

PRETTY DRESSES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

By Isabel A. Mallon



SENSIBLY, indeed, are the children of our day dressed. They can enjoy life. They are not starched and befrilled so that pleasure is impossible, and, thank goodness, they are clad warmly enough to make it possible for them to play in the clear cold open air without any danger of them catching cold. The little brains that have gotten heated in a warm school-room have an opportunity to freshen up in the cool air, and the little bodies, because of the healthy play, grow better and stronger, and all because they are sensibly, as well as prettily, clothed. The picturesque element strongly obtains in cloaks and hats, and though the frocks are picture ones also, still it cannot be claimed that there is any special change in their styles; wise mothers, having discovered a comfortable and pretty design, are clinging to it.

THE FABRICS FANCIED

THE fabrics fancied are invariably wool, cashmere, camel's hair, the rough fleecy stuffs or the soft wools peculiar to plaids being selected. For school dresses, dark blues, browns, deep crimsons, and bright scarlets in cashmere are pretty, and are colors that usually wear well. The plaids are most popular in the blue and green combinations, the bright red ones so fancied by little English girls not having the same vogue here, possibly because our skies are brighter and the brilliant coloring is not so badly needed to improve the weather.

For little wrappers, intended to be worn when some nursery disorder has made of a merry maiden a little invalid, gaily striped flannels, buttoning all the way down the front, quite loose, and with a belt of the same material to hold them in, shows how all the different times of life, the good and the bad, are alike catered to.

EVERYDAY DRESS

A GOWN that is to be worn every day and is suitable for either school or home, for sister who is eleven years old, and who can write real letters, is shown in Illustration No. 1. The skirt is perfectly plain, gathered in around the waist and sewed on to the bodice which is also a plain one, the hooks that close it being invisible; the collar is a deep turned over one of blue silk that matches the cashmere used for the little dress. A broad belt of blue silk folded over to look as if it were tucked, is laced in the center in front, and reaches to the top of the gathers far up on the bodice, giving the desired short-waisted look; the sleeves are high and full, gathered in at the wrists and finished with cuffs of blue silk. This little sister still wears her hair cut in a picturesque bang and falling loose at the back far below her waist.



EVERYDAY DRESS (Illus. No. 1)

If one did not care to have a silk belt, collar and cuffs, then they could be made of the same material as the gown, or if one wished them to be a little more elaborate the coarse Russian lace could overlay the collar and cuffs and a buckle fasten the belt. In making the belt, put that stiffening between the lining and the silk that is used by tailors in making standing collars stand up, or straight cuffs straight.

FOR A WEE MAIDEN

THE same dark cashmeres or stuffs are used for the gowns of the wee maidens as well as for the girls who are counted as large in nursery parlance. Golden-brown cashmere is particularly pretty for the small blonde people. Little gowns continue to be gathered or plaited in at the neck, and then they are permitted to fall loose at the back, and are only partially confined by a belt of ribbon or velvet in front. No frock could be more comfortable or more picturesque, and no frock could be more easily made at home. The little girle forms the only decoration, except, indeed, broad collars and cuffs either of white embroidery or linen.

One small girl wearing such a gown is pictured in Illustration No. 2. The real golden-brown cashmere is used for this, and the full skirt is gathered and fastened in at the neck to a yoke that is invisible. Far up under the arms comes a narrow-pointed girle of dark-brown velvet drawn down in front and caught just in the center under a velvet rosette. The sleeves are full and gathered at the top and at the wrist, and a deep square collar of coarse embroidery hides the yoke and is fastened in front under a velvet ribbon bow, the loops and ends of which are so stiffly placed that one feels like calling the wearer little Miss Prim. Deep cuffs matching the collar are also worn, and form a pretty finish to the full sleeves. In blue, scarlet, any of the plaids, gray or mode, a little gown like this might be made. A small woman who is to keep the cold out this winter by means of a gray kimmer coat has a gray cashmere gown made after this fashion which she wears under it, but, of course, a light shade like this will need to have special attention, and little Miss Prim will have to be on her best behavior when she wears it.



