

A youth beside a little rose-wreathed mound,  
 Where lies a form in silent, peaceful rest ;  
 Weeping upon the consecrated ground  
 The tears which should have fallen upon the breast  
 Of her who lies beneath : in dark despair  
 Moaning his grief in low and saddened speech,  
 And craving pardon in an anxious prayer,  
 Which now her deadened ear can never reach.

A child who loses the bright butterfly  
 Which he has chased by dell, and stream, and copse :  
 A dying maiden hearing in the sky  
 The lark's sweet song while leaving life's bright hopes :  
 An aged man, at sober twilight's fall,  
 Sitting beside the fading embers' gleam,  
 Striving in thought life's drama to recall,  
 And finding out how much was but a dream !

ALEXANDER LAMONT.

### LITTLE CHILDREN: HOW TO CLOTHE THEM.



WILL it be useful? Is it suitable? These are two important questions in connection with the choice of clothing for little children. There are some parents who are able to renew the garments of their little ones continually — perhaps during each season of the year—and there are other parents to whom stern necessity forbids any such pleasant indulgence ; but however this

may be—whether little miss and master have constant changes of raiment, or whether they are obliged to don their one or two sets of costumes month after month—I am of opinion that the mother who takes into consideration usefulness and suitability when ordering the dresses of her boys and girls, will show both wisdom and kindness by so doing ; for depend upon it, the small people themselves are really much happier when habited in a plain and useful fashion.

I feel sure that all of us who have any recollection of our childhood will remember sundry scoldings, more or less severe, followed sometimes by divers punishments, for the rents and spots and other disfigurements which made themselves visible on our outer clothing. It is the nature of little children to gambol and frolic, and who would wish to deprive them entirely of innocent and reasonable pleasures? And yet we either do this, or else we mar their enjoyment, when we dress them in flimsy material which tears with the slightest pull, or in fabrics of such a delicate nature that their beauty is soon spoiled, and cannot be restored.

It is a temptation into which some mothers fall, this desire to deck out their little ones ; and in the breasts of some little folk finery fosters vanity and begets pride. Most, if not all, of the attractive artlessness which characterises the true child is driven away from the face and form of the little creature constrained to be continually watchful of every movement and action, for fear it should disarrange or spoil its grand clothes. To other children this peacock display is an actual discomfort ; these smart dresses are gilded fetters, so to speak, which torment the healthily active child by the restraint which they entail.

Now it must not be thought from the foregoing remarks that I wish the small folk to be dressed in

frocks made of sacking or suits made of corduroy, even should they be veritable little romps and tomboys. Indeed, I do not wish usefulness to absorb every other idea ; for, note, I make suitability a strong point also, and I opine that suitability embraces prettiness and freshness, together with taste, simplicity, and a moderate display of fashion.

My first subject shall be the materials most fitted for the frocks of little children, by which term I mean those between the ages of three and nine or ten years old. Of course long before the latter period is reached the young gentlemen have doffed frocks, therefore I must speak of their garments separately ; but as it is our national custom to put the ladies first, let us give them our first attention.

October warns us that winter is fast approaching. What kind of material is it advisable to buy for that season? If we are in search of a really warm material, we must buy one which is made entirely of wool ; and all fabrics of this class are expensive in comparison. But if we have to pay a long price, we get our money's worth, for the advantages gained are many. Warmth and durability and lightness of weight—these we can always depend upon having in a material which is “all wool.” But when cotton is mixed with wool, the fabric does not possess nearly so great a degree of warmth, and it is very much heavier in proportion. Moreover it does the little folks harm to carry a weight of clothing on their backs, or from their waists.

For winter dresses I place French merino in the first rank, as possessing all the good qualities mentioned above. Added to this, there is a certain softness, flexibility, and grace about French merino which makes it particularly adapted for children's dresses. A good material of this kind will cost at least four shillings a yard, but then the width is wide. Merino wears remarkably well, for fine wool does not soil quickly ; and when, after a long lapse of time, there are such signs, merino can be washed, and still it will look well ; and when you are tired of the colour, it can be dyed, and even then it will look well. Not so English merino, and coburg, which become shabby in a comparatively short space of time, and never look creditable when either washed or dyed.

Home-spun is another extremely useful material, provided you can obtain the real *bonâ fide* home-spun, which is very strong, very warm, and yet not heavy.

