

FRENZIED FASHIONS

in-One Gown, Stockings With Tassels, Boneless Corsets, Fourteen-Foot Hats and Parisienne Effects in "Knickers"

By Mrs. Cholly Knickerbocker.

WHEN the split director's gown made its appearance last spring you thought the limit of the risqué in dress had been reached—didn't you?

You held up your hands in righteous horror and shut your eyes—at least you pretended to shut your eyes, but it's my private opinion that you took care to miss anything, you know.

But now you must close your eyes and hold your breath, because here is something more shocking, more scandalous, more sensational than the split waist skirt ever thought of being.

The French designer must have spent many sleepless nights in thinking out this horror in feminine attire—or, perhaps, it would be more charitable to imagine that he ate great quantities of pate-de-foie-gras sandwiches and drank many glasses of absinthe, after which he had a nightmare of the worst description. Result: This latest split gown.

From the back they look quite ordinary—long, tightly-fitted. But the front view leaves you in doubt as to whether the wearer's nether limbs are

encased in masculine or feminine attire. Anything more like trousers, when, in reality, they are not trousers, you never saw. They remind you of the ancient joke about the poor suffragettes—about "women's rights" being "man's lefts"—and you wonder if the perpetrator of this practical joke in the way of women's clothes had an "inkling"—liking—that the strong-minded sisterhood is going to demand the right to don man's attire as well as casting votes. Some people, you know, are prepared for all emergencies.

But, as in the comment-provoking director's skirt, the split's the thing.

It starts at the hem directly in the center of the front and runs up, dividing the skirt to about 10 inches below the natural waist line. The two front pieces of the skirt are then drawn back and fastened by elastics to the center back seam of the skirt. As the skirt is very narrow in cut this arrangement forms two trouser legs, completely outlining the limbs of those courageous—or outrageous—enough to wear it.

Oh, it's a horrid thing in clothes I assure you. And I sincerely hope they will suppress it before it has a chance to cross the ocean and inflict itself upon us here. But anything for a sensation—the more risqué the better—so perhaps, the hope is a vain one.

The war against hips has now been raging for some time, but it still goes sadiy on. Fat women struggling to be thin and thin women striving to be thinner still.

It is not in this day the matchless figure that draws admiring and envious glances, but the figure like a match. And so desirable has this attribute of willowiness become that the modish ideal is almost represented by the attenuated Bernhardt, of whom they used to say: When she took her bath she had to be very, very careful to keep the stopper in the tub lest in an unwatchful moment she might be carried down the drainpipe with the water!

If you have hips prepare to shed them now, is the uncompromising edict. And every single woman being—from the vine-like creature who has a slender waist, but unfortunately "is waiting all the way up," to the comfortable soul who bulges generously wherever her corset will permit it—has fallen into the procession and enthusiastically taken up the slogan: "Down with Fat!"

Ah, that we were all paper dolls from whom a facile clip of the scissors might eliminate the too redundant outlines! However, such accommodating surgery is not possible even in these days of accomplished beauty doctors, and the road to slenderness is apt to be a hard and bleak one, the goal to be attained only by arduous dieting, expensive corseting—and that bugaboo of the average woman, strenuous exercise.

The vital question after the desirable attenuation has been attained, is how to be clothed in order to correctly express the fashionable silhouette; how to reduce the under-garmenting to the least possible bulk in order that flowing outer fabrics may cling artistically without latererating bumps and bumps beneath.

Petticoats for some time have been banished from the fashionable American woman's toilette, but now the French woman has gone one better, for by a process of elimination she has brought her garments down to—of course, beside her shoes and stockings—just two!

One of these two garments is a com-

blation chemise and "knickers" of finely woven silk, which, being elastic, hugs the form like its own skin. The other is a corseted frock.

Think of corset and gown in one! A consummation of French genius, one thinks, that were it not for the undeniable expense of the clever notion it would spread like wildfire in popularity.

But this latest clever thought of one of the great French modistes is not inexpensive. For only the most skillful of stay-makers are employed to make the corset, which is fashioned of the lining of the frock. He builds it absolutely as he would an ordinary corset, following the measurements carefully. When completed it is returned to the modiste, who then proceeds to build the gown upon it.