PICTURESQUE FROCK (Illus. No. 2)

OVER-DRESSING OUR CHILDREN

I DON'T think any of us like to think of our babies being sacrificed to their clothes, and while a little lady will see that she does not muss or soil her gown, still it is a little hard for her to be hampered by the consciousness that her frock is her first consideration. Dame Fashion has offered us suitable styles and sensible materials for our children, and if we do not dress them properly nobody will be to blame but ourselves. Not very long ago I heard a nurse in one of the parks make a queer comment on a much over-dressed child. The poor little tot had on silk stockings, shoes with ridiculous heels, a silk frock, a white hat laden with blue feathers and a much-trimmed coat. Looking at her own charges, who were plainly but sensibly clad, and who were trundling their hoops and romping about searching for good health, with an air of satisfaction, and then looking at the over-dressed child she said: "She evidently belongs to a tenement house." Although this was rough and rude, there was wisdom in it; she knew where ignorance was the dressing of such a child would result, and she was certain that the woman who could count her money by the millions would never commit such a blunder as to over-dress a child.

THE WISE APRON

THE apron has always had for little people a prestige of its own. To put on a clean apron usually means that one is in good standing in the nursery, and that the freshening up of an afternoon is deemed desirable. The materials used for aprons nowadays are nainsook, lawn, cross-barred muslin and an unbleached linen that is supposed to be made in regulation pinafores to be worn when toys or books are being painted by young and very zealous artists. In their designs, the aprons are almost exactly like the frocks over which they are worn. A square or pointed yoke, with the skirt straight and full gathered into it, is often seen, and this may have either long, full sleeves, or simply a ruffle around the armhole, as is fancied. The broad sash to hold the fulness in is made of the same material as the apron, and has its edge finely hemmed by hand and so flattened out that it doesn't curl up after it has visited the laundry.

Aprons are very sensibly made quite plain; the dressiest have a yoke of coarse embroidery or Russian lace, but the putting of innumerable frills or the decorating them with gay ribbons is not considered good taste. When a yoke apron is not selected, then the square-cut one, tying on the shoulders—a pattern that I am sure our grandmothers wore—is chosen. For the little woman who goes to school, and who has gotten past the wearing of a yoke or a body apron, one that has a square skirt and a good-sized bib is selected. It has a quaint housewifely air, and, as it is usually carried folded and assumed in the school-room with much precision, it not only tends to keep the gown clean, but teaches the value of caring for one's belongings.

THE LITTLE HANDKERCHIEFS

OF COURSE they shed them as the roses do their leaves, and for that reason the little handkerchiefs want to be as simple as possible. Those shown in the shops are of plain white linen with a narrow hemstitched edge. Occasionally the Christian name is embroidered on them in red, pink or pale blue cotton; this is done to avoid any discussion as to whose the handkerchief is, for if only the family name is upon it, it will be quite possible for the boys to claim it as their own, and so make very wretched the tidy little maiden who takes care of her things and who grieves over their disappearance "by those bad boys."

To teach a child that her clothes are her own, that her handkerchiefs and her collars are hers individually, is to make a child careful. When she knows it is her very own she is apt to put the handkerchief back in her pocket and not risk throwing it on the floor, or laying it on a chair without a thought as to its future. The wise mother will, as soon as her little daughter is of sufficient age to understand, give up all of, or part of, a bureau drawer in the nursery to her, and will teach her that hair ribbons, handkerchiefs, the small fan that is hers, and her numerous belongings are to be put away there by herself until they are required. This is the way to not only teach a child to care for her clothes, but to be systematic in the disposal of them. Once the habit of tidiness is formed, it will only be natural for the child to adhere thereto.

