Ancient Costumes

CHAPTER FIVE

We now proceed to learn what the ancients contributed to modern thought in dress.*

Take the Polish warrior of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as illustrated in figure 31. Figure 32 represents a German woman of the first part of the fifteenth century. Figure 33 represents the costume of a woman of Italy during the first part of the fifteenth century. With these designs as a basis we have created the two designs you see in figures 34 and 35.

The afternoon dress figure 34, was suggested by the costumes shown in figures 31 and 33. The line of the embroidery around the neck and down the front was taken from the bodice of the Italian costume. The scarf worn over the shoulders is changed into a one-sided draped collar. The design of the skirt of the warrior's costume is taken to form the skirt of the modern dress, while the motif on his belt is embroidered on the underskirt of the afternoon frock.

The collar and sleeves of the blouse, figure 35, were adapted from the suggestion of the neckline of the

*It would be presumptuous on the part of the author to attempt to cover in these few pages a complete study of ancient costumes as a source of inspiration for the costume designer. A few examples only are given in order to show how we moderns can use the work of our predecessors to good advantage. By working on the suggestions contained in the pages of this book, however, you can readily derive innumerable ideas from ancient costumes. Books on the subject are to be found in almost any public library and in bookstores.
German costume. The draping of the cloak across the front, and the glimpse of the black undergarment, suggested a wide crushed belt with a black ribbon just below the waistline. The slash in the girdle and the draped end hanging from it are taken from the draping of the cloak at the one side.

From these ancient costumes, we have designed garments which are usually termed "afternoon wear," consisting of a blouse and an afternoon frock. It is by no means necessary to limit the suggestions one can take from these ancient costumes to that particular type of costume, however, and one can just as easily derive suggestions for evening or street wear from them.

In figures 36 and 37 you will see pictured two costumes—that of a male and of a female—which are typical of the middle of the Byzantine period. Note the absence of drapery which was an important feature in the costumes of the earlier Greeks and Romans. In both the costumes illustrated, we find the bands of typical Byzantine ornament at the neck and sleeves.