And such a perfect fit as results! And such a slenderness! But only for the long of purse is this scheme possible, for, of course, it means a corset for each gown, as the dress is actually made and sewed upon it. But for those who can afford it it is a luxury worth considering. No more uncertain corseting to mar the fit of one's adored frock; for every woman knows that even the best of corsets is an uncertain thing, apt one day to be too tight, another refusing to lace evenly. But with this corset-and-gown-in-one arrangement all this is done away with. And, as I said just before, it re-

duces the underclothing to a minimum. For the lucky, lucky woman who is not cursed with superfluous flesh the edict of "No corsets with Tanagra gowns" should be of the greatest interest. The great dressmakers all agree that even the lightest corseting spoils the sweet lines demanded by these artistic frocks. The graceful drape at the waist, the lax pose of the figure, the languid air of the whole silhouette is best obtained when few underclothes and no corsets at all are worn.

This does sound a bit startling at first, but it is an actual fact, that with some of the more extreme of the new Grecian and Tanagra costume effects the corset will be dispensed with altogether. In its place will be worn a little contrivance—or rather two contrivances—of satin, which, while giving the necessary support at the bust and keeping the figure flat below the waist in front, will leave the wearer absolutely free and unhampered at the waist line.

An authoritative dressmaker says that this season's fashions ignore the upper part of the figure—that the lines from the waist down are all that count. This may well be so, for with waist lines creeping up under the armpits there is not much to be corseted above one's sash.

For another thing, much lower-busted corsets are favored by the artists in the newest costuming. No woman laced rigidly into one of the unyielding high corsets recently in vogue could possibly have the lissome, unconfined grace of form imperatively necessary for true classic outlines. But as the inches are clipped off the top of the new corsets they are added to the bottom, and the tendency of new models is assur-

edly downward—in dimension, if not in price.

The transparent fabrics of evening costumes, of course, demand something in the way of an under petticoat, but if you must wear a petticoat it must not be of lingerie. To a princess jersey of knitted silk, so fine that you could almost draw the whole garment through a finger ring, is attached a knee-deep flounce of lace-trimmed net, with perhaps an under flounce of softest chiffon.

And since the multiplication of under garments amounts almost to a crime, according to the present way of thinking, corsets and petticoats and knickerbockers are now turned out all made in one by enterprising designers and manufacturers. Thus we find petticoats of finely woven silk, clinging in the extreme, built in one piece with lightly boned corsets, the whole thing fastened up the back; or little knickers of silk or lingerie with an upper part of boned-corset cover, which, if you are reasonably slight, does away with the need of more substantial corseting.

And just at present "knickers" are quite the most attention-holding part of our feminine toilette, petticoats having been given such a "knockout" blow. And when one comes to think of it, fancy a Naiad, or the winged Victory, or any of the lovely draped creatures from whose gracious outlines the costume designers profess to be taking their inspiration—in petticoats. No, sisters; if we are to be classic let the thing be done thoroughly. A petticoat in a tradition, to be sure, but what a trifle is a tradition in the acquirement of art!



Here's the Very Newest of New Ideas in the Dressmakers' Art. They Now Make the Gown Onto the Corset, Which Thus Becomes the Lining of the Dress.



The Toreador Scarf Shawl is One of the Latest Caprices of Fashion.



From the Uniform of the Hussars Has Been Borrowed This Dashing Little Shako.

Her Hat! A Creation That Is Simply Staggering—Fourteen Feet in Circumference.

THE FOUR-DRESSES-ALL-IN-ONE-GOWN.

1—Gown with overskirt draped on one hip, the long ends of the overskirt descending to the ground and ending in tassels. 2—The overskirt is still draped on the hip, but on the opposite side is lifted to the shoulder and held there by a metallic ornament. 3—The overskirt is lifted on to both shoulders, falling in graceful folds across the bust and down below the waist in front. In the back it hangs almost to the floor. 4—This very varied overskirt takes the form of a long, enveloping cloak. It hangs straight in front and in the back, with slight folds from each shoulder.