

likely to encourage laziness and unthriftiness to a far larger extent. I do not know whether the problem which now confronts us has arisen in the great cities of the United States, but I am bold to assert that in that land of freedom—where every man is as good as his neighbour—even if the evil were twice as great as it is here, the authorities would never attempt to interfere in the manner now suggested. But if it may be hoped that time will work out a remedy for the excessive poverty of the lowest classes in the country, it remains to consider if any temporary measures of relief may be taken. I am inclined to agree that if the railway companies could be induced to carry workmen at lower rates something would be gained, since many of the better-paid artisans would avail themselves of country homes, and leave room, at reduced rents, for those half-employed, badly-paid classes who would never be able to rent country lodgings, even if the railway companies carried them to and fro gratis. If the country can afford to remit the passenger duty, and if a bargain can be made with the companies for something in exchange, in the shape of reduced workmen's fares, well and good. From several points of view, something would be gained, although I am afraid the result would not be all that the Opener of the debate seems to expect.

Artisans' Dwellings Companies—worked on strict business principles, to pay a moderate percentage on capital invested—may also be factors in the solution of the problem. If plenty of good and well-built healthy lodgings, consisting of two rooms, can be let for 4s. 4d. a week, we shall not hear much more of 2s. 6d. and 3s. being demanded for a squalid attic. The 2s. 6d.

or 3s. will soon be reduced by the ordinary laws of supply and demand to 1s.; and, by the coercion of the local authorities, the attic may be rendered habitable even for that. Private enterprise, assisted by charitable efforts; improved education; increased industry, thrift, and sobriety; emigration; and a resolute determination on the part of local authorities to insist on the perfect sanitary condition of all tenements, without however improving them off the face of the earth—these are the fit agencies to cope with an exceptional evil, and to render it needless to ask in years to come whether the State ought to provide healthy homes for the poor.

[RULES OF DEBATE.—*The course of debate is as follows:—Two principal speakers holding opposite views on the Question discussed are selected by the Editor. Readers of the MAGAZINE are then invited to express their own views on the subject, to the Editor, who will at his discretion select some of the most suitable and concise of these communications, or portions of them, for publication in a subsequent Part of the MAGAZINE. The Opener of the Debate is to have the right of reply.*]

TO OUR READERS.—The Editor will be happy to receive the opinions of any Readers on the above Question, on either side, with a view to the publication of the most suitable and concise communications in subsequent issues of the Magazine. The Debate will be resumed in the June Part. Letters should be addressed "The Editor of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, La Belle Sauvage Yard, London, E.C.," and in the top left-hand corner of the envelope should be written, "Family Parliament." The speech should be headed with the title of the Debate, and an indication of the *side taken by the Reader*. All communications on the present Question must reach the Editor not later than April 15.

An Honorarium of £1 1s. will be accorded (subject to the discretion of the Editor) to the *best speech, which may be on either side of the Question*; no speech to exceed 50 lines (500 words).

KING BABY'S WARDROBE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE CHILDREN'S ROOM."



THE thought has often crossed my mind that there may be—nay, I am sure there are—many ladies to-day to whom a few words upon this important and pleasing subject may prove useful. At any rate, it is with this sincere hope that these lines are penned. In a short article like the present it is, of course, impossible to mention everything in the way of clothing requisite for a baby's use; but it is not at all necessary to do this, as there are many little details which may safely be left to the taste and discretion of the mother.

We are not all in a position to give an order to one of those important people who undertake to supply layettes, and so have no more thought or trouble in the matter until the things arrive all ready for use;

and I, for one, never envy those who can do so. I am always inclined to feel rather sorry for them, for those who do not know what it is to work, both with fingers and brains, for the dear little beings dependent upon them, miss one of the sweetest pleasures in life. I always look back upon the time when I was preparing for my own first little darling as one of the happiest times in my life. How quickly the days flew by, each one filled with some loving labour for the sweet little treasure who was coming to make our happy home still happier! Why, I was positively jealous of my baby's clothes! I could not endure other hands than my own to fashion them, for with every stitch I seemed to entwine some happy dream or hope for the future.

Supposing, then, that some one is going to follow my plan, and have baby's outfit made at home, let us consider the best and most economical way to commence. First of all, decide how many of each article are required, and carefully measure exactly how many yards of stuff will be wanted for the making of each. A great waste is often caused by the want of a little forethought in this respect.