WHEN SHE GOES OUT

WHEN she takes her walks abroad, the young woman who is at present the woman of the future and who is just now the child of your heart, wears a pretty warm cloak which the dressmakers call the Florentine cloak. It may be made of camel's hair, of warm heavy cloth, of plaid, but it is the prettiest and most suitable for the season when it is of cloth or heavy camel's hair trimmed with some inexpensive fur. In Illustration No. 3 is pictured the veritable Florentine cloak. It is made of a deep mode fleecy cloth, the yoke is pointed in the back and front, the material plaited on



WHEN SHE GOES OUT (Illus. No. 3)

and allowed to flare; in length it should be an inch below the skirt of the dress worn underneath. The sleeves are full, and come just below the elbow to deep cuffs bordered with natural beaver fur; a collar of natural beaver is about the neck; a pointed girle of mode velvet only about two inches wide confines the fulness in front. A little muff of natural beaver is carried, so that the small hands do not get cold. Leggings of the same material as the coat are buttoned up to keep the little legs warm. The hat is a large soft felt of the mode shade, with a huge bow of brown ribbon as its only trimming, unless, indeed, the strings that tie it down so primly under the chin and which make it look so picturesque, are counted as a decoration. Krimmer, any of the beavers, chinchilla, or seal may be used as a trimming upon such cloaks, or if one did not desire a decoration, the collar and cuffs could be quite plain. For school wear, long cloaks with capes, and hoods made of plaid lined with some bright color are in vogue.

A WORD FOR YOU

AND when I say you, I mean you happy women who are fortunate enough to have little people of your very own. Don't make the playtime of life a burden by making a child think too much of its clothes and feel that the little body can't have its natural freedom of movement because a frock will get out of place, or something come unhooked. Give your children every pleasure that you can; the dark side will come to them only too soon, so let them have all the sunshine possible, and let them think of the many pleasures that come to them from you. I don't mean you mustn't teach them to take care of their belongings, for you must. A child is never too young to be tidy, and if it only begins by hanging up its stockings at night be sure that in a very short time it will learn where the skirt belongs and where the other garments should be put. But don't make tidiness and tyranny synonymous. Never, if you can help it, make a tear come in your little girl's eyes about her clothes. Teach her their value, and teach her quietly and gently how to take care of them. She will learn, and as for you, well, no matter what happens, when she goes from you you will not have to remember that for some little fault about her frocks you made her unhappy. Just think always how things will seem to you in the future, and I do believe that you and your neighbor and I will all act differently in the present.

There is nobody quite so unhappy as the child who does not have a real childhood; who isn't saved from as many of woes of this life as is possible, and who isn't given golden days while it is young. Make them as happy as you can, for you and I will never forgive ourselves if we don't.

SUMMER DRESSES FOR SMALL PEOPLE

By Isabel A. Mallon



WHEN the little tots begin to look as if they wanted a fresh gowning, when it seems as if not to have them in the pinks, pale blues, whites and violets, like the spring flowers, were wrong, then comes the busy mother's time. I have said so many times, and yet I feel that the simpler a child is dressed the more fashionable is its get-up. Women of great wealth and of corresponding intelligence gown their little ones either in cotton, or some soft wool, but silks and laces are left for those mothers whose bank accounts are smaller, and whose taste is most decidedly bad.

THE MATERIALS IN VOGUE

THE wash dresses, and the cotton gowns for the little people, must be made so they can visit the laundry; gowns of zephyr gingham are given the preference. Those best liked are the "cram," which shows dull blue, faint pink, durable gray and golden brown; next to these the gingham, showing a white background with the narrow stripes, is liked, and, by the by, these must be made up with the stripes straight instead of bias, as it was last year. Lawn or nainsook is fancied if the small woman is of a size to go to a baby party, but are seldom in use for everyday wear. Cotton cord is liked, but not for the very little people, it being put on the older girls, that is, those ranging from seven to fourteen years of age. It makes very durable dresses and, although it will certainly have to go to the laundry, it will return in that most desirable of all conditions, that is, it will look as good as new. In making up the piqué, great simplicity is observed, although where a girl is large enough to be a little careful as to her frock, it frequently has a scarlet sailor collar, scarlet cuffs and a deep pointed girdle of scarlet mounted on stiffening, and laced not only in front, but at each side.

