The Laundering of Table Linen: a bag for blue

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The eye-appeal of a dinner-table is always enhanced by good quality napery—and to my mind there is nothing to equal the appearance of a well-laundered white linen damask tablecloth with table-napkins to match.

The best quality damask is made from pure linen and requires very little starching, as linen is naturally stiffer than most other textile fibres.

Cheaper cotton damasks, or even linen which has worn thin with age and usage, will require thicker starch to improve their appearance and to prevent rapid soiling.

The proportions for starching are given here on the assumption that the articles are of good quality material and dry. In actual practice articles go straight from the last rinsing water into the starch. Material takes up the starch more readily when wet so allowance must be made for the water in the articles themselves when thinning down. Omit some of the "thinning down water" if you are starching cotton breakfast cloths, thin cloths and items of this nature.

**STARCH**

Rice starch gives by far the best results. The starch cells in a rice grain are very small, even and compact, whereas the cells in starch from wheat or maize are much larger and uneven in size. Rice starch is not always readily available on the market, but it is quite a simple matter to prepare your own starch.

Plan to have a plain boiled rice pudding or curry and rice on the day before washing day. Cook the rice in plenty of water and strain off water as soon as rice is cooked. Save this rice water and use for starching on washing day.

**Standard Boiling Water Starch.**

**Ingredients**—
2 tablespoons of starch.
1 cup cold water (for blending).
1 teaspoon borax (gives added stiffness and gloss to linen) few shreds of whitewax or candle wax (gives gloss and makes iron run smoothly).
Boiling water.
1 cup of cold water.

**Method**—
Blend the starch until free from lumps using 1 cup of cold water.
Add borax and whitewax.
Add boiling water, stirring all the time, until starch turns thick and clear.
Stir in 1 cup of cold water. This prevents a skin forming on top of the starch. Cover starch until required.
This starch is thick and needs thinning down before use.

**Thinning Chart.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starch</th>
<th>Water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best quality linen tablecloth</td>
<td>1 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium quality</td>
<td>1 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton breakfast cloth</td>
<td>1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good table napkin (linen)</td>
<td>1 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton table napkin</td>
<td>1 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart is a rough guide only as materials and individual tastes vary considerably.

In actual practice, if articles are starched while wet in order of stiffness required, each succeeding article automatically thins down the starch to the required strength.

If starch becomes too thin a little "standard starch" added from time to time restores it to the necessary strength required.

**TO IRON A TABLECLOTH OR BREAKFAST CLOTH**

It is important that old starch is removed before material is restarched. This is done by thorough washing and rinsing or boiling and rinsing.

Dry the cloth in the sun after it has been starched then damp down thoroughly, roll up firmly and leave for at least half an hour, preferably longer, until moisture is distributed evenly.

**Folding.**

You will need a "helper" to assist in folding the cloth and pulling it into shape.

Each person takes a hem, shakes and pulls cloth, then folds selvedge against selvedge, with the right side inside pulling the selvedges until quite straight. Cloth is folded again in the same direction then pulled until hems are straight.

Screen fold by dropping the outer single fold and picking it up on the other side. This makes a screen fold of four, or an M fold with the right side to the outside.

Pull again, then place into position for ironing.

**To Iron.**

Place the cloth with the folds towards you. Iron the hem first, as this sets them and keeps them straight.

Iron the top fold, being careful to keep both fold and selvedge straight.

Fold the top layers over away from you and iron on top of the fold nearest to you.

Replace the first fold so that folds are once more towards you.

Turn the cloth over from end to end and iron the two remaining folds in the same way as the other two.

To iron folds on the wrong side, place the cloth with selvedges towards you then fold layers as you did when ironing on the right side.

Ironing on the wrong side is important for damask as it makes the pattern show up to advantage on the right side. Touch up any creases or damp spots with the iron. Air thoroughly before rolling tying and putting away.

**TABLE NAPKINS**

Prepare for ironing by starching, drying, then damping down.

Pull table napkin into shape, seeing that hems and selvedges are straight and corners rectangular and even.

Place about half table napkin on table, right side uppermost, smooth surface with the hands.

