

side, and keep up a constant fire at the enemy. Only do not forget, in the excitement of aiming, that you have to be constantly repairing your own ranks, for perhaps while you are bending over, and making havoc in the opposite line, you will hear a loud "Hurrah!" from the enemy, as your last marble is shot out of the ranks; and then you are beaten.

If there are two players on each side, it is well

for one to make it his chief business to repair the ranks, while his partner continues firing.

A battle sometimes lasts as long as three-quarters of an hour, if the players keep a good watch on their lines.

What with the firing, the scrambling about after stray marbles, and the excitement, I am sure that this game will make you quite warm on the coldest day.

M. B. M.

OUR SAILOR BOY.

HURRAH! hurrah! here's a letter from Tom—
A letter from Tommie across the sea;
The good ship *Rover* is sailing home
With her blue flag flying so fair and free.

He sailed for China a year ago,
With a wonderful cargo for far Hong Kong;
And he sang, as he left us out on the pier,
"Good-bye, my hearties, I'll not be long!"

Oh, my boy Tom is as fair as day,
With his cheeks so fresh and his eyes so blue;
We used to laugh at his golden curls—
They looked so bright when the sun shone
through.

Hurrah! hurrah! here's a letter from Tom—
Have you seen it, Maggie?—we're all so gay;

He sent this off in a shore-bound boat,
And he'll try and be with us, he says, to-day.

Why, he's out there, dad, on the sunny path
Where the big bees hum and the roses blow;
And that's him shouting, I know his voice—
"Ahoy, there! Maggie and little Joe!"

And out we throng in the leafy porch
To welcome our laddie who's come from far;
There's the same old smile on his sun-tanned face,
Though his strong brown fingers are black with
tar.

So we sit and talk till the moon mounts high
Through fleecy cloudlets as white as foam;
And when bed-time comes and we say "Good-night,"
I hear Tom whisper, "Thank God for home!"

MARK MERVYN.

SOME NEW WAYS OF DRESSING DOLLS.

TQUIE hope that all the girls whom I know—yes, even the little trots—will each dress a doll and send it in competition during the coming year, so that when the Editor distributes your work for you next Christmas he may have a goodly number of gifts for the little inmates of the Children's Hospitals.

Most likely you know the rules to be observed (see page 51) are, that all the garments which clothe these dolls are to be cut out and made entirely by yourselves: no kind mother, no good-natured aunt, no indulgent nurse, may stir a finger to help you in any way.

Although all aid of this kind is to be withheld from you, yet help of another sort may be given to you, and it is for this special purpose of assisting you by direction and hints that I sit down and write to you now. The dolls of which I am speaking, viz., those in Competition V., are to be dressed in ordinary clothes—so run the directions of the

Editor. They may represent girls and boys, and men and women of all ages, from babyhood upwards, and they may be of all sizes and stages of growth.

I think you will find that it is easier to cut out small garments than those of large size, but that, on the other hand, it is a more difficult matter to make a small garment—to sew it neatly and put the pieces together neatly—than to make a large one. Do not cut out the clothes in too great a hurry; take time to consider which is the right way of the material: the selvage of every kind of material, whether calico or silk, must go the length-way of, and not across the garment.

A very superior effect is given to flannels if you work feather-stitch with linen thread along the line of the hem and tucks, and a still further beauty is given if you embroider a tiny wreath or a small spray here and there, with this thread, on the hem. Another method is to trace round scallops along the single edge of the flannel, to buttonhole a thick

edge on these, and to embroider a star or a forget-me-not in each space.

The combination garment is one which it will be well to bring into use for the older and adult dolls, otherwise their skirts will look old-fashionedly bunchy. It is not necessary to strive at the highest fashion, still the dolls will look more attractive if some attention be paid to what is *à la mode*.

