

HAND-MADE BUTTONS.

THE linen buttons which we buy so cheaply and can sew on so quickly are, we persuade ourselves, a wonderful convenience and a great saving of time. I believe, however, if we counted up the number of times a button has to be replaced upon the same article, we should conclude that they are not, after all, so economical of time as they appear to be.



Fig 1



Fig 2

The little metal frames upon which they are made seem to have a peculiar fancy for catching on wringers and mangles, and safe indeed we may consider ourselves when some of the material has not been wrenched away with the button, leaving us a hole to darn as well as a button to replace.

The old-fashioned buttons which our great-

grandmothers made had not this failing, for in my possession I have some pillow-cases, now frail after years of good service, upon which the original old-style buttons still remain, apparently as good as ever. These buttons are not tedious to make when you practise the work for a little while; and their cost is practically nothing, because they are generally made of small scraps of material, usually consigned to the rag-bag.

The illustrations show how these buttons are made. The material used for the model was flannelette, which is nice and soft to learn upon. Cut two rounds of it exactly the size of a penny; gather one of them evenly round the edge, leaving a margin of less than a quarter of an inch beyond the gathering, and draw it in until the edges meet in the centre. Pull the material into a neat little round, and fasten off the thread. Repeat the process with the second round, but do not break the thread. Place the two pieces together with the gathers inside; hold them between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, and join them together the whole way round by button-holing them along the edges.

Linen buttons are made in much the same

manner, but the material being thinner the gathering should be pulled in closer, so that the margins may fill them up better, thus of course making the button somewhat smaller. Should the linen be of a light make, a little extra stuffing may be added by snipping up some small pieces of it, and slightly filling the two puckered up rounds; but it is a mistake to stuff them too much, or to make the buttons



Fig 3



Fig 4

very hard, as they are then troublesome to sew on, and, moreover, they do not wear so well.

Any ornamental work may be added to the upper side of the button, such as satin-stitch dots, if you wish it. When sewing on the buttons you should sew through them, as this prevents their being squeezed crooked in the wash. The buttons may be made larger or smaller, by cutting the rounds of different sizes.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

IN beginning a new year of "Answers to Correspondents" we should like to express our earnest wish to help all "our girls" in their aspirations, whether those lie in the direction of literary work on their own account, of improving their education, of increasing their knowledge of the world of literature, or of, in any way, reaching forward towards that life which affords higher pleasures than the life of sense.

For this purpose we invite our contributors to send us:—

1. Original compositions, in poetry or prose, for criticism.
2. Original music for criticism.
3. Questions of a literary character for solution, e.g., as to the authorship or whereabouts of a quotation, or the meaning of an obscure passage.
4. Any question regarding education, or the choice of a career, for our advice.
5. Requests for international correspondence; e.g., if a French girl wishes to exchange letters with an English girl, each writing for the sake of self-improvement, let her send us her request, with name and address. This international scheme may be developed so as to be a great help to girls of different countries who wish to familiarise themselves with other languages than their own.

No contributor need be ashamed to send a question because it seems too simple. If it is anything that interests and concerns her, that is sufficient title to our consideration. And on the other hand, we will endeavour to grapple with more abstruse and difficult matters to the best of our ability.

Questions can never be answered at once, but the answer is sure to come in due time, and we shall frame it with the interest and sympathy we feel for those who seek our help.

STUDY AND STUDIO.

MADLINE J.—We have read the verses by your blind brother with much sympathy. "A poet" is a term of very high praise; but he certainly has some faculty for versification, and if it is any solace to him in his blindness you should encourage him to express his thoughts in this form.

