

THE NEEDLEWORK OF WAR-TIME.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



WE have all been wanting to know, I am sure, what we can personally do for our brave soldiers in the way of work, and a great many of us have already been busy, almost day and night, in knitting helmets and socks for those already on their way. Many of our officers know the value of them for sleeping in the open and the immense protection to the head and neck. For the nights and mornings are cold and raw, and the single military blanket is not very thick, and has a supplement of newspaper if a big one can be found.

One of the easiest things to make for the use of the wounded in hospital is the capital wrap which bears the name of its inventor, Miss Nightingale. Two yards of flannelette are required to make one, and a good material should be selected. Take off a full quarter of a yard at one end, and use it as a lining at one side to strengthen the shoulder part; in order to do this you lay the piece along one of the selvages and tack it down, turning in all the raw edges. It may then be sewn on with the machine. Then double the wrap in half, and make an opening a finger and a half long for the neck, turn in the edges, and stitch down on each side. Add strings of washing ribbon.

A "Tam-o'-Shanter" cap or "bonnet," if worked in crochet-stitch, had better be made in double Berlin wool. The following is a good recipe for it. Work a 3-chain, unite; work in rounds of double crochet; increase by 2 stitches into 1, when necessary to make it lie flat. Begin the under part when the round attains twelve inches in diameter. First round, mark the point of commencement, and work round 2 rows. Third round, double, and decrease; repeat. Fourth round, 5 double, and decrease; repeat. The fifth, sixth and seventh, should be plain; and the eighth round decreased at every 20th stitch. Then make seven rounds without decreasing, ending off with 3 single stitches. A tuft of the wool should be added to the top of the cap, and then line the crown, cutting the black silk or

black calico round, and afterwards the under part. A lining for the forehead should next be inserted, a binding of black ribbon, about three-quarters of an inch wide, completing the whole.

Tam-o'-Shanters can also be made in 4-ply fingering, and they can also be knitted; but I do not give the knitted instructions, as I have always found that crochet took up so much less time, and wore quite as well. There is a description of Neapolitan cap, which is knitted just as a stocking is knitted, and ends in a long point. This is considered useful by many people as a head protector.

The following instructions for making helmets have always been issued by the Mission to Seamen for use in the North Sea; and they have been taken out by several of those who have already departed for the seat of war, and they are better in every way than a Tam-o'-Shanter, for sleeping in, to protect the head from the cold as well as the neck.

Have four bone needles, No. 9. Cast on 90 stitches, 30 on each of three needles, very loosely. Work thus: knit 3 stitches, purl 3, and go on in this manner round and round till you have done a piece five inches long. Then place on a piece of string 21 stitches; this should be 4 knit ribs and 3 purl ones. Put the remaining stitches on two needles, leave off ribbing, and knit backwards and forwards for thirty-eight rows in plain knitting; this will be about four inches. Now knit 15 stitches, take 2 together, knit the remainder plain. Next row the same; go on thus till you have reduced to about 42 stitches, then knit 9 stitches only, and take 2 together and work thus till you have reduced to 25 stitches. Reduce four times in each row till 3 stitches remain. Now resume your four pins; take up the loops at the ends of the plain rows, also the 21 stitches on the string; count them round—there should be 114 in all, including the 3 remaining on the pin. If there are too many or too few, knit 2 together or make one or two, so as to make the correct number. Next rib round and round as you did at first, 3 plain and 3 purl, taking care that the ribbing matches those which were on the string. You will find it easier to knit plain the first row till you come to these stitches, when you can commence ribbing. Work for

two and a half inches and then cast off loosely. In this matter of casting off, as well as in casting on, it is very needful to be careful, for nothing is so tiresome as to find a tight band through which you must push your way, or else break it, to have more discomfort from a loose edge.

Personally speaking, I always knit with two needles only, and these same instructions will answer perfectly; and I find that I can knit much faster with two needles than with four. A 4-ply fingering makes a good stout helmet, but there are plenty of other descriptions that can be used; Alloa yarn, for instance, which is stouter, and pins No. 8 are required as well as four and a half ounces of the yarn. 5-ply fingering is rather softer than Alloa and will need the same pins.

