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What to Wear and When to Wear it.

All through the month of January the city shops have been given over to whitewear sales according to ancient custom. There is method in the apparent madness, for, of course, in many households there is a quiet time immediately after the holiday season when some sewing can be done, but on the whole it has always seemed to me rather a crazy idea to attempt to urge upon women, whose purses are well nigh empty from buying, the purchase of dainty underwear, which in our climate cannot be worn for another four months at least. No doubt the shop keepers know their business better than I do, and certainly if you have a little money to spend, more especially upon materials for the construction of underwear, now is the time to buy.

What is new? is of course the first query and after a pretty careful survey of the whole situation I find that there is nothing strikingly new in either design, trimming or material for the making of underwear. There is, however, a wider range of qualities in the goods offered, the designs of embroidery and lace, the staple trimmings, have never been prettier and there is a very marked predilection for material as sheer as it is possible to get it.

On the whole, I think that in trimming there is rather more embroidery than lace this season, which is the reverse of last, and where lace is used there is more torchon and less Val, although all styles of lace are used to some extent.

Another feature of the trimming on underwear this year is that there are fewer inserts, which is certainly a good thing, for inserts—that is, the individual inserts, rarely stand the washtub and the iron for any length of time.

Before going further I would like to say a word to the girl who expects to be married next June and who is wisely now getting her underwear ready. The word is one of warning to be careful not to be beguiled into making up good material and wasting neat and careful handwork on freakish designs in garments. There are some new designs shown that are unmistakably good, there are others that, while they attract by their novelty, are by no means suitable for all occasions of life, and the girl who is making a good supply of underwear against her marriage should make it on lines that are likely to last so that she may not, early in her married life, have either the trouble or the humiliation of having to get a new supply, while many of the garments on which both time and money were expended lie by, utterly useless.

Three Piece Garments.

These remarks are more especially a warning against what is known as the three piece combination. That is, drawers, slipwaist and petticoat all in one. One or two of these combinations are all right, but beware of more. There is one unflinching test of a matter of this kind, and that is the number, proportionately, of a new design which the manufacturers are stocking. I happen to know that they are manufacturing these garments with circumspection and it rather looks as if they did not expect them to be stayers on the market.

By the girl with somewhat limited means for the procuring of nice underwear it should be borne in mind, there are many occasions when you may wish to wear a nice corset cover and drawers and have no need for a fancy short white petticoat.

Just now the extreme directoire and Empire gown effects make it desirable to have as few belts and garments round the waist as possible, hence the evolution of the combination, as it were. But the directoire style of dress will not outlast another season, while good underwear, with a little carefully adding to from

time to time should last at least six years, even in these days of bad wearing cottons.

Slipwaist and Drawers.

While there is much to be said against the combining of three garments there is considerable to be said in favor of combining two, and these may be slipwaist and petticoat or slipwaist and drawers. To me the latter combination is best, though if a girl can afford it, it is good to have some of both. Even when gowns are not directoire it is just as well not to multiply belts and fastenings at the waist line, and the fewer garments to put on the more quickly you can dress. My reason for preferring the waist and drawers together is merely this: A slip waist is so close to the skin that in warm weather it will become soiled and need changing, before the petticoat to which it is attached, while the same objection does not apply to drawers and slipwaist as assuredly one should be changed as often as the other.

Many of the new designs, and in fact the majority of the new designs for these combined slipwaist and drawers are arranged for closed drawers.

But however many combined garments you have, see to it that you have a few, at least, of each garment separate and then you will be prepared for all emergencies.

As I intimated before, there is nothing new in materials but there is something new in the quality and weight of the materials offered. Sheerness is desirable. The day of the fine, heavy close cotton, which was an affliction to wash, is passed and while materials are fine, they are sheer and thin and of looser weave. This makes them easier to wash, easier to sew and much easier to keep a good color. Taken all round, I think a fine nainsook makes the best foundation for all undergarments and it is easy to wash and iron.

In trimmings, though lace is very attractive, unless you can afford a good linen torchon, good embroidery is certainly the most satisfactory decoration after homemade crochets and knitted laces, which, to my thinking, surpass all other decorations for undergarments.

In buying embroidery great care should be taken to see that the edge is well and strongly finished, for often an otherwise good garment is rendered unsightly by the frayed edge of the embroidery. Fine tucks and narrow insertions without embroidery on the edge are seen on very many of the handmade garments shown by the best houses. This style of decoration wears well and is easy to iron.

Comparatively few of these are shown among the late made goods, with the short sleeve and low neck. There are some in that style among the most expensive handmade goods, but they do not predominate. One or two of these nightdresses are nice to have for the extremely hot weather, but they are not all round useful and should be prepared sparingly. There is a very noticeable return to the yoke and cuffs of fine tucks with an edge of narrow embroidery or lace. Hems on the bottom are wide, from two to five inches. The effect of this is good and it does not add much to the cost of the garment.

Every girl, prospective bride or not, likes to have one or two really fancy petticoats, and a friend of mine has just finished one that is a work of art and does not cost a fabulous sum, either. When you consider that a really fancy petticoat will, with any kind of reasonable

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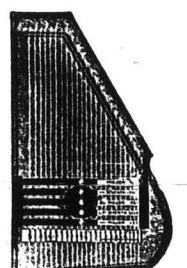
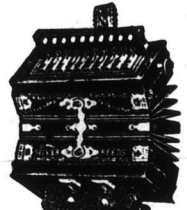
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