Set the hems with the iron, then the selvedge.

Iron remaining portion in the centre, half at a time. Moving ironed part away iron remainder of table napkin until dry. Turn over and iron quickly on the wrong side.

Fold in a screen fold of three or N fold. Take the outer corner where the wrong side is uppermost and fold back corner to corner so that right side is uppermost.

Air well.

**FANCY FOLDS FOR FESTIVE OCCASIONS**

There are a great variety of fancy folds for table napkins and many of these are very easy to make. The table napkins should be perfectly square; the large 24 in. size is best and they need to be starched, somewhat stiffer than those normally used. Some designs, the "Orchid" for instance, work out quite well with paper table napkins which are much smaller.

**THE "ORCHID"**

**Method.**

Place table napkin on the table right side up.

Fold in half, selvedge to selvedge.

Fold hem to hem to form a square, press in creases (a). Re-open once (b).
Fold selvedges to centre crease to make a triangle (c).

Turn the triangle over.
Fold the right hand corner to left hand corner making another triangle (d).
Fold from the lower corner into even pleats concertina fashion (e).
Lift up (f).
Place sideways and pull the corners downwards, right and left in the shape of petals and place in a glass.

THE “WATERFALL” OR “RAPID”
This is similar to the “Orchid” and both are suitable for long tables for wedding breakfasts, big dinners or other functions.

Method
Place table napkin on the table right side up.
Fold in half, selvedge to selvedge (a).
Place hem to hem to form a square (b).
Put the folded corner over to the opposite corners to form a triangle (c).
Form into pleats, concertina fashion (c) and (d) see that the double fold of the table napkin comes at the back.
Place napkin in a glass and pull down the single corners each corner overlapping the one below.

THE WATER LILY
This looks particularly attractive on a dinner table with a bread roll or cube of bread placed in it.
For some occasions a small spray of flowers or a small gift may be placed inside.

Method.
1. Make sure the table napkins are square.
2. Place table napkin right side up on the table.
3. Fold to find the centre.
4. Unfold then fold four corners to the centre (a).
5. Repeat (4) twice.
6. Turn the table napkin over and fold corners to the centre once more.
7. Place fingers of the left hand firmly on the four folds in the centre.
8. With the right hand pull up each of the under petals, the last four being drawn upwards firmly, to make the lily a good shape.

A Bag for Blue

HAVE you ever bought a knob of blue and found it was in a paper wrapper? Try making this blue bag. It may be refilled over and over again and may be hung up to dry after use. The bag illustrated was made of cotton netting twine although any coarse strong crochet cotton will do. A No. 11 crochet hook was used.

Method.
First round.—Make 6 chain and close the ring with a single crochet.
Second round.—Make 2 chain to form an upright stitch, then 11 treble into the ring. Close the circle with a single crochet.

Third round.—Make 2 chain, then one treble into the space at the base of the chain. Make 2 treble into each of the remaining spaces between stitches in the previous round. There should now be 24 upright stitches.

Fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh rounds.—Make two chain to form an upright then one treble into each space between stitches of previous round. Close each round with a single crochet. There should be 24 uprights in each of these rounds.

Make 36 chain and end off.

Thread chain through top of bag to make a draw string. Insert a knob of blue before drawing up the string. Make a loop for hanging at the end of the string.

TO CHOP PARSLEY
1. Wash parsley and dry thoroughly.
2. Gather parsley into a tight bunch in the fingers of the left hand.
3. With a sharp knife slice through the parsley thinly.
4. Hold one end of the knife down and with the other hand chop rapidly.

TO CURL CELERY; RADISH
Take short lengths of celery or radishes wash and clean well.
With a sharp knife, slit a number of times along the length to within half an inch of the end (narrow end for celery, broad end or top for radish). Leave to soak in very cold water, until celery or radish curls. These make attractive decorations for salads.

This photograph shows two gully heads and two stone gully stops put in at the same time at the head of each gully. One has been successful so far, the other was not successful.

Don't tackle the problem so far downhill, get up the hill to the area losing the water. You can increase your yields while you cure the erosion.
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