The colours most worn just now are old red, old gold, bronze, terra-cotta in all shades, peacock green, sapphire blue, heliotrope, primrose, white, cream, pale pink, and blue. Combinations of some of these in the form of plaids are also worn. For your dolls, none but small plaids will look well, and even those will not look suitable on small dolls. Soft clinging materials are used at present, such as cashmere, nun's cloth, nun's veiling, Surah silk, and sateen. Satin, plush, and brocades, are used for trimmings, and they should be of the same colour as the article of dress.

Lace, too, is much worn, and always looks pretty on dolls' attire, but it must be selected with judgment. It should be soft, not stiff, and what is still more important, its pattern should be small and simple in character. The same remark applies to the embroidery used for under-garments. Frills, frillings, and kiltings are the usual means employed to trim dress skirts. You will find the first two are the easiest ways. I tell you which is the easiest way for the benefit of the little girls; their elder sisters can, of course, accomplish anything they wish to do with dolls. Only expert needle-girls will be able to dress a baby doll, because there is much fine and some difficult work to be done. Nevertheless, do not be dismayed; take plenty of time and a good stock of patience, and you will be sure to succeed and gain a victory.

I do not think there is much to note that is new in a baby's clothes. Fine cambric and fine flannel for the under-garments, narrow hems, tiny tucks, wee stitches, slender needle, and fairy-like cotton, these are the requirements. Then we come to the robe, and here behold bars of lace and muslin work, alternate one with the other across and across from the neck to the very edge of the long skirt. Now look at the cloak: it is a long one, of cashmere lined with silk, with a cape of the same material, and the whole is bordered with plush of the same colour. The hood is made of white or cream satin; a piece of stiff muslin is covered with satin and pleated into a largish flat crown; then a piece of double satin is gathered and drawn into a round comfortable shape for the front; quillings of narrow satin ribbon, or rows of narrow lace, are placed on the inner and outer edge, and a cap of narrow lace fits round the interior, a long rosette of the very

narrowest ribbon is laid on the top of the hood, and a curtain of satin protects the back of baby's neck.

Dolls to represent children of two or three years old can be dressed in the following ways:—A dress of cashmere cut out like a princess dress, until within a short distance of the bottom of the skirt, where a kilted flounce descends all round. A broad ribbon sash is placed where skirt and flounce meet each other, and is tied at the back. The sash looks as if it would slip off the skirt; it is certainly far below the waist, round which sashes are supposed to wind themselves, but yours is in its right place for this dress.

Lace should be sewed in the dress for the tuckers in this and in every case; machine-made frilling, whether of lace or muslin, always looks too stiff and prim for children's garniture. The little damsel we are now dressing might have a prettily-shaped pinafore, or an apron made with bib and shoulder-straps, of transparent muslin, either plain or with a shower of tiny spots on it, edged with narrow lace. If you wish to clothe her for out-of-doors, I should make a round cape of plush of the same colour as the dress, to reach to her waist, or a broad plaited satin collar edged with rather broad lace, to reach to the shoulders. A granny bonnet would suit this attire. It is worn by little ones of all ages, and any colour may be chosen, but if you have chosen a winter colour for the dress, I should make the bonnet either the same or of fawn or dove colour. The bonnet is made in this way. Cut a band of stiff crinoline which will reach over the head from one ear to the other. Cut a large piece of stiffish muslin and cover it with satin, silk, or sateen; plait it so as to form a large crown, sew the front part on to the band, and let the piece behind form a curtain. For the brim, take a double piece of satin much longer than the band, run a tuck for the edge, then make two or three narrow passages for fine round wire, at little intervals from the edge, arrange the gathers, and form the front into the shape you want it. Of course, it is to be a poke of some kind, wide or shallow, high up, or projecting forwards. A piece of ribbon straight over the top hides the union of crown with tip, and supplies strings. A bow on the top and a bow at the back are the only ornaments.

A child dressed for garden play looks pretty. The frock is made of cotton material, sateen, or French print, having a small, tiny, flowery pattern; the bodice is made with a yoke, and the material is full from there; the sleeves are full and gathered near the shoulder and near the wrist. The skirt is separate from the bodice; it is trimmed with small frills or tucks surmounted with white braid; it is

gathered into a band for the waist ; a sash of the same material is tied round the waist. If a pinafore is added, it should be of thickish muslin, and be edged with muslin embroidery. A sun-bonnet, either on the child's head or hanging by the strings from its hand, should be made.