WHAT STYLES ARE MOST FANCIED

WISE mothers, while they choose simple styles, still insist that the little frocks shall be made after the last fashion; the last, by the by, being two. The one which is known as the French model, and which displays a very long waist and a skirt that is merely a frill, reaching just to the knees and permitting an absolutely free movement of the legs in running or frolicking. The other style, which is called sometimes the Greenaway, sometimes the Empire, is gathered on to the guimpe, allowed to fall full from it, and either drawn in across the breast and around under the arms, or else confined just there by a broad sash. This skirt entirely conceals the little legs, and too often results in a small girl tripping over her frock, tumbling indiscriminately, and not having quite as nice a time as she might wish. Personally, I prefer the French dress, because if a long stocking is worn the little body is well covered and sufficiently warm.

On larger girls there is a fancy for very deep, full cape-like epaulettes either of the coarse lace or of the Russian embroidery, which is effective and by no means expensive. Every one of us knows how a girl from ten to fourteen seems to spring up like a weed in the night and look supernaturally tall and wonderfully narrow. These epaulettes add to her width and are decorative beside, while they retain their simplicity as a trimming. Very often regular little fichus made of mulle or nainsook, and having a narrow hem, hand-sewed, for their finish, are chosen for the older girls in place of the epaulettes, but the latter are to be commended as newer, though as both have the sweetly prim air so much liked for little women either may be chosen.

THE YOUNG WOMAN WE ALL ADORE

IS gowned in a frock of pink gingham. It is smocked at the throat to quite a distance down on the bodice portion; it is then allowed to flare and is drawn in a little below the waist line by a sash of the same material formed simply of long widths hemmed on each side and tied in a big butterfly bow in the back. The sleeves are full, smocked at the wrists and then flare out in a ruffle that comes well over the hands. The edge of the skirt has a plain hem, hand-sewed, and above it three narrow tucks, caught by needle and thread in the same manner. The hat worn is a large one of brown straw with a huge brown ribbon bow placed flat on its brim. The stockings are long, and suspended from the waist, while the shoes have a medium low heel and are laced up the front and tied with ribbon strings.

This is a frock that your little daughter and mine could be happy in, would look pretty in, and what more can you want for her than this combination? To be happy and to look pretty! Isn't that all that is necessary when one is young? Somebody says: "To be good" is required; but really, I do not believe any child is thoroughly happy who is not thoroughly good. It is a good doctrine to teach the little people, and the big ones, too, for that matter, that real happiness does not come unless it is brought by real goodness. A sermon from frocks! But then they can be found in everything; and when one looks for them in every-day life they do not always turn out such bad sermons. There will be no violent grief if the little gown is soiled, and yet there can be a gentle suggestion that some care must be taken of it. Tell your girl, as I tell mine, every time there is a horrid smut on her gown there is some poor unfortunate little flower has a smut come on it, and so the flower suffers for the misdemeanor of the little living rose.

OUR COMING MEN

DON'T you want to take him into your arms and hug him till he struggles to get free? It is just possible that later on he may not exhibit this desire to get away from the clasp of lovely women, but now he would rather play tennis or ball or race around with the boys or do most anything than suggest that he is a bit "girly." I have known him to sit down and weep for an hour because he had a petticoat on. But we have changed all that now. The boy looks better for it, and he doesn't suffer as much.

Immediately after he has left off regular frocks, which is usually in the neighborhood of three years, he is put in knee breeches and kilts, and if his mother is wise enough to tell him about the great big Scotchmen who dress just that way, he can be encouraged into wearing his kilts in a satisfactory manner. The most desirable materials for a small gentleman are the piqués and the corded cottons, and I think it would be wise to choose the first when the little master starts out for church looking as spotless as a lily, and select the corded stuffs for every-day wear. These may be gotten in blue and white, black and red, blue and black, scarlet and dark blue, brown and blue and black and white. They do not soil easily, and if properly done up, that is, without too much starch, they will wear for two days, if a boy is careful, and for a day and a half if he does not consider anything in the world but his own pleasure. The little breeches reach just to the knee, the stockings coming up under them so that the legs are entirely covered. The skirt is invariably a plain kilt, and must come just over the knees, while either a jacket and shirt may be worn with it, or else a loose blouse or even a tightly belted one can take its place. The immaculate linen shirt and smart little cutaway jacket are usually reserved for special occasions, and the blouse in its various forms for general wear.