The cheap imitations are not serviceable, for there being cotton mixed with the wool, the material cockles

and shrinks when wet with rain, and is also very thick and heavy.

Serge deserves honourable mention. It is a very durable material, and is an excellent one for seaside wear, whether in summer or winter; but for little children it will be found too heavy, unless a very fine kind of serge is chosen. Serge is considered to be expensive at the outset, but I doubt if it ever wears out!

The old-fashioned linsey-woolsey bears the same excellent character of durability, but as a rule its colours are so sombre, and one does like to see the little folk attired in cheerful hues.

I have enumerated what I deem to be the most serviceable of winter fabrics. Rep I consider too heavy for young children, and of the host of other materials which appear in the shop windows, I will have naught to do with them for children's use.

I must now speak a few words about dresses for winter evenings, for parties and entertainments where full dress is required.

I strongly uphold the choice of a white material of some description or other. What can look more dainty than a dress made of India or organdi muslin? But some parents are afraid to permit a change to be made from a very thick dress to one transparently thin, and, of course, the risk is great where children show any signs of delicacy. There are several substitutes that I can enumerate. White cashmere is very pretty for evening wear, but it is expensive. Alpaca is much less so, and at the same time more useful, for the gloss on its surface protects its purity. I would here remark, by the way, that all bright and shining materials are certain to keep clean a very much longer time than those which are rough or dull.

Llama is excellently suited for evening dresses; there is a softness of texture, and a delicacy of colour, which make it a great favourite with those who know it, and have therefore discovered its many good qualities. For very young children the delicate shades of pink and blue are most suitable. This material is not costly, being about eighteenpence a yard; and besides this recommendation, it possesses another, that of looking well when washed.

For spring and autumn, we have an immense variety of textures from which to choose; but we must be very wary, for many which present such attractive appearances are, I am sorry to say, sad deceivers. What we have principally to guard against is a material which will shrink or crinkle if it gets wet. At these seasons there are frequent and sudden showers of rain, and it is particularly vexatious when one such shower spoils the new dresses. It is always a great risk to buy a mixed material—for instance, a combination of silk and wool, or cotton and worsted, or cotton which is made to resemble worsted. All these fabrics are more or less unsatisfactory, and, as a rule, belie their looks. I must not leave you bewildered as to what to do for the best, for I can mention two or three materials which will prove useful.

Alpaca is strong and serviceable, and keeps its cleanly appearance for a considerable time, owing to

its bright surface; but its colours are mostly grave, and for this reason it is not such a general favourite for the juveniles.

Camlet is another inexpensive and durable material, and it looks well when washed.

Of llama I have already spoken. Suffice it to say, then, that this material is particularly adapted for spring and autumn, when dresses are needed which are at once warm and yet light in substance.

For every-day summer wear I know of no material to compare with the old-fashioned printed cotton. It is strong, it is durable, and its freshness can be renewed every week. French print is exceedingly pretty, the patterns are usually so neat and tasteful, but the material is not so substantial as our English cotton. Holland and batiste are much used just now for our little children as well as for our big ones, and exceedingly simple and child-like such dresses look, especially when trimmed with white braid. They are not, however, so fitted for rough wear as the printed cotton to which I have alluded, because they will more easily tear, and all creases and crumples, and blots and spots, show more readily on the plain colour than they do on the print, even though the ground of it be white and the pattern a mere spot of colour.

For high days and festal occasions, white cambric, lawn, muslinette, and muslin hold the pre-eminence in the matter of usefulness and suitability. Do not you think so? White dresses may be made as costly as you please or as simple as you please, and in both cases they will look child-like and pretty. They may be trimmed with handsome embroidery, or have but a few frills of the same material; but whichever it is, if the dress is nicely made, clean, well washed and well ironed, depend upon it, that dress will be a becoming one.

White materials have several advantages over coloured ones; one is that no one ever grows weary of the dress. Year after year it may appear, on summer days and winter evenings, first on this child and then on a younger, and yet ever looking fresh and new, the simple change of colour in sash and ribbons sufficing for the transformation.

Again, the fashion and style of a white dress is capable of being altered with but little trouble. Mark you, I like the little people to be dressed according to a moderate fashion. I do not wish their garb to be quaint or Quakerish. Well, white dresses can have pieces put in and pieces taken out of them, they can be lengthened and enlarged—in fact, completely remodelled—and who would ever detect it? But attempt the same kind of alterations with a coloured dress, and what extra trouble it entails, for does it not often happen that the stock of remnants which have been left are scanty, and that the patterns are difficult to match, and the new pieces are too bright, and contrast badly with the faded colour of the older parts of the dress? All these considerations go to prove that on the whole, even when we take the washing item into consideration, white dresses are less costly than others.

