

MISS LESLIE'S
LADY'S HOUSE-BOOK :

A MANUAL OF

DOMESTIC ECONOMY,

PHILADELPHIA:

A. HART, LATE CAREY & HART.

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We highly recommend a brick pincushion, as an important article of convenience when sewing long seams, running breadths, or hemming ruffles. It is too heavy to overset, and far superior to a screw pincushion, which can only be fixed to a table with a projecting edge. A brick pincushion can be set anywhere, even on a chair; and enables the person who has pinned on it her sewing, to sit always in an upright posture, which is a great advantage; as to be obliged to stoop incessantly over your work, is extremely injurious to health.

Get a large clean brick, not in the least broken or scaled off at the edges, and cover it all over with strong coarse tow linen, or thick cotton cloth, sewed on tightly and smoothly with strong thread. Then make a bag of thick linen, allowing it to be two or three inches larger each way than the top of the brick. Stuff the bag as hard as possible with bran or with clean wool; (not *cotton*, as it will prevent the pins from going in.) You must put in at least two quarts of bran, but most probably more. You can procure bran at a feed-store, or from a stable. In making this pincushion, you should wear a large apron, and keep the whole apparatus on a waiter or tray. Use a spoon for putting the bran into the bag; and press it down as hard as possible. When the bag cannot hold any more, even by tight squeezing, sew up the open end. Fit the bag evenly all round to the top of the brick, and sew it strongly to the coarse linen covering. Then sew a piece of green baize on the bottom, where it sits on the table. Afterwards cover

sant to use. It comes in skeins that are twisted up very tightly. Silk is troublesome to wind, and is weakened by the process. It is better to cut the skeins at the tying-place, and put them into long papers. By laying on each other six half-sheets of long or foolscap paper, and sewing them together down the middle, as if making a book, and then folding each division lengthways into a thread-paper, you may have a receptacle for twelve different skeins of silk; keeping them all compact by means of a narrow ribbon or tape tied round the whole.

Except for some very slight purposes, it is best to buy no tape that is not twilled. Real linen tape is now scarcely to be found at any price; all that passes for it being only of glazed cotton, therefore, since you *must* have cotton, it is better to get the twilled, as it is very strong, and not apt to break. In buying cotton cord, choose that which is quite small, or, when covered, it will be clumsy; and see that it is clean and of a good white, particularly if intended for muslin; as it will show through the covering, and never wash whiter. It is well to buy a dozen hanks of cord at a time.

In choosing galloon or silk ferret, inspect it attentively to see if it is not half cotton, instead of being all silk. If there is cotton in it, the colour will be dull, and it will very soon break. There are thick stout ribbons (usually broad) that have cotton in them, and wear rough and rusty almost immediately: do not buy them.

No sort of sewing work can go on well, unless there is at hand a sufficient and well chosen supply of every thing necessary to its accomplishment.

In providing needles, short ones will generally be found most convenient, and their eyes should be rather large. Many of the needles that are put up in assorted quarters of a hundred, are so small as to be of no possible use to any one. Therefore, in buying needles, it is best to select for yourself. Have always some that are *very large*, for coarse strong purposes. When a needle breaks or bends, put it at once into the fire; for if thrown on the floor or out of the window, it may chance to run into the foot of some one. It is well to get at least a dozen cotton spools at a time, that you may have always at hand the different gradations of coarse and fine. The fine spools of coloured cotton are far better for many purposes than bad sewing silk; but coloured sewing cotton should only be used for things that are never to be washed, as it always fades after being in water. Mourning chintz should on no account be sewed with black cotton, as it will run when wet, and stain the seams. The sewing silk now made in America is of excellent quality, and far superior to the imported both in strength and smoothness. Of foreign sewing silk, the Italian is good, provided it is not very fine; in which case, being only two threaded, it will split and ravel, and besides is very weak. The best English sewing silk is excellent, being both strong and pliable. The India is strong, but harsh, wiry, and unplea-

You will require several bodkins of different sizes. The smoother they are, the better they will run through the cases. Always get them with a knob at the end. Steel bodkins are more serviceable than those of gold or silver; but in buying steel ones, take care that they are not pewter: this you may ascertain by trying if they will bend.

You will find it necessary to have three pair of scissors; a large pair for cutting out things that are thick and heavy; a smaller pair for common use, and a very small pair for work that is nice and delicate. They should all be sharp-pointed. When your scissors begin to grow dull, have them ground at once. The cost will not exceed six cents for each pair, (even if ground at a surgical instrument shop,) and haggling with dull scissors is very uncomfortable work.

It is well to have always two thimbles, in case of one chancing to be mislaid. When you find that a hole is worn in your thimble, give up the use of it; as it will catch the eyes of your needles and snap them off.

Keep always coarse brown thread in the house; also hanks of gray, white, and black worsted, for darning winter stockings; and slack twisted cotton, and strong floss silk, for repairing other stockings.

As mother-of-pearl buttons have, from their superior durability, almost entirely superseded the use of thread buttons, it is well to keep a supply of them always in the house, buying several cards at a time. It is a saving of expense, as well as

the whole pincushion (except the bottom) with thick strong silk, or damask, or some other substantial material. It is best not to ornament it with bows, as your thread may catch round them when you are sewing.

All mantua-makers and seamstresses should be provided with brick pincushions. They can be made at a very trifling cost: and, with renewed coverings, will last twenty years or more.

A smaller pincushion may be made in a similar manner, substituting for the brick a square block of wood. These block pincushions are not heavy enough to use when sewing a long seam, but they are very convenient to hold the pins you may want when cutting out and fixing work on a bed; for, having flat bottoms, they are not liable to roll off. You may also make a very handsome toilet pincushion with a block for its foundation.

of time and trouble, to buy every sort of sewing material in quantities, as far as convenient. There is also economy in purchasing plain ribbons by the piece, when they are of excellent quality. Keep your ribbons always wound on blocks and secured with minikin pins. You can easily obtain blocks from the shops where ribbons are sold. In winding on a block a ribbon that is in two pieces, slip the end of the second piece *under* the end left of the first, and not over it, or there will be a ridge.

You should appropriate a box or drawer entirely to the purpose of keeping materials employed in sewing; the articles for immediate use being in your work-basket.

There are various ingenious needle-books, so contrived as to contain, in a very small compass, all the implements that may be necessary to a lady when she takes her sewing with her on a visit.

A piece of white wax, for rubbing on a needleful of sewing-silk to strengthen it, is a most useful little article: so also is a small box of prepared chalk, to dip the fingers in when the weather is warm and the hands damp. But, as some portion of the chalk will come off upon your work, it is best to use it only when you are sewing white things. At other times, you will find an emery-bag indispensable. Those that are made for sale have generally so little emery in them, that they are soon found to be useless. It is best to make your own emery-bags; buying the emery yourself at a druggist's, or at a hardware store.