For the boy who has left off skirts of all kinds, and feels that he knows a great deal more than his father, the sailor suit continues in vogue. The regulation blue serge is used for it, and following an English fashion it is pretty enough brightened either by scarlet collar and cuffs, or the regulation white ones. A gallant little sailor lad, who is dressed in knee breeches of dark blue serge, which, by the by, the sailor does not wear, and a loose blouse of the same material interests us. The deep collar is of scarlet cloth, the ends of it hardly showing in front, although it extends far down in the back; where the sailor's bare neck would show, a plastron of red is set in. The knotted tie is of dark blue silk. The sleeves are comfortably full and are plaited in at the wrists to cuffs of scarlet. The stockings are very dark blue, and the shoes are good sturdy ones with flat heels that will permit my gentleman to take many a walk abroad. The hat which he holds in his hand as he makes his good morning to you is a Tam of blue serge like his clothes, and has on its band in bright red letters the name of the ship upon which he is supposed to sail, but which is really dragged along ignominiously by a string. However, if he finds happiness in this amusement, be very thankful, my friend, for illusions go from us only too quickly.

TO COVER THE HEADS

THE large light-weight straw hats are liked for girls who are over six years. Their decoration is usually an enormous bow of ribbon, flatly placed on the brim close to the crown. The colors liked are dark brown, dark blue, very dark red, while very occasionally a white one is seen. On the black a scarlet bow would be placed, on the scarlet a black one, on the blue a scarlet one, and on the brown either a scarlet or blue one, as is fancied. Occasionally one of these large hats is covered with a wreath of flowers, but while it looks pretty and picturesque, it seems a little bit out of place, as anything artificial always does on a child.

For the smaller women large shirred hats of gingham are chosen. These may be in any color desired, and I was going to say in any shape, but the truth is that the wise mother makes the hat with the soft Tam crown, shirrs the brim on cords and then, when it is firmly stiffened, bends it to suit the face of the little maiden. These hats are light, shade the eyes, and as they are not expensive it is possible for little missie to have three or four of them. A pretty hat is of pale blue zephyr gingham with the Tam crown and a gathered brim, bent as an artist mother decided it should be.

THE FLOWING LOCKS

AS far as possible during the summer months let the locks of your little one float about her head freely, and do not under any circumstances cut her hair, unless it is that you wish to shape it for once, and after that to let it alone. The favorite mode of arrangement is to have it about the front of the face in a fluffy bang, and to let the back have just the ends turn. This can easily be arranged by putting them over a bit of paper, or a kid roller, and after training them that way they will turn of themselves.

As for a boy, I like his curls, but I must confess that I sympathize with him in his desire to get rid of them. He does so long to be a man. If the lovely curls give your boy one pang, send him to the barber and have them cut off. The truth of it is I do so believe in giving children all the happy, sunny days possible, that I don't want to think that the arrangement of the hair, the putting on of a hateful garment, or the wearing of something that seems to belittle these small folks should be permitted by mothers with loving hearts, and I think you and I each claim to be that, and we do not want to pose as hypocrites, do we?

BOYS' GINGHAM KILTS

SOMEbody has asked how the little knee breeches are to be worn with gingham kilts. This is the way: In selecting the material, a design is chosen in which a dark color is found, although the general effect may be bright, and then, although the kilt and blouse are made of the cotton material, the knee breeches are made of light-weight cloth, serge or flannel, and match this dark color. In almost every design, either a dark blue, dark brown, very dark green, or very dark gray, may be found, and the breeches will then be of that shade; but where no color whatever that would be desirable in cloth is discovered, then the little breeches may be made of black, which harmonizes with everything.