There are grenadines and silks and other pretty fabrics which have neat little patterns, but these can-

not be put under the head of useful or suitable for the garments of little children. The thin material splits and tears and roves, oh! so dreadfully, and the delicate silks soil, oh! so quickly. Turn them, and the spots soon reappear. Send them to the cleaner, and the three or four shillings demanded for each dress is money soon lost, for frocks which have been cleaned very soon lose their good looks again.

You will say that I have been very circumscribed in the choice of materials. So I have, and so I intended to be. I think that the variety for children should consist in colour and pattern and style, more than in variety of material.

But some mother may wish to remind me that there are cases, and these by no means rare, in which no choice of materials is allowed, for in these instances the frocks for the little ones have to be cut out of the skirts cast aside by the elder ones of the household.

Very well. Then if usefulness of material is out of the question, and if juvenility cannot be shown in the pattern, at least let simplicity and suitability mark the fashion in which the frocks shall be made.

Why spend so much time, or why pay for so much time being spent, upon the making of so many frills and flounces and furbelows? Why bestow so much trouble and expense in the sewing on of so many yards of velvet and gimp and lace?

This expenditure of time and money (often obtained with painful difficulty) is an error, methinks, in taste and an error in judgment. The epithets of daintily, prettily, and well dressed, when applied to children, should be bestowed not upon those whose garments exhibit costly material expensively and elaborately trimmed, but upon those who are dressed in a cleanly, tidy, and simple fashion, and whose clothes fit the little figures with nicety.

E. C.

### THE OLD COACHING-DAYS.



NO one, we fancy, would desire to return to the days of stage-coaching, yet it can hardly be denied that there was something to be said in favour of that method of travelling. Old men

may still, here and there, be heard replying, when their grandsons express wonder as to how in the world their forefathers put up with that slow style of locomotion, "Ah, well, my sons! the gain isn't all on your side; there was danger sometimes in travelling by coach, but nothing compared with a railway. You got upset in a coach and there you were. You get upset in a train and where are you?"

Dr. Johnson used to think that of all pleasures there was none greater than a journey on the top of a stage-coach, and under favourable conditions, when the weather was fine and the country traversed of some interest, it is not difficult to understand the doctor's preference. Now we travel at greater speed, with greater comfort, and we suspect, though at first sight it may not appear so, with greater safety. But all the various incidents that frequently enlivened the road in former times are gone. There was hardly a better way of seeing a country than from the top of a stage-

coach. The coachman was often a genial-tempered, shrewd fellow, fond of his joke and story, and the possessor of a great deal of information about the country through which his stage ran. He knew all the gentlemen's residences in the neighbourhood, their histories, and those of their possessors, and whatever gossip was connected with them; and if you understood how to manage him, he was not slow to impart his knowledge. These qualities rendered a seat next the driver the most coveted place in the coach. But the tips which both the coachman and guard received, from passengers desirous of having good places retained for them, had the usual effect of sometimes spoiling these functionaries, causing them to be extortionate in their demands from their wealthier patrons, and somewhat cavalier in their demeanour towards those who were in humbler circumstances. We remember reading an admirable sketch of an imaginary drive on a stage-coach, in the opening pages of a recently-published novel. The guard was frequently a hearty, cheery fellow, who could enliven the way with an inspiring strain—"The Yellow-haired Ploughboy," or "Johnny at the Fair"—on the key-bugle, on which instrument he sometimes played with considerable skill. The guards of mail-coaches were provided with an instrument of somewhat shrill but not displeasing note, called—from the material of which it was made, and from its approaching a yard in length—the "yard of tin." Under the circumstances above hinted at, then, travel by stage-coach was neither unprofitable nor unattractive. But it had another and less cheerful aspect, and this, we fancy, was that which most frequently presented itself. Travelling by railway can occasionally, as most people know by experience, be comfortless enough, but it is rarely that it is attended by so much discomfort as a coach journey used frequently to be in the beginning of the present century. The youth of the present day who goes from London to visit his friends in Edinburgh in the space of ten hours, has no