

We Dress Bleurette

Combination of Embroidered Percale – 1918

It is recommended by *Tante Jacqueline* that we use percale or a similar woven cotton or linen for this combination undergarment. [Combination garments can be seen in fashion books as early as the 1860s, and can refer to either a combined chemise and petticoat or chemise and drawers, like this one.]

She suggests that colored linen with all-white embroidery would be very fashionable. The buttons are 3/8 inch mother-of-pearl lingerie buttons with a shank. For embroidery thread to make the eyelets and scallops, she suggests DMC Cordonnet thread, which is a 6-ply tightly twisted cotton. Use regular embroidery floss for the forget-me-nots, which in real life are a blue-violet, or could be made all white. She suggests that the stems and leaves of the corolla of flowers could be made with a feather stitch, rather than the very realistic-looking leaves that are shown in the sketch.

To make the embroidered combination, trace the outline of the front and back of the garment onto two pieces of percale or linen, about 9" square, or onto one larger piece, if you prefer, 18" x 9". Clamp the piece to be worked into an embroidery hoop and work the scallops in buttonhole stitch. Make the front and leg eyelets by circling each spot with a running stitch, then pierce each with a stiletto, or make a tiny X cut in the center of the eyelet, turning back the fabric of the hole; cover the edge with close overcasting, and trim away any fabric bits left on the back. Make the embroidered flowers and leaves in white or colored thread as you see fit. When all the stitching is worked on both the front and back, cut out the garment, trimming very close to the scallops, but taking care not to snip the threads, and allowing the 3/8" seam allowance shown on the pattern for the crotch and side seams. [You may wish to increase this to 1/4" or more.]

In the original instructions, *Tante Jacqueline* tells us to make "English seams," and then describes what we in America would call French seams: Wrong sides together, make a tiny 1/8" seam with the allowances on the outside of the garment; press the seam to the back. Turn the garment inside out, and enclose the first seam's allowances inside a second seam of about 1/8". This seam will be on the inside of the garment. On the large sketch, the seam appears to be on the outside, but that is because the sketch is showing the total seam allowance for both seams, which is 3/8". The small sketch shows the seam inside.

At the top of the shoulder straps, sew the buttons on the front straps, and make a corresponding buttonhole on the back strap. [You could also use snaps.] Run a narrow ribbon through the eyelets of the legs with a bodkin or safety pin. Cut two lengths of ribbon for the front, and sew them to the inside under the first eyelet; weave the ribbon through the eyelets on both sides of the front, ending with a bow in the center front.