In the way of easy knitting, we have the long comforter, or muffler, which is also a great help in keeping the men warm by day. Alloa, fingering and fleecy, may be used for the thick ones; double Berlin, single Berlin, and Lady Betty are for a better and finer class of thing. From 60 to 64 stitches should be cast on, and the usual length is about two yards. Narrower ones would require about 36 to 40 stitches. These may be made of plain knitting, or the Brioche stitch may be used, which is worked thus. Make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, and knit 2 plain stitches at each end. Or, a purl and plain design may be chosen, 3 purl and 3 plain, which is very good for the finer kinds of wool.

Most of the officers took out woollen socks, as being the most lasting, and the best for the long marches and fatigue. To those who knit these, I would say, make them long enough in the leg; well and closely ribbed to the top; and, above all things, choose a well-fitting size for the foot. There are so many good books on the subject, that there need be no badly-fitting socks. A good 4-ply fingering, heather mixture, or dark-blue mixture for colouring. But, indeed, there are such numbers of good yarns to be found that it is hard to select.

The articles may be sent by post or rail, prepaid, to Captain D. MacIntyre, R. A. M. Corps, Station Hospital, Edinburgh Castle; or to Miss Robinson, Soldiers' Institute, Portsmouth.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TWILIGHT CIRCLE.

A few words to all my dear girl correspondents. Long before there was any thought of a Twilight Circle column, piles of your letters had gradually accumulated. I alluded to a few of them on our "Open Evenings," which were greatly liked by you all, if I may judge from letters recently received. Though unable to do more than touch on the contents of a few of these communications, I valued them so much and sympathised so truly with the writers, that I could not bear to destroy them. Hence the long-delayed replies which are gradually reaching you through the channel opened for us by the kind thought of our dear Editor and true friend of girls. That the replies, however long deferred, have been constantly looked for and are now heartily welcomed, new letters abundantly prove. My love to each and all of you.—RUTH LAMB.

THEO. C.—Your "religious difficulty" is no uncommon one. You hesitated to offer yourself for the rite of confirmation because you felt that "your love for God was not strong enough to induce you to give up your own will for His, or really to dedicate your life to His service." At the same time you say, "I very much want the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and I want to

feel safe, and that whatever my earthly troubles are I have always God, and that He will love me and take care of me." You ought not to make a solemn promise knowing that you have no present intention of keeping it. You say, "I have asked God to make me love Him many times, but the love has not come." It often happens that both old and young people would like to grasp Christ with one hand and find safety in the contact, whilst clinging with the other to worldly habits and indulgences which must hinder them in running the Christian race. Ask yourself whether your prayers have been offered with a reservation. Have you been in earnest, or has there been an undercurrent of longing that you might have a sense of safety through the love of God in Christ, without being called on for self-sacrifice or service? The titles "servant of God," "disciple of Christ," are not mere honorary ones. They involve the doing of the Master's will as well as knowing it, the following His example—afar off it may be at first, but with an overpowering longing for a closer union with and growing likeness to our Great Teacher. Do not be discouraged. Watch over self and remember the omnipresence of God. Here and now are the place and time for work and service, but these must be given heartily. You cannot serve two masters.

AGNES H.—Before your letter reached me I had promised to forward one from another correspondent to "Une de vos Filles." Perhaps if her health will permit she may also be able to send you an occasional word of cheer, for her great desire is to serve her divine Lord by making others happier in His service. In any case you, my dear Agnes, have cause for rejoicing though you get down-hearted at times and are lonely and dissatisfied with the best you have been able to do. Looking to Jesus as your best friend and "personal Saviour," you can recall and appropriate to yourself those precious farewell words addressed to the disciples: "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Can you think of them and feel lonely? Do not be afraid of writing again.

AN AFFLICTED SPINSTER.—To know that you and I have been intimate though unseen friends for more than fifteen years is a great pleasure. Such words as yours deepen one's feeling of responsibility, for you write that I have seemed to know your trials and have entered into your very nature, and that you have felt compelled to lead a better life through our imaginary talks and meetings together. Heartfelt, loving thanks for your prayers on behalf of the Editor and contributors to the "G. O. P.," and for your sweet letter written under difficulties, the contents of which will not soon be forgotten by me.