



By Isabel A. Mallon



**B**ABY'S *layette* must, first of all, be simple, though the tiny garments which compose it must, of course, be as fine and soft and dainty as circumstances will permit. The finest of nainsook makes the best frocks, while soft cambric is used for the simple little slips. Every stitch should be put in by hand, and while elaborate hemstitching is permitted, all lace, except the very narrow, fine, real Valenciennes, is counted bad form. The weighing basket usually after performing its chief function, *i. e.*, holding the baby while the scales tell how many pounds it weighs, constitutes itself the receptacle for all the baby's belongings, unless, indeed, a hamper is furnished.

#### THE DAINTY HAMPER

**T**HESE hampers, made of palm leaf, may be gotten untrimmed at a very reasonable price. The expectant mother usually dedicates one of the spring flowers to the little baby, and the blossom chosen must decorate all the toilet articles. If the apple blossom be selected the basket and tray of this hamper are lined with pale pink silesia covered with white dotted Swiss put on very full. A broad pink satin ribbon is laid across the lid, and on it in letters of white and gold, with apple blossoms thrown here and there in an artistic manner, is painted,

"Sing heart, thou art young and the world is in blossom."

The rolled pincushion is of pink silk with apple blossoms painted on it, and the outside of the flannel-leaved book, intended to hold safety-pins, is decorated in harmony, although by needle and silk. The backs of the little brushes, of the celluloid powder-box and the china soap-dish, as well as the white china cold cream box, all have an apple blossom upon them, and "For Baby" painted upon them, so that there may be no doubt as to the owner of these dainty belongings. Besides the *layette*, there must be soft linen towels, marked with a big "B," and a large flannel apron with ribbon strings for the nurse to wear while giving him his bath. His blanket is bound with pink ribbon, embroidered in one corner with apple blossoms, and has, worked in pink and white, this pretty quotation:

"Shut little eyes, and shut in the blue;  
Sleep, little baby, God loves you."

Of course, there are simpler blankets only bound with ribbon and having a large "B" embroidered in the upper corner.

#### A SUITABLE LAYETTE

**I** USE the word "suitable" because there are quite enough pieces in this *layette* for the most luxurious baby, and yet it is not an extravagant one. Again, I must say that silk on a baby is in excessively bad taste. Everything except the outside wrap worn by one of these tiny little rulers must be so made and of such material that it is possible for it to endure a water bath and a soap rubbing, otherwise the baby's belongings are not dainty. You say silk will wash; yes, but even the best of it will turn yellow, and whatever may be the flower you dedicate to your baby, he must, at least, look white like the lily.

Take the dainty little note-book and pencil, and write down this list as constituting the things you will need. First, six flannel bands; these bands should be cut in strips fifteen inches long and five inches wide, and they should be feather-stitched and not hemmed, for even a narrow hem will hurt that sensitive skin which you must remember is as delicate as a rose leaf. Then you want three dozen linen diapers, made very large, and for them you must choose fine bird's-eye. Then six Canton-flannel diapers, made equally large, hand-hemmed like the others, and if you have any old linen use it up in the same way. Then six linen shirts. These must be made each with a high neck and long sleeves, and should, for their decoration, have a fine hemstitched edge. Sometimes the narrow Valenciennes frill is added, but if it is it must be over-handed on with the daintiest of stitches that are at once exquisite and secure. Laundered? Certainly. But softly, that is, without even a suggestion of that enemy to baby's underwear, starch. Its use must be honored in the non-observance.

#### THE BABY'S SKIRTS

**T**HEN you need three flannel barrow skirts. These are made on to a broad cambric band, and are left open all the way down the front. The prettiest finish is a simple flannel binding. Then there should be four flannel petticoats made on to cambric bands, finished with a hem and feather-stitched tucks, but entirely free of embroidery or crochet lace.

The daintiest material for white petticoats is that old-fashioned stuff called dimity; it is, however, rather expensive, and if you do not care to get it, select in its place a fine cambric, making of the material four white petticoats. Of the same material, cambric, you make ten slips; these are intended for day wear, are high in the neck and have long rather full sleeves. For night are six slips of the same material, but shorter, with less needlework upon them, and not having the almost infinitesimal frill of real Valenciennes lace that finishes the necks and wrists of the day dresses. Then you want two flannel wrappers; make these of the prettily-striped inexpensive outing flannel, scalloping either with pink or blue silk the tiny collar which is the neck finish, and the edges of the sleeves. Some one of your women friends will send you the three little sacques, either crocheted or of embroidered flannel, cloth or cashmere, that are required last of all on the list.

#### FOR THE BABY'S OUTING

**Y**OU will prepare for that; so in his long cloak and cape of Bedford cord, or prettier still, of heavily-grained white silk, with a close-fitting little cap on his head made of the same material as his coat and decorated only with rosettes of baby-ribbon, shaded by a knitted or lace veil over his face, he is ready to start out to give to a longing world an opportunity to gaze upon him. His nurse, thinking of his welfare, carries him up-stairs first, so that he may be high-minded, and after he has gotten from under the doorway the wish-bone that decorated it is taken away so that all the good luck may go in his footsteps. When he is a little older he will go out in his carriage, and nowadays the carriage is a thing of beauty. Usually it is enameled in white and picked out with gold; a white goatskin rug is under the baby's feet, though a long distance from them, and after the decorated cover is laid over him, a hand-painted strap of white kid with apple blossoms decorating it, and "Baby" in gold just in the centre, holds this lucky baby in place.

