

"I wish she lived with us," sighed Sophie Mapes; "opportunity should not be wanting."

"Do you have so much of it to do?" asked I sympathetically, for I know it is not a pursuit attractive to young people.

"You ought to see the weekly piles of stockings," replies Sophie feelingly, "and nearly every pair with holes big enough to put your head through."

"To speak within bounds," I add smilingly. "But really I do not think it pays to darn such immense holes."

"Oh! dear, I wish it didn't, but we cannot afford to throw them away."

"Indeed; I didn't mean to intimate that you should," I say. "I was only thinking that it would be better to patch the heels neatly, if they are the impaired portions, or even resole them if necessary. If the stockings are long enough, they can be cut down and be almost as good as new; and even if they are quite short they can be made over for children."

"Isn't it a great deal of trouble?"

"No, very little; you can buy a pattern, or you can cut one from an old stocking, and you will have no difficulty at all. I had much rather do it than darn stockings that are really past darning."

"How did we get around from dish-washing to mending stockings?" asks Nellie Greene, meditatively.

"Upon my word I cannot tell," I answer, "but you know—"

"Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain. Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise! Each stamps its image as the other flies."

## Fashionable Stationery.

NOTE and letter papers continue to be manufactured with either the linen or the smooth finish, one being thought as stylish as the other, although ladies are apt to prefer the smooth finish. The square envelope, with sheet folded once, seems to be firmly established in popular favor, and retains position as a leading style. Elegant stationery is in pure white, but very pale tints give a change. These, however, are without exception quite faint, and the favorite hues are cream or light gray.

Note cards are as much in favor as ever, and are usually seen plain on the edges, any desire for ornamentation being gratified by the introduction of pretty fancies in the way of colored designs on the left upper corner of the card. The envelope is generally left plain. One of the newest ideas is that of Japanese figures in colored gilt, by which the effect of lacquer work is produced. Birds, reptiles, and flowers are portrayed, but the manner of doing it is in the peculiar Mongolian style that is so much liked at present. Fishes are likewise represented, and sets of note cards present a singular appearance—a lizard on one, a bird on another, a spray of flowers on a third, etc. In each kind of ornamentation, too, there is much variety, so that one continually finds something unexpected. These figures are not transferred to the envelope, which is entirely plain.

Sometimes the envelope used for note or letter paper is embellished in imitation of the large old seals of colored wax that some of us can remember. Bright blue or red is chiefly selected, but any color in sealing-wax can be chosen. A circle of goodly size presents quite a conspicuous appearance, and within the initials or crest is transcribed. Of course the simulation is placed where the seal of genuine wax did duty a generation ago. Occasionally the seal appears on the left upper corner of the sheet within, but this is not appropriate, and is in bad taste. Doubtless these ideas are in accordance with the revival of old things which is a hobby of the day. Monograms are not now usually depicted as they were some time ago, but, instead, are in cipher or Japanese style; those on the seals just described being in the form first mentioned.

Mourning paper is black-edged, and sometimes the initial, monogram, or crest is stamped on the left corner in cameo style; but where the mourning is deep, this is done wholly in black. When the first severity of costume is lightened and white accessories appear, the cameo is white and black. Both in black, and black and white, the cameos are of different shapes—round, oblong, square, etc. The envelope is plain. Sometimes large, black, simulated seals are seen on mourning envelopes, imitating, of course, a former use of black sealing-wax.

Visiting cards show no changes worthy of remark, and here the styles are as unpretentious as possible. Gentlemen's cards are growing smaller, although always considerably less in size than those used by ladies. Both are unglazed and engraved in plain script, without flourishes of any description. Invitations to balls or formal evening entertainments are also in very simple fashion, without any attempts at display or ornamental finish; the engraving is fine but plain script. The most expensive work is, of course, put upon menu cards, which show exceeding taste and infinite variety. The painting is exquisitely fine and full of surprises. Much of it for one of the most fashionable firms is the work of a young lady whose father was formerly a millionaire, who cultivated her talent for her pleasure while she was not obliged to do it for pay, but now

makes it a means of livelihood for herself and others. It is said she is sometimes paid as much as a hundred dollars per week for her work.

The most elegant dinner cards are mounted on thick satin ribbon, the ribbon itself the same on both sides and fringed upon the ends. This is folded lengthwise, the upper side being a little shorter than the under, and the card placed inside, the upper part of the ribbon forming a cover. The design on this front side is often of extreme simplicity and refinement, and the disclosure of a more elaborate design beneath is in the nature of a surprise.

A menu design, prepared for a lady who paid two hundred and fifty dollars for twenty-five of them, was on pale blue satin, very wide, and with a ribbed border. The front showed a pictured mansion, lightly arched with gold and shaded on one side with foliage, upon a banneret outlined with gold and gold cord, twined about with a light wreath of flowers. The card for name was thrown across, and below this was a summer sea upon which a lady was sailing alone in a dainty boat. The interior card contained the menu, and was decorated with stems and branches, upon which a bird was perched. A corner in gold contained the mystical lettering which indicated the occasion of the festivity.

Japanese fans for dinner cards are in two colors, of satin de Lyon, wine-color and blue, maroon and écarle, or crimson and gold. Small fruits and their blossoms are painted upon some of them, and insects upon the reverse side. A bright green grasshopper will stand in an attitude of astonishment at the oddity of Chinese lettering, or butterflies will spread their gorgeous wings.

A pretty idea for a child's birthday party is a young etched head upon the center of the card, and a bit of morning sky, with swallows on the wing, in the corner. A few loose spires of grass and clover adorn the points, and the transverse bend for the name is outlined on the satin. Holly looks well upon crimson satin, the stems touched up with gold, and small acorns showing different shades of green. Birds are very often most beautifully made with real feathers, and with such wonderful minutiae that the naked eye cannot follow the details.

A charming menu card is covered with a very pale pink satin, decorated upon the front delicately with a few oats. Upon a reedy marine elevation upon the card, on the outside, stands a tall bird, with a speckled brown coat, and it says, "I will wear my brown gown, and never dress too fine."

There is a small portfolio which is a favorite design for a dinner card, and is made of satin tied around with ribbon. The cards in the interior of these are usually etched, and sometimes very beautifully; and English violets, or some modest field-flower, will form the remainder of the decoration.

A quaint card for an annual birthday dinner exhibited an oriental scene upon which had dropped down a couple of open-mouthed, wild-eyed Japanese, set in relief; and a farewell dinner card had marine views that would have done credit to Moran—very small, however, and the bon-voilage was in illuminated lettering upon gold-satin ribbon, the other colors being crimson and dark blue. Etching is very fashionable now, and this strong and characteristic style of drawing admits of quaint, piquant, original, and even grotesque design, without becoming vulgar. These cards are usually done in sets of a dozen or more, and no two of these will be alike. Sometimes they will illustrate, by desire, quotations from a favorite poet. The four designs for correspondence are bronzed, and are very rich and beautiful; the lettering is in colors.