CHAPTER III
DARNING AND MENDING

NOWHERE is the maxim “A stitch in time saves nine” more applicable than in the household. Here it implies, in a general sense, the immediate repair of any and all household articles. But the proverb is more particularly associated with the thought of mending and darning the household linens and the clothing of the family. Everyone will agree that a patch is better than a hole, but it is still better to postpone, and, if possible, to prevent, the hole wherever the case will permit it.

DARNING is a simple remedy for many cases of prevention as well as cure. A few general directions will apply to darning in all its various phases. Neatness and the careful selection of materials most appropriate for the work are the chief requirements for successful darning. Whether the material to be darned is cotton, silk or wool the darning thread should correspond in thickness and color to the thread in the material, and the needle should be neither coarser nor finer than required.

For Reenforcing worn places before the hole has come through, particular care should be taken to make the work as inconspicuous as possible. A thread or raveling of the material will do better than one of sewing silk, as the latter, no matter how well matched in color, will be sure to have a luster that will bring the stitches into prominence. The drawn thread need not be long; short ones can be worked in just as well.

Baste the part to be mended over a piece of medium stiff, glazed paper, or table oilcloth. Use a needle as fine as the thread will permit. Darn back and forth with as fine stitches as possible, following the grain of the goods and keeping the threads loose so that they will not draw. (Fig. 55.) The ends of the threads are not fastened, but are clipped off close to the garment when the work is finished.

A Running Darn is used when the garment is worn too thin to be mended satisfactorily by reenforcing. Insert the needle a short distance from the edge of the worn or thin part, and parallel with the thread of the weave. Run it under a few threads and over a few, to the opposite side of the worn place. Returning, run the needle over the threads that were taken up, and under those over which it passed in the first row. Continue the process until the whole thin surface has been given a new body. In Fig. 56, white thread has been used in order to show the stitches.

When the part to be mended requires still more body than can be given by the running darn, a piece of the material may be laid on the wrong side, and while applying the running darn, this piece is occasionally caught up by the needle to hold it securely in position.

A Woven Darn is necessary when a hole has been worn through the material. The threads in this case are woven both lengthwise and crosswise with the weave of the garment. First baste the part with the hole over a piece of paper or table oilcloth, taking care not to draw it out of shape nor to let it bag. Do not trim the frayed or worn edges off. The unevenness around the edge, which these frayed ends create in the process of darning, helps to make the darned place less con-
spacious. The lengthwise threads are run in first. Starting well in from the edge of the hole at one side, take up a few small stitches, cross over to the opposite side and again run a few stitches into the edge. Keep the threads taut, but not tight enough to pull. Returning, leave a tiny loop at the turning-point, to allow for shrinkage of the darning threads. Continue back and forth till the hole has been covered. Now begin the crosswise threads in the same way; darn over and under the lengthwise stitches, alternating with each return thread. The frayed edges are caught in the weave as they happen to come, and are firmly secured between the latticed threads. (Fig. 57.)

STOCKINGS are darned on the right side to keep a smooth surface next the foot. A darning-egg or ball, held in the left hand, is slipped under the hole, with the stocking stretched smoothly, but not tightly, over it. The darning is done with the right hand. In a woven darn the darning threads in a stocking usually run up and down with the rib, and then across, but when the hole is at the knee or heel, where greater elasticity is desired, the threads are run across diagonally.

A Broken Stitch or two in a stocking, sometimes giving the appearance of a large hole, can be very easily remedied if attended to at once. With a silk thread, pick up the broken stitches and draw the edges together, and by a web-like weaving close the hole.

A Dropped Stitch is an ugly imperfection in a stocking that is more easily remedied by the use of a crochet-hook than by darning. Slip a fine crochet-hook through the little loop at the lower end of the hole; catch up the first thread, and pull it through the loop. Continue until every dropped thread has been caught, then securely fasten the last loop at the end with a few sewing stitches. Fig. 58 shows the position of the crochet-hook in the process of picking up dropped stitches.

To Set in a Piece is a very satisfactory way of extending the
trim off the ragged edges. Cut the underlying piece a trifle larger than the hole, but conforming to it in shape and matching it in color and texture. Baste the piece on the paper first, and then lay the hole over it. Or the torn piece may be stretched over an embroidery hoop and the patch basted to it. Run the darning-needle back and forth, over and under the lapped edges, closely weaving them together, keeping down all the loose ends. Fig. 60 shows the right side of the finished darn, a black thread having been used in the illustration to show the stitches.

