CHAPTER XVII

UNLINED DRESSES

FORMERLY the kind of dresses that were made without linings was strictly limited to those of washable materials, such as muslins, gingham, lawns, etc. But so popular has the unlined dress become that we are now quite accustomed to seeing organdies, voiles, and even crêpe de Chine made up without linings. They are usually worn over slips, or well-cut corset covers and petticoats.


An unlined dress is really nothing but a blouse or shirt-waist joined to a skirt in what is now called “semi-princess style.” The instructions given in the chapters “Unlined Waists” and “Skirts” will cover every point in the construction of the unlined dress, except the matter of the finish at the waistline. In dresses made by a dress pattern the waist and skirt should be joined according to the directions given on the pattern.

Practically any unlined waist can be joined to a skirt in semi-princess style if the openings of the two garments come at the same place at the front, side or back. Of course the designs and materials of the skirt and waist must be suitable.

When a skirt and waist are to be joined together each is made and finished independent of the other. But the belt-stay of the waist is basted to the inside of the blouse, and the belt of the skirt is basted to the skirt, but not stitched.

When the two garments are finished put them on with the skirt over the waist. Adjust the fullness of the waist becomingly and pin the waist and skirt together. Then take them off and baste the two together at the waistline. Try the dress on again to make sure that the waistline is exactly right, and rip the belt-stay from the inside of the blouse before stitching the belt.

IN CLOTH, SILK, CRÊPE DE CHINE DRESSES—In fact, dresses of any material that does not require laundering—stitch the waist and skirt together at the top and bottom of the skirt belt. Cut the bottom of the waist away below the belt and beneath it to remove all unnecessary thickness at the waistline. The belt can be covered with a girdle or sash.

IN LINEN, GINGHAM, PIQUÉ, etc., DRESSES, the skirt belt generally finishes the waistline of the dress. It can be made either of the dress material or of some other wash material of a contrasting color. It should be stitched at the top and bottom after the waist and skirt are basted together. The bottom of the waist can be cut away below the belt, but not beneath it until the dress has been laundered. Then if the waist shrinks there is an inch or so of material under the belt by which it can be lengthened. After the dress has been laundered two or three times this can be cut away.

IN LINGERIE DRESSES the belt is generally covered with lace or embroidery joined together to the required width. After the skirt and waist are basted together pin the lace belt over the waistline of the dress with its lower edge just below the lower edge of the skirt belt. Sew it securely in place, taking care not to stitch through the skirt belt. After the lower edge of the lace is stitched down, rip off the skirt belt and the belt-stay of the blouse and then sew down the upper edge of the lace belt. In this way you get rid of the two unnecessary belts.

The bottom of the waist can be cut away below the belt before the dress is washed. Afterward, if the waist does not shrink, it can be cut away under the belt as well.

Instructions for applying lace and insertions are given in Chapter I, “Sewing Stitches.” The more severe unlined dresses and shirt-waist suits are finished in tailor fashion.