June 17, 1958 M. H. ARGYLL 2,839,057

PROTECTIVE GARMENT

Filed Feb. 3, 1956

FIG. 1.

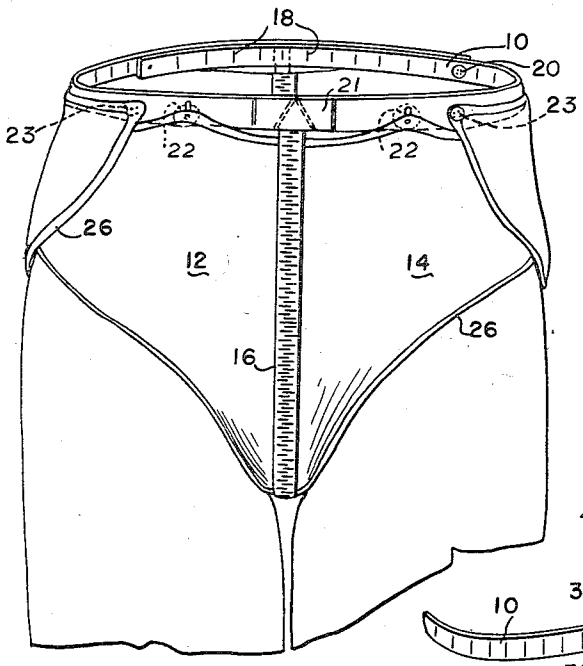


FIG. 2.

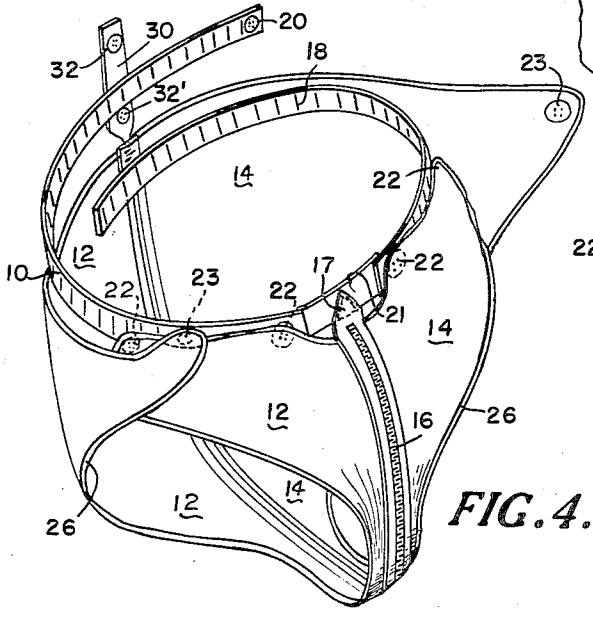


FIG. 3.

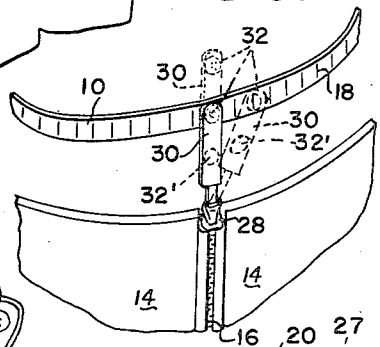
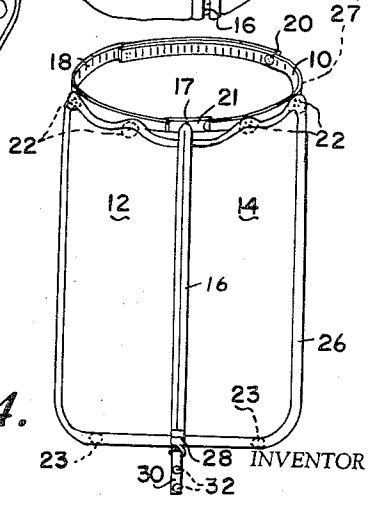


FIG. 4.