The mother who can paint or embroider may, at an expense that seems trifling, decorate all the belongings of her baby, and exhibit to admiring friends a *layette* that even money cannot buy. On every piece of furniture required for the baby's toilette, including the papier-mâché tub, should appear the daisies, violets or spring blossoms that have been selected for his highness' flower.

#### THE LITTLE ONE'S BED

**L**ONG ago the doctors pronounced cradles unhealthy and said that many a baby had died of brain fever brought on by continuous rocking. So his highness, the baby, dreams beautiful dreams in a tiny bed of his own that does not rock. Sometimes these are of brass, sometimes of iron, enameled white, or of rattan, but always standing on strong legs. Curtains of silesia of the color chosen for the baby are over-draped with dotted muslin trimmed with fluted ruffles. These curtains are not only dainty to look upon but they keep the draughts away, while they are not so thick as to forbid the entrance of fresh air. Feathers are counted too heating and so the tiny pillow and small mattress are filled with carefully-picked white horse hair, fine as possible. The small blankets are bound with ribbon of the proper color, the muslin sheets are hemmed by hand, and there is also provided a dainty comforter made of cheesecloth; this is filled with lamb's wool, tied with Tom Thumb ribbon and bound like the blankets. A rubber sheet is a convenience also. Any pretty sentiment may be worked on the pillow-cases which are to be used for the baby's carriage pillow; those for his bed should be simply hemstitched. If he should have appeared with the summer time the pillow-cases may be of linen, but for any other months they are better made of fine cambric or muslin of one of the soft brands.

#### THE CHRISTENING DRESS

**M**OST of us remember that horror in baby's frocks showing puffs, tucks, insertion and edging, and which was intended for his tiny majesty to wear on the day when his name was given to him. Common sense has changed all that, and it is demanded for the christening robe that it be of the finest material possible, usually the sheerest nainsook; that the hand work be marvelous, but that if any lace at all is put upon it, it must be real, very narrow and on the yoke. The Duchess of York chose for her little son the low-necked and short-sleeved frock fashionable so many years ago, but here, where the climate is so variable and so severe, wise mothers insist that even the christening robe must be high in the neck and long of the sleeves. A very pretty and suitable one has, overlaying the yoke of nainsook, another of real Valenciennes lace, while tiny cuffs of the same kind of lace are the sleeve finish. The long, full skirt is decorated only by its hem and five narrow tucks, all finished by the drawing of their threads and hemstitching. Occasionally, as in this case, especially if the baby is very large, a three-inch-wide white satin ribbon is brought around under the little arms and tied in long loops and ends just at one side of the front. But a baby inclined to be energetic must be watched, else he will soon chew these ribbon loops into damp ugliness and make them anything but things of beauty. Gold buttons with pendent chains are not liked by women who are specially dainty about the baby's belongings, the tiny lace buttons made for the small person's use being counted better form.

#### THE BABY'S BELONGINGS

**P**ALE pink and pale blue have from time immemorial been the colors dedicated to the baby, and any effort to get something out of the common by using yellow or any eccentric shade, is to be frowned upon. China bowls in white enameled frames, and just the right height to be convenient to a mother when she is bathing the baby, are decorated with Kate Greenaway figures, and have two compartments, one for hot and one for cold water. A dish rather larger than the ordinary soap-cup matches the basin, and is also divided into compartments, one being for the silk sponge and the other for the soap. If the pennies have to be considered do not buy an expensive soap, but choose, instead, a good, plain white Castile which has age to recommend it, and which will be certain to agree with the delicate skin. I have seen women who lacked the instinct of motherhood bathing their babies, so I would like to say to you: Be willing to acknowledge your ignorance and let your nurse teach you how to bathe the baby, otherwise chafed skin, a sore head and weak eyes may result from your lack of knowledge, and also from the fact that you are ignorant of the art, a great one, of drying the baby properly. Powder may make him feel more comfortable, but there will certainly be trouble with that sensitive skin unless, before the puff is applied, every drop of water has been absorbed into the soft towel.

#### A FEW LAST WORDS

**Y**OUR baby is the most lovely that was ever born, but do not let strangers, in their desire to express their admiration of it, kiss the little lips that cannot object, or clasp tightly in their arms the little body that is, as yet, so tender. So many little ones are injured by promiscuous kissing that the wise mother tells the nurse that once she knows that outsiders are permitted to kiss the baby her discharge without a reference will promptly follow. Hard-hearted? No, indeed. Nurse must consider, first of all, her charge, even if, to the rest of the world, she is unwilling to display the baby intrusted to her care.

I wonder if those women to whom comes the great blessing of motherhood ever realize what it means not to have a child of one's own? At the mere hint of a baby's going from her the loving mother draws him closer and closer, and while his eyes close she dreams out what life is to be to him, and what he is to be to her. It may never be as she thinks—but oh, are any hours so happy, is life ever so full of bliss as when a mother holds her child in her arms and knows that she makes sunshine or shade for it, and that it is to her a joy forever?

It must make a woman better—this knowing that one little soul entirely trusts to her; expects the best from her. How can she disappoint her child? How can she be anything except the best of women? It is the baby now, but as the years go by and it becomes the boy, and then the man, she must long for him to think that mother always does right. Or, if the tiny one be a girl! In the far-off years she will be her helper and her companion, and the girl must find in her mother her ideal. It is a wonderful gift, this one of a human soul. And God has thought a woman worthy of it. Therefore, must she not show in her daily life how she appreciates the honor? And must she not endeavor with all her heart to be a good mother? Oh, that means so much!