PART I.

THE CHOICE OF GARMENTS FOR THE SCHOOL COURSE OR YEAR.

If each child during its school career is to receive a properly balanced and progressive training, the choice of garments to be made must be considered a most important matter.

For example, such a sequence as the following:

1. Yoked Pinafore,
2. Shirt Blouse,
3. Baby's Overall,
4. Night-dress,

does not provide as useful a training for later independent work, as would be found in the making of:

1. Flannel Petticoat,
2. Camisole,
3. Combinations,
4. Yoked Overall.

In the first set, there is much *common* ground in construction—the yokes, similar sleeves, etc., and in consequence, much repetition of experience.

This, though having a value of its own, is waste of opportunity.

In the case of the second series, however, the garments are much more varied in type, the points to be taught many more, and, therefore, the preparation for later unaided work more helpful and comprehensive.

The inclusion of certain essential points in the teaching, the fixing of placket and front openings, the setting in of fulness, etc., etc.—*must* therefore be kept in view, whatever plan be adopted.

Another fact to be recognised, almost before any other consideration, is, that if the teaching is to accomplish all that is desired, the keen *interest and enthusiasm of the children themselves* must be aroused and maintained.

Fortunately in needlework this is not a difficult matter, *e.g.* in the majority of schools it is quite possible to give the children opportunity to exercise their own little individual preferences as regards colour or material. When making pinafores, patterns of plain, striped or spotted muslin might be shewn, or for overalls, linen in three or four pretty art shades, and a selection made after consultation at home.

At the same time there is room for much valuable incidental teaching, not only on such points as comparative wearing and washing values, cost, etc., but especially in the poorer districts in helping to form a taste for that which is suitable and good in dress.

The plainer, more uninteresting garments naturally do not make the same appeal to little workers. Here, the new step in construction or the new stitch must be made the most of, so that the pride in the working of a front opening for the first time, or the successful management of a button and button-hole may take the place of admiration for the more attractive article.

In the last few years, too, there has been such a revolution as regards " fixing " for children in school, that the garments selected are necessarily easier and much more simple in construction than when the teacher " fixed " and the children " sewed," so that children of the present day have not to face the monotonous endless seams and tucks of the past.

The very fact that the worker is responsible for the whole of the garment, cutting, fixing and making, now gives a closer personal interest in it.

A further incentive to enthusiastic work is given, when the child provides her own material, or buys it from school stock.

In poor neighbourhoods much can sometimes be done in this way, by starting an informal needlework club, and accepting instalments whilst the article is being made.

In many schools the ultimate disposal of the garments made must to a certain extent govern the choice made. Well-made clothing of stock sizes can, however, usually be sold with little trouble.

From an educational point of view, though, it is far better when the child's work is either for herself, or a labour of love for someone at home.

In all cases, some *system* of selection must be followed, and though circumstances vary so much, and Needlework Syllabuses and Courses must vary correspondingly, no plan can be regarded as satisfactory, unless made with due regard to both past and future.

Matters can be simplified by the preparation of a table, recording what each class has already made, and what is intended to be the work of the future.

The following is given merely as an example of this. The actual work in any school must, of course, be regulated entirely by the circumstances peculiar to that school. The advantage of keeping some tabulated record is that there is then less likelihood of omitting some essential detail in the teaching, and also less danger of repeating what has already been mastered.

SPECIMEN RECORD OF ONE CLASS THROUGHOUT ITS SCHOOL COURSE (FROM THE AGE OF EIGHT YEARS).

By the time a child is eight years of age, it is fairly safe to conclude that it has been taught to tack, run, oversew and hem, and that it has practised these stitches in the construction of several simple little articles.

It is presumed, therefore, that these, and seaming in one or two forms, can be fairly well done, before attempting such a series as the following:

	New Stitches.	Processes.
I. *Simple One-Piece Pinafore,* bound at the top with galloon, round neck, and straight slope for sleeves.	1. Seam.	1. Hem on curved edge. 2. Running-on of trimming. 3. Tape as a draw-string (*i.e.* if needed at neck).
II. *Linen Apron,* with darts. No Bib.		1. Darts. 2. False hem. 3. Binding (the pocket). 4. Tape-strings.
III. *Flannel Petticoat.* Not gored. Straight band.	1. Herring-boning. 2. Seaming in flannel.	1. Placket opening in flannel. 2. Pleating. 3. Fitting-in and fixing of waist-band.
IV. *Sleeve Guards.*	1. Gathering, Stroking, setting-in band. 2. Button-holing and button. 3. Running and felling.	1. Management of weak spot at end of graduated hems. 2. Idea of a pair.

	New Stitches.	Processes.
V. *Chemise*, Child's, open at front. Lace edging.	1. Feather-stitching.	1. Plain front-opening. 2. Fixing and setting-on of band.
VI. *Bloomers*, large, with circular and straight bands.	Buttonholing on the cross.	1. Pairing. 2. False hems and false pieces compared. 3. The shaped band.
*VII. *Overall Dress*, without collar.	1. Fancy stitch. 2. Hooks and eyes or loops.	1. Tucking. 2. Back opening in linen. 3. The yoke and its lining. 4. The setting-in of sleeves.
*VIII. *Night-Dress*, trimmed with embroidery.		1. Front opening with embroidery. 2. Setting-on of turned-down collar. 3. Binders (if wished).

* In this Specimen Record given for example, it will be noted that no instruction in gored garments has been given, so that in this particular at least such a course would be an imperfect one.

Again, there is too much in common in the construction of an overall and a night-gown. Far better to substitute the "Gored Petticoat" for one or other of these two.