Boy dolls could be dressed in sailor-suits, made of blue serge, or with white duck trousers and white sateen shirts with blue linen sailor collars, and a black silk sailor knot at the throat. Also boys in Scotch suits, with plaid kilted shirts, and velvet jackets ornamented with numerous diamond-shaped silver buttons. For representations of older people—a young lady in a tennis dress of white twilled flannel, made with a full bodice, and the skirt with kilts round the edge, and a series of puffs up the back ; a tennis apron, with bib or shoulder-straps, and a long pocket for the balls, a shady hat trimmed with lace or tiny flowers. A lady dressed for a ball, in gown of soft silk or of nun's veiling (you cannot make satisfactory kilts with these materials, so make frills or puffings), rather short

in front and with long, square, or rounded train behind, with tiny flowers hemmed on the hem of each frill, with a collarette of flowers round the neck and over the front of the dress, with two or three bands of tiny flowers to match, round the head at intervals, and a cluster behind, with a fan made of fluffy or curly feathers suspended from her waist. A lady in a morning dress, with brocaded velvet dolman or a large fur cape, or a jacket the same material as her dress, and a hat nearly covered with feathers or black lace, or a bonnet drawn in circles round and round from the centre of the crown, with a couple of feathers or a velvet flower on one side of the front. This lady might have a muff, which you can make of satin or velvet gathered full, with a frill left at each edge, and a flower or a bird perched on the front of it. A lady dressed in a riding habit. This garment requires great nicety, and would be a test of skill in cutting out and fixing together. You must choose a doll with a shapely figure for this costume. I must now leave you to your work, so good-bye, one and all.

E. C.

A SNOWDROP VALENTINE.



A GIRL and boy wandered forth into a fair, pleasant garden that looked like fairyland, although it was wintry weather.

Suddenly the girl spoke.

"I wish St. Valentine had had the snowdrop instead of the crocus dedicated to him."

And as she spoke she knelt down, and, raising one of the white drooping flowers, she gazed lovingly at its pure white petals and at the delicate green tracery of the leaves of its inner cup.

"Ah!" said she ; "what have you been waiting for so long ?

"Under the snow, under the snow,
With your ivory heads all bending low,
How many secrets you must know!"

The boy looked at her wonderingly.

"How can the flowers know anything?" he asked.

"Everything knows something," returned Leila, dreamily ; "but the flowers are dumb, and cannot tell one their thoughts : only their beauty speaks ; and their fragrance breathes sweet thoughts into one's heart that one tries to put into words. But that is almost impossible."

"Of course it is," answered her companion.

"Now, it is quite different with the birds ; they

can make themselves understood. They sing songs of thanksgiving, and their note of joy or mourning is easy to tell. They scold and chatter as the jackdaw and rook, or screech like the owl, or sing a serenade as the nightingale. And one of them speaks even more clearly, for when he cries 'cuckoo, cuckoo,' we know that the summer is coming. No wonder St. Valentine cared for the birds, and you see that they are all fluttering out and singing a joyful song in honour of his birthday."

"Yes," said Leila, softly—

"The birds in spring
Sweet chorus sing
To good St. Valentine.

"See, there are two sitting on a bough whispering to each other of the spring and summer days, and all that is going to happen ; where they shall live and how they shall build their nests. And there are two more flying towards them ; and two more—always in pairs. Ah ! that is because on Valentine's Day each bird chooses its mate."

"Of course," answered the boy.

"And the snowdrops are nodding their heads, as if they were keeping time to the birds' song," continued Leila. "Doubtless they have been waiting to do honour to St. Valentine. They have been lying patiently under the snow, and now that a warmer day has come they are saying, 'We belong to the wreath that the flowers weave for Valentine's Day.'"