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PROTECTIVE GARMENT

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5 Claims. (Cl. 128—288)

This invention relates to a nether garment which is to be worn or used by females suffering from any form of incontinence. It is particularly valuable to hospital patients and to the aged in order to forestall the possibility of the above mentioned incontinence.

An absorbent pad or insert may or may not be used in connection with this garment, depending on whether the incontinence is an actuality or a dreaded possibility. By dreaded possibility it is meant that the need for such a garment may well arise quickly and with little or no warning, and it is within the contemplation of this invention that the garment described hereinbelow may be worn at all times, as regular article of dress, by females who are in advancing years. As will be explained, such a garment should be comfortable, of a suitable material, and easy to don.

Many females, and more particularly, many elderly females, suffer from incontinence, and are unable to control the flow of urine. Unfortunately, when those suffering from this malady are elderly, they frequently are unable to care for themselves and are unable to don, adjust, and maintain devices and means as are presently available to cope with their unfortunate situation.

Further, certain of these elderly females also suffer from anility, and are unable or unwilling to appreciate the necessity for wearing absorbent padding under the circumstances, and will attempt to divest themselves of these devices.

It will therefore be seen that it is desirable to provide some means for maintaining such absorbent padding in position with the means being so arranged that it can be easily and conveniently fitted to the wearer by nurses or ward attendants, or by the wearer herself if she is in full possession of her mental faculties, and yet which will be somewhat difficult for an anile or irrational wearer to remove and so the purpose of having the fastening at the back of the wearer is thus explained.

Further, it will be seen that inasmuch as such females are frequently institutionalized, it is quite desirable that such garments be manufactured in but one or two sizes, and be so arranged as to be readily adjustable to conform to the diverse body shapes and sizes as will be encountered in such institutions.

It is, therefore, one of the primary objects of this invention to provide protective nether garments which are easily and cheaply manufactured.

It is another object of this invention to provide a protective nether garment which is easily adjustable to conform to any wearer's body.

A further object of this invention is to provide a protective nether garment having a slide fastener extending substantially throughout its entire length whereby absorbent pads may be easily removed and the lower portions of the wearer's body cleansed without removal of the garment.

Yet another object of this invention is to provide a protective nether garment in which the one end of the slide

fastener is vertically adjustable to provide additional room in the crotch of the garment.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a protective nether garment in which select sections may be replaced without destroying the entire garment.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a protective nether garment which may be easily sterilized in whole or in part or which may be disassembled to sterilize only one section or element.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a protective nether garment which may be easily removed from bed-ridden patients without the necessity for moving or lifting the limbs.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a protective nether garment which may be quickly and easily removed when the wearer is standing erect by unfastening the waist of the garment and allowing it to fall to the floor without further handling.

Other object and advantages of this invention will be in part obvious and in part explained by reference to the accompanying specification and drawings.

Figure 1 is a front elevational view of the garment and shows the manner in which the device is fitted to the torso of the wearer;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the garment illustrating the manner in which the various elements are secured together when the garment is fitted to the torso of the wearer;

Figure 3 is a fragmentary view of the exterior surfaces of the back side of the garment and its waist band, and illustrates the vertical adjustability of the slide fastener in accordance with this invention; and,

Figure 4 is a front elevational view of the garment with the panels attached to and suspended from the front portion of the waist encircling band but not yet secured to the back portion of the waist securing band, in the manner best illustrated in Figure 2.

Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to Figures 1, 2 and 4, it will be seen that the garment has as its main elements a waist encircling band **10**, and a pair of elongated panels **12** and **14** secured thereto and having their neighboring edges fastened together by a slide fastener or zipper **16**.

The waist band **10**, which is preferably formed from a light, strong, non-absorbent or quick-drying material, such as nylon, has a large number of button holes **18** spaced at close intervals along its entire length. The waist band has a button **20**, dimensioned to fit any selected button hole **18**, secured at or near one end so that the waist band may be selectively fitted about the waists of individuals of widely varying sizes. In accordance with this invention, the waist band may have an elastic insert **21**, which is here illustrated as being disposed at the front of the band, so that the waist band may be closely fitted without being uncomfortable, or interfering with the breathing of the wearer.