A PATCH is generally used for mending flannel or heavy woven underwear, particularly if the garment is too much worn to warrant the time and work necessary for a careful darn.

A Flannel Patch is a piece of the material basted on the wrong side of the worn or torn part, and catch-stitched to the garment with small stitches all around the edge. The worn place, or the ragged edge of the hole, is then cut away from the right side, and the edge catch-stitched all around in the same manner. (Fig. 61.)

A Hemmed Patch is used—unless the hole is so small that it can be neatly darned—for mending material that requires frequent laundering, such as muslin underwear, bedding or household linen. If the material is striped or figured, the patch should be cut so that the lines will match. Pin the patch into position on the underside of the piece to be mended. Crease a seam all around and baste it down. Now cut out the worn part, allowing a narrow seam at the edge. Clip the edge a trifle at each corner, turn in the seam, and baste it down. Then with fine stitches sew the patch down all around on both sides of the material. (Figs. 62 and 63.)

An Overhanded Patch is used on material that is seldom washed, and where the raw edge on the wrong side is not objectionable. The sewing in this patch is not so noticeable as in the hemmed patch, for it has but one line of stitches. In cutting the patch be sure to match the stripe or figure. The piece should be large enough to cover the hole well, when it is basted over it with tailors’ tacks. (Directions for tailors’ tacks are given on page 22.) When the patch has been basted and cut apart, it will be seen that the exact outline of the patch has been marked on both the garment and the patch. The uneven edges are trimmed away leaving a narrow seam. (Figs. 64, 65 and 66, page 20.)
Notch the corners of the hole diagonally to the line of tacks, and trim off the corners of the patch. Turn the seam edges of both hole and patch toward the wrong side on the line of the tacks, and baste together. Then with small overhand stitches sew the patch in securely, being careful during the whole proceeding to keep the warp and woof threads of the material straight at the joining edges. Figs. 65 and 66 show both sides of the patch after it has been well pressed.

Fig. 64. Setting in an Overhanded Patch

Fig. 65. Wrong Side of Patch

MENDING TISSUE, or TAILORS' TISSUE, as it is sometimes called, is a great convenience in cases of awkward rents or tears where patching would be undesirable. It is a semi-transparent substance, resembling the thin rubber used in dress shields. It melts under a hot iron and acts like a glue, holding the torn fibers together.

A Triangular Tear should be mended immediately, before the edges have had a chance to fray. The torn part of the garment should be laid, wrong side up, over an ironing-board. Push the torn edges together, bringing them as nearly as possible to their original position. Lay a square piece of the mending tissue large enough to completely cover it over the tear and a piece of the cloth over the tissue. Baste the cloth piece in position, but do not let the basting threads run through the mending tissue or they can not be easily drawn out. Then run a hot iron over it all several times until the two pieces and the ragged edges are nicely stuck together. Cut away all superfluous material around the edges. Fig. 67 shows a satisfactory result of this method of mending on the right side of the material.

Fig. 66. Completed Patch

Fig. 67. A Rent Repaired with Mending Tissue

A Patch may also be set in with mending tissue in cases where it is undesirable to have any stitches showing. The hole is trimmed to a square or oblong shape, and a piece cut the same shape, but a seam's width wider all
around. Lay the garment over an ironing-board, as directed above, and, between the edges of the hole and the lapped edge of the patch, lay strips of the mending tissue. Be careful not to have any of the tissue extending beyond the torn edge on the right side, as it will make an ugly mark after being pressed. Fig. 68 shows a hole neatly mended by this method.

**Stoting** is a process of mending much used by tailors, especially on closely woven or very heavy cloth that does not fray. The first illustration, Fig. 69, shows the cut, and in Fig. 70 is shown the position of the needle and thread in the process of stoting. Use either a thread drawn from the cloth, or a hair, to do the stoting.

The part to be mended is basted smoothly over a piece of paper. The needle is inserted about half an inch from the torn edge, and run between the threads of the cloth, across the cut, to half an inch on the opposite side, and drawn through. Reinserting it, run the needle back on a somewhat slanting line and continue until the cut has been closed. Then repeat the same process, running the threads in the opposite direction. When pressed, this mending can hardly be noticed, but stoting can only be done over a clean cut or tear. On material that is not thick enough for the needle to pass between the weave, it must be done on the wrong side as lightly as possible.