ABBOTSFORD.—We have read your letter with very great sympathy and interest. The reviews you enclose are most encouraging, and you may well feel that literature is your chosen path in life. But your expectations of immediate and speedy success are evidently too rose-coloured. There is nothing for the young writer but the old rule, "Try, try, try again," and this in spite of disappointment. Perhaps your good reviews have made you too sanguine, or possibly you have overthrown yourself just for the present, and need a rest. As to your relations with your publisher, it is quite possible for a first book to be a success, as far as reviews are concerned, and yet not pay its way. You would certainly not "put the unsold copies of this book in any other publisher's hands." But we should advise you to persevere, not frittering your powers away too much in short stories, but writing another volume when you feel able to attempt to do so. It takes a long time to become known, and if you look at the slow patient work necessary in any other profession before success is achieved, you will see that it is unreasonable to expect in this one avocation to leap into fame at a bound, or indeed, to avoid some expenditure at the outset. In your place we should regard this first book as a venture, and not begrudge the money spent on it, for in all probability the favourable press opinions will help a second book to succeed in every way. We are sorry for the loss of your MS., but if you have the story in print, you could always in case of need have it re-issued at a future date. The one watchword for you is "work," mingled with good reading and judicious rest. We thank you for your kind words about THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER which you say you have taken from the first number. As a farewell we may quote to you the words of Addison:

"Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius—we'll deserve it!"

ETHEL.—You have chosen a tremendously difficult subject for your poetic effort in "The Creation," and it is no wonder if your pen should falter before such a task. Here and there your rhymes are incorrect, e.g., "throne" and "dome." Your lines are occasionally halting as "During this seventh period;" and you should not use the same word to rhyme with itself, e.g., "power" in the "Sixth Day." We should not like to state confidently that you would never be able to "write real poetry," but we must warn you that it is a gift you cherish to very few. First of all, the rules of poetic form have to be grasped, and then there must be musical thought, to be musically expressed. We should advise you to attempt some simpler theme.

L. BOEKOW.—You inquired a little while ago for the address of the Excelsior Reading Club. Miss Hathway writes to say that the particulars of the Excelsior Literary Club can be obtained by sending a stamp to her at Anderson's, Denmark Hill, London, S.E.

P. VON V.—Your sonnet is superior to the majority of the poems sent us for criticism, but it would not be quite suitable for our columns. We cannot altogether understand the image embodied in the sestet, and though you may yourself know your meaning, the general reader would not clearly grasp it. The symbolism of the morning sunlight streaming over the cross on the altar is plain, and gracefully set forth; but then comes the thought of the reflection in men's lives of the Christian ideal, and the connection of this with the parable of the osetet is not evident. We should advise you to try again.

CURLY-WIG.—Your verses are quite up to the average of those we receive, but we are sorry to say you could not hope to earn money by them. You have a good ear and the form of your verse is fairly correct, also your thoughts are pretty. We prefer "Only a Dowdrow" to the other poem. Certainly we think you might do much better "when you are older," and we will with pleasure criticise any stories you may send us.

SWEET SEVENTEEN.—I. We are glad you have gained the prizes of which you speak. Your handwriting is legible, but you form your letters a little stiffly, especially your n's and m's. You should not write "Yours," but "Yours sincerely."—2. Your verses may perhaps pass muster as a hymn for a united meeting of Sunday school teachers, but they do not contain anything original, either in the way of thought or expression. Perhaps it is difficult on such a well-worn subject to say anything fresh.

SINCERUS.—You ask us how your lines compare with other productions sent to us by our readers. We can truthfully answer "very well indeed," and if we prepared a graduated scale of excellence, you would be near the top. Your lines on a "Shot Sea-Gull" do you credit, by reason of the feeling expressed in them—the determination

"Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

You have a good deal to learn as to form, and should, if you wish to write poetry, read as much as you can, and that of the best; but you evidently have an observing eye for the beauty of Nature, and a sympathetic heart.

NIGHT BEK.—We are sorry that we are unable to give the names of special firms to whom you could submit specimens of book illustration, but we should advise you to write for advice to the "Artist's Guild," Royal School of Art Needlework, Exhibition Road, South Kensington. We go to press long before you receive your magazine, so can never reply at once.

SNAP-SHOT.—There are some humorous pieces suitable for recitation in the *American Reciter*, edited by Alfred H. Miles, and published by Simpkin, Marshall & Co., price 6d. Do you know "The Bishop and the Caterpillar"? You could obtain the part of *The Boy's Own Paper*, in which it first appeared, from 56, Paternoster Row.