The panels **12** and **14** are preferably formed of some fluid resistant material, such as rubberized silk, or the like, and have all of their edges, excepting their neighboring edges, bound with a stretch resisting, quick-drying, tape, such as nylon tape **26**. The neighboring edges of the panels **12** and **14** are each sewn to the side tape of a conventional zipper **16** which has its closed or bight end **17** sewn, or otherwise secured, to the waist band **10** at a point which will be the front center when the waist band is fitted to the wearer; in the preferred embodiment elastic insert **21** is located at this portion of the waist band.

The longitudinal ends of the panels **12** and **14** corresponding to the bight end **17** of the zipper **16**, that is to say the first ends, are each provided with two or

more buttons 22, each of which are fitted into selected button holes 18 of the waist band. It will be seen that the particular button hole selected for an individual button 22 will vary somewhat, depending upon the size and shape of the abdomen of the wearer. For example, if that individual is particularly obese, the buttons of a particular panel will be placed closer together than would otherwise be the case. So as to allow sufficient slack material to prevent binding or chaffing, the panels 12 and 14 are positioned against the exterior or outside surface of the waist band 10, with the buttons 22 extending inwardly or toward the body of the wearer, and through the button holes 18. At the opposite or second longitudinal end of each of the elongated panels 12 and 14, there is at least one button 23, secured to the panel on the same side thereof as buttons 22.

Referring to Figure 4, it will now be seen that when the waist band 10 is fitted to the erect body 27 of the wearer, the panels 12 and 14 will be suspended from the front portion of the waist band 10. The zipper fastener 16 is closed, as illustrated in Figure 4, and the second ends of the panels are then passed between the legs of the wearer and then up the back side to cover the buttocks. The buttons 23 are each secured in an appropriate button hole 18, which will, of course, depend upon the size and shape of the torso of the wearer. Inasmuch as the panels 12 and 14 are roughly rectangular in shape, the fabric will be gathered or bunched as it passes under the crotch, but it will be seen that a certain amount of the slack in the fabric will be taken up by absorbent pads which are placed in that area for the reasons discussed hereinabove.

The slide 28 of the slide fastener 16 has an elongated tab 30 fixed thereto, and the tab is provided with two or more buttons 32, all on the same side thereof and spaced from one another.

It will be seen that this feature gives a further flexibility in the adjustment of the garment to conform to the individual characteristics of the body of the wearer. Thus if the weight of the wearer requires more space in the area of the crotch, the buttons 32 nearest the end of the tab may be secured to the waist band 10, as shown in Figure 3. However, if the particular configuration of the body of the wearer does not require such an area of fabric in the region of the crotch, or if the buttocks or abdomen are not unduly large, the button 32' nearest the slide fastener may be appropriate, as shown in phantom.

While the tab 30, as illustrated in Figure 3, is extending vertically upward to the nearest button hole 18, it will be understood that another button hole may be used with the tab extending obliquely upward, as also shown in phantom in Figure 3, from the slide 28 so as to give a further, and finer adjustment of the position of the panels 12 and 14, or, more particularly, of the second end of the panels as discussed hereinbefore.

It will also be understood that under certain circumstances, and owing to particular bodily configurations that may be encountered, the slide 28 of the zipper may not be drawn to the very end of the zipper but rather may be locked in an intermediate position with the tab fastened in an appropriate button hole to secure the garment snugly against the body of that particular wearer.

In any event, it should be understood that the arrangement of the zipper in such a manner that the tab is always secured to, or near, the center of the back portion of the waist band will serve to hinder the efforts of anile individuals to remove the garment if they find it uncomfortable or disturbing.

It should be understood that it is within the contemplation of this invention to make various modifications in the details of the structure of this garment. For example, it is within the contemplation of this invention to provide a slide fastener of the entirely severable type, that is to say, a slide fastener which can be broken down into two entirely separate sections, in which case the bight end of the fastener would not necessarily be secured to the front central portion of the waist band 10.

It is also within the contemplation of this invention to make some variations in the configuration of the side panels, which are here illustrated as being substantially rectangular