The design that has been worn for several summers continues to be favored for the gingham costumes, that is, the kilt and blouse of gingham, and the deep, square collar, either of the gingham, or, of course, lace or embroidery. Very full sleeves are not fancied for small gentlemen, but they are comfortably loose, and arranged to give a manly breadth to the young shoulders. Still, as a precocious young man remarked: "We boys don't wear sleeves up to our ears like you girls." When piqué is used, the knee breeches are of the same material, and so they are when the very heavy cotton cord is the material selected.

Occasionally one finds a boy who really likes being "dressed up;" who has a keen appreciation of how he looks in his clothes, and who is willing to bestow a certain amount of care upon them. He can scarcely be quoted as a favorite among the boys, but he is very apt to be the delight of his mother's heart. As he starts out for a walk, or to go to church, he wears knee breeches of dark-blue light-weight cloth, a kilt, and a little cutaway jacket of the cloth that, flaring away, shows the finest of shirts, with a lace-edged ruffle down the front. The collar is of lawn to harmonize with this, and square cuffs turned back on the coat sleeves are also in good taste. The hat is a high silk one, a miniature of the one worn by the young man's father. Tan-colored gloves are the finishing touch given to this elegant get-up. Now, I admire the boy who can enjoy this magnificence, and I appreciate his mother's pleasure in him, but somehow he does not get as close to my heart as does the wicked little one in plain clothes.

THE VERY SMALL BOY

THE very small boy is dressed almost like his little sister, though his white slips are a tiny bit shorter, and by the time he is three years old he is permitted to be happy in a frock of brown holland or natural colored linen. He usually wears a square collar in preference to a round one, and there is never a suggestion of ribbon or lace upon him. These may belong to him when he is just "a bit of a baby," but when they begin to call him "our boy," the fond mother knows that it is time for him to doff the little frills. In the very warm weather his bare legs show above short stockings, that is, if he is strong and healthy, and his mother prefers the English style of dress for children, though quite as many are seen with the long ones, which the doctor pronounces healthier. As an evidence of his coming greatness he wears no jewelry, not even a chain and locket being permitted about his white neck. Bless his dear heart, he wants no decorations, for, funnily enough, he is apt to be ten times more affectionate than his little sister, and to give his mother a much more sincere adoration.

WHAT OUR CHILDREN CAN DO

THERE seems to exist an idea that children are not competent to take care of their clothes; that if they tear them and muss them and treat them in a rude way it is because they cannot help it. Now this is absolute nonsense. Without making the small people absolute prigs, there is no reason in the world why they should not appreciate the value of their clothes, the amount of money and care required to get them, and the fact that it is a duty they owe their mother to try and make them last as long as possible. If you are willing that your child should go untaught; that it should be rough, noisy and untidy, do not, when this child gets to be six or seven years old, blame it, and even punish it for faults which you have taken no trouble to correct.

Nobody knows just how soon a child begins to understand, but I really think it is much younger than any of us imagine; and just as soon as it does understand it begins to know the difference between right and wrong. Then comes your opportunity; just at first you can only teach it that it must do this or that because it is right. After while, when the little brain is working, you can give a reason for this. There are few small boys who cannot understand that if their fathers work for the money to buy their clothes, if their mothers make or attend to the making of them, that it is not right and just for them not to take as good care of them as possible. There is your sermon for your small boy. The little woman can be shamed out of unkindness, the fact that she does not look nice appealing to her self-respect doing much to keep her in order. Not for one minute nor one second do I want you to make life unhappy for a child because of its clothes, but you can teach it self-respect, and you can teach it that the respect due to you is best shown by behaving itself. Like you, little children are near and dear to me; I confess to having loved some very bad ones, but usually the badness could be traced, not to the desire of the child, but to the ignorance of the mother. You cannot let a little flower grow crooked for six years, and then expect to straighten it out in one day, and you cannot straighten it out by striking it. You'll never get it back to its graceful shape by that sort of suasion, and it is just possible that you may break it entirely. Think it all over, won't you? And if you feel an inclination to say hard words, or give a blow to the small man or woman, who is, after all, your very own, stop and think whether the negligence of the mother has not caused the sin of the child.