CHAPTER XX

OUTER-GARMENTS: SILK DRESS, BLOUSE, GUIMPE

SILK DRESS FOR AFTERNOON WEAR

*Suitable Materials*

- Taffeta.
- Pongee.
- Faille.
- Crêpe de chine.
- Crêpe meteor.
- Satin.
- Messaline.
- Foulard.
- Silk poplin.

*Trimmings*

- Lace.
- Net.
- Braid.
- Self-trimming.
- Fringe.

Planning the Dress.—With the exception of a few details of construction, the same principles employed in making a wool dress enter into the making of a silk dress. In designing the dress, there is the same need of feeling for color, lines and form; the same economic principles enter into the purchase of the materials, the same question of wearing qualities, and cost. The choice of a silk dress would suggest the use of chiffon laces, nets, velvet, braid, or self-trimming, unless its finish were to be strictly tailored, when stitching might be used for ornamentation.

Depending upon the type of dress to be made, it may or may not need a net or silk underbodice or drop skirt. Directions for making these are found on p. 383.

Cutting Dress.—The dress may be developed from a drafted, commercial, or draped pattern. If you wish to drape the dress, working directly with the material itself, follow suggestions given for draping (pp. 170–173, 177–178). When cutting silks, consideration must be given to figures, stripes, plaids, changeable colors, and twills (pp. 27–30, 358–392). Otherwise the general rules for cutting should be observed.

Marking and Basting Seams.—Silk seams may be tailor basted or traced slightly on the chalk tracing board. Never trace them on a hard surface, as this will often cut the threads. The texture of silk gives it a tendency to slip and slide, hence great care must be exercised in pinning and basting seams. Use fine cotton or silk for soft silks, and if there is the slightest tendency to mark the surface, use needles or the best steel pins for pinning seams and parts of dress.

376
Stitching and Finishing Seams.—Judgment must be used in regard to machine stitching on silk dresses. Sometimes it is impossible to make good-looking seams by machine on some of the soft silks. Where the question of expenditure of money or time does not enter too seriously into the question, hand-run seams frequently give the best satisfaction. In hand sewing on silk, be careful not to draw the thread tight; use a combination stitch (two or three running stitches and a backstitch). If machine stitching is used, be careful to have an easy tension. Test carefully before stitching seams.

Any one of the following methods may be used for finishing the seams, selecting the one best suited to the material, and other treatment of the dress:

1. Trim and overcast raw edges, pressing seams open or keeping them together (Fig. 217A).

2. Edges of silks that do not fray (taffeta, etc.) are sometimes pined (Fig. 217B).

3. The edges may be turned in toward each other and run (Fig. 217C).

4. The edges of seams may be bound with seam binding, either singly or together (Fig. 218A).

5. The seams may be pressed open, the edges turned back on themselves and run (Fig. 218B).
Plackets.—Apply the principles already learned, remembering that the secret of success lies in the careful staying of bias edges and avoiding thickness.

Hems.—The edge is usually turned in, unless silk is heavy. In the latter case, Prussian binding may be run on the edge of the hem, holding it easy, and the edge of the binding slip-stitched to the skirt. Circular, or draped, skirts will need to be faced, or hem treated as suggested for wool skirt, p. 363.

Fig. 218, A, B.—Methods of finishing seams of silk dresses.

Pressing.—Silk requires the utmost care in pressing; do not press except where necessary. In pressing seams, draw them over the face of a moderately warm iron. This will usually press them sufficiently to make them smooth, without marring the softness of the fabric. When necessary to press seams open, or in pressing hems, use a soft cloth under the silk. Two or three thicknesses of outing flannel or an old blanket make a satisfactory surface for pressing silk. The iron must not be hot; nor must it be pressed hard on the silk.

SEPARATE BLOUSE OF LACE, NET, CHIFFON OR SILK

Net, lace or chiffon blouses should be made over linings of net or chiffon, cut on the same or closer lines than the blouse itself. Under this should be worn a net or silk underbodice simply trimmed. The blouse may be designed on the lines of any of the good models of the day.
Seams.—French seams, machine hemstitching or fagoting may be used.

Decoration.—Hemstitching, fagoting, embroidery in silk or worsted, and beads make attractive trimmings. Strive to use just that which will give a distinctive note to the blouse.

Fastenings.—The same as for other garments, snap fasteners, and hooks and eyes.

Silk Blouse.—The treatment of such should be practically the same as that of the waist of an unlined silk dress. It may be finished at the waist with (1) a peplum, (2) a band finished to the waist measure, (3) cut longer by several inches, and a casing stitched near the bottom, through which an elastic can be run.

Guimpes are here classified under two heads:

1. The soft underwaist, with long or short sleeves, high or low collar, for wear with sleeveless overblouse or other material.

2. Guimpe of net or lace, with high, close-fitting collar and yoke, cap sleeves for shields, to be worn with silk or wool dresses.

The first type of guimpe need not claim our attention at present, because it should be constructed on the same principles as a lingerie waist or chiffon blouse.

Net guimpes with close-fitting collar. This may be made in one of two ways:

1. Draped Guimpe.—If one has a dress-form padded to fit her figure, the better method would be to work directly on the form (Fig. 219).

To Drape Front.—Measure strip of net from one edge, wide enough to reach from underarm seam to underarm seam, and allow one-inch tuck on each side of guimpe. Fold through center of strip and run a colored basting through this. Place this line to center front of form; allow sufficient material at top to give shoulder seams. Pin to place through center front. Slash through net at front, above neck to permit stretching across chest and around neck; stretch tight across chest; cut away material one-half inch above neck. Keep net smooth across chest, lay in one-half-inch tuck inside armhole; sew tuck, run from shoulder about four inches. Trim out armhole, allowing plenty of seam here and at shoulder. Adjust fulness at waist; pin back of underarm seam.