Whenever possible, the materials should be of the

very best quality. Although costing more at first, it will be found the cheapest in the long run, for baby's clothes require such constant washing, that if made of poor stuff they last scarcely any time at all; and so, instead of the first expense being the only one, there will be a perpetual outlay. In many cases I have known the same set of baby-linen serve for a large family; but, of course, that can only be expected to occur when the things are very good to commence with. It is not at all necessary to provide an extravagant stock of baby's clothes. A dozen little shirts, a dozen long gowns, and eight barrow-coats will be found quite a sufficient number of the larger garments.

The little shirts ought to be made of the finest lawn, as a baby's skin is very tender, and therefore easily chafed. The trimming should be soft lace. They must be made open all the way down the front, so as not to require putting on over the baby's head. Patterns for these and all the other garments can be bought at a very trifling expense. Six of the gowns can be made of fine soft calico, trimmed with narrow, inexpensive lace. These are to be used as night-gowns, therefore the plainer they are the better. But the other six, which are to be worn during the day, are generally made of pretty striped or spotted cambric. These can be made to look very tasteful by bestowing a little pains on the making, and trimming them with good lace.

The barrow-coats are best made of real Welsh flannel; it shrinks less than any of the other makes, and is a capital wearing flannel. They may be divided in the same way as the gowns—four to be worn during the day, and four for night use. These latter only require binding round the edge with a soft binding sold for the purpose; but those for day wear need a little more labour expended upon them. They look very pretty if a small neat pattern is worked all round, either with silk, or filouette, which washes much better. Let the pattern be about an inch from the edge. Buttons and button-holes are much better down the front of the barrow-coats than strings. They should be put rather close together, so that the baby may not kick its little feet between them. Speaking of the baby's feet reminds me that I never allow my own babies to wear socks. I dare say many who may chance to read this will readily agree with my nurse in thinking me extremely odd; but let me assure you the experiment is worthy of a trial. I always found the baby's feet a great deal warmer without socks than with them, from the fact, probably, that while the little toes were left bare the child was able to move them about, and so keep the blood circulating more freely. Of course, as soon as the little mite became wishful to put its feet on the floor, soft shoes were put on, but not before.

The most important point to keep in view when making baby's clothes is not so much the appearance as the health and comfort of the little wearer. Everything about an infant should be soft and loose-fitting, so as in no way to impede the movements of the limbs. Pins must never be used where a string or a stitch can possibly be put to answer the purpose

as well. It is only very experienced nurses who can use pins in such a manner as not to cause pain to a baby.

A pretty little wrap for an infant (useful either for the house, while passing from one room to another, or for the garden in fine weather) can be made in the following simple manner:—Buy one yard of fine twilled flannel a yard wide, of any pretty tint (pale pink, for instance). Cut one corner round, and run a slot so as to form a hood. Line the piece which is intended to cover the head with a bit of soft washing silk, and work it prettily all round either with filouette or silk, or even fine wool looks nice. Tie it under the chin with a soft ribbon-string, and it will be one of the cosiest little wraps imaginable. Both hood and cloak being made all in one piece, it is impossible for any draught to get in at baby's neck—a place too often left exposed. Two or three other squares will be required as well; these can be made either plain or fancy, according to taste.

For outside wear nothing is so cosy as a large Shetland wool shawl: they are so warm and light—just the very thing for a baby—and much to be preferred to the elaborate cloaks which we often see displayed in shop-windows. These look much better there than when worn by an infant, for they are awkward, uncomfortable things, far too heavy a weight for a baby to bear, and, at the same time, not sufficiently warm.

When the child is old enough to discard long clothes, and to be put into "frocks," then is the time when no end of mischief is done by attempting to make our little pets look "smart." This is a very serious mistake indeed. Nothing can look prettier, or be more healthy and comfortable for a child, than to dress it in little frocks made of soft, fine woollen material, such as cashmere or twilled flannel. They should be cut high, or fairly so, at the neck, and have sleeves quite down to the elbow. It is a most dangerous thing to expose the chest and armpits of a baby, as many people do, by having low-necked and short-sleeved dresses, sometimes even making matters worse by tying the sleeves (the little there is of them) up at the shoulders with bows of ribbon. Those who indulge in these foolish fancies very often live to regret it. Besides injuring the health of a child by over-dressing it, its temper is very apt to get spoilt as well, for no baby can bear being turned and twisted this way and that while all its little adornments are being fastened on, without becoming cross and ill-natured. A sash is quite allowable, as it in no way interferes with the baby's comfort; but anything more than that should be looked upon as worse than useless.

When the barrow-coats are discarded, substitute for them a pair of little soft quilted stays, very loose-fitting. Never put more than two petticoats on a baby at one time, one of flannel and one of calico, and let these have waists to them. This prevents any sense of dragging.

If a baby is dressed as I have endeavoured to describe, other things being equal, it cannot fail to thrive, and be a happy, contented little mortal.