To Drape Back.—Fold one inch back on one edge of net; baste. Place on left-hand side of back, letting one-half inch extend beyond center. Pin to place, stretch net across back; pin shoulder seams;
trim around armhole, allowing seams; adjust fulness at waist, and pin underarm seams. Cut extra material away. Fold back one inch on other edge of net; place folded edge to center back, and proceed as with the other side. Pin linen tape or Prussian binding to guimpe at waist line, distributing fulness as needed; draw net down tight. Mark neck line with colored thread. Sew shoulder seams on form, finish as fell on right side. Baste underarm seam on form also.

Fig. 219.—Net guimpe, showing cap sleeve collar, back and waist finish, the material of guimpe having been cut away under yoke.

To Drape Yoke.—Mark the center of the piece of net or lace intended for the yoke, after having marked off a strip large enough for the collar. Yokes are stretched usually without seam on the shoulder. With the net lengthwise in the center front, the back will be somewhat bias. This can be stayed with a straight piece of net
later on. Stretch the yoke very carefully, and cut the neck out with
the greatest care, so as not to have it fall short at any point. Pin
closely and baste on form, to hold it in place.

To Make Collar.—Use the cardboard model of collar which was
prepared when fitting tight-fitted waist lining for padding form.
Cut strip of net lengthwise, one and one-half inches longer than
collar and one inch deeper. Turn one-quarter inch on one edge,
baste. Colored basting through center. Stretch lower edge of collar
along cardboard, keeping center of net to center front of collar.
Stretch and pin to cardboard. Colored thread for lines for extenders.
At right hand end, fold net even with edge; at left hand end, let it
extend one-half inch for facing. Baste collar extenders to place,
top and bottom, before taking from cardboard, using lines on board
as guide for direction (Fig. 82C). Remove from cardboard, pin to
neck line of guimpe. Baste after removing from form.

Sleeve.—May be draped over padded arm or cardboard. Seam
may come directly underarm or as shown (Fig. 82A). Baste sleeve,
place in armhole. Try guimpe on. Alter if necessary.

To Finish.—Underarm (French seam); hem bottom of guimpe
and sleeve. Sew waist tape by machine. Plain at armhole, bind
with net, or finish as stitched fell.

To Cut Out Yoke.—Remove bastings at neck, stitch at a time;
put finger between outside and lining and re-baste collar as you rip.
Remove extenders. Hem collar with No. 120 thread, from right
side of neck, trim edge on wrong side to one-eighth inch and whip
down so that it looks as if rolled; overcasting stitch gives better
result. Turn in the lower edge of yoke and sew it with fine running
stitches. Then cut the under side of the lining away, following the
line of the yoke, but allow one inch beyond the sewing line on the
edge of the yoke. Clip the edge of the lining, turn in one-quarter
inch, and finish the same as the yoke.

The edge of the top of the collar may be turned in, and Irish
picot with points turned down, sewed to it, or Irish ladder may be
sewed to the edge, the top of the collar being cut lower to accom-
modate the lace. Sometimes rat-tail braid is rolled and whipped
into the edge of the collar to finish it. Narrow little lace braids
make attractive edges for such collars. Lace braid, narrow footing,
or net, may be used to face the extensions on the yoke and collar,
and also the edge which is turned back. Hem the sides of the
guimpe, one-half-inch hem. Use small hooks and thread loops on
yoke and collar, and snap fasteners on guimpe, except at waist, use one large hook and eye.

2. **Guimpe from Shirtwaist Pattern.**—When one does not have a dress-form, a net guimpe may be cut from a shirtwaist pattern. Cut net lining by fitted pattern, mark center front with colored thread, stitch shoulder seams. Run thread around neck to keep it from stretching. Place lining on one for whom it is being made, and drape outside on lining as on dress-form; fit collar; drape sleeve on cardboard form; or lay out flat on cutting board and pin carefully, so that it is very smooth, but not stretched to one side or the other. Mark material for yoke through the center, as in other guimpe. Pin center of yoke material to center of lining, and smooth across, pinning to place as it is stretched across. Work carefully. Pin it closely, remove pins that hold lining to board and baste yoke material to lining, following line at lower edge indicated by pins. Trim out guimpe under yoke, allowing very generous seams. Run a thread around neck line of yoke, making it a little tight (wind thread around pin) so it will not stretch when you try guimpe on. Cut and baste sleeve, and place in armhole. Cut strip for collar two inches longer than needed and one inch deeper. Fold one-quarter inch on one edge and baste. Try guimpe on. See if neck line is good. Then pin collar to place, center front to center front. Stretch collar as much as seems necessary to make it smooth. Pin it up the back, and the clip at top, and trim line as low in front as desired, and raise back of ear, then lower to center back. It is rather difficult to turn this line, but it can be done nicely if plenty of time is given to it. The collar can be made the same as for draped guimpe over cardboard. Pin waist belt to place. When removing guimpe, be careful to mark the line on back of collar with pins, also back of yoke.

*To Finish.*—Follow the directions given for other guimpe above.

**SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS**

1. What should be considered in designing a silk dress for afternoon or street wear?
2. What materials and trimmings are suitable for making a simple silk dress?
3. How would you finish the seams of a silk dress?
4. In what two ways may net guimpes be made?
5. How would you sew the collar on a net guimpe; finish the ends and top?
6. For what purposes is a silk dress especially suitable?
7. What is the average cost of a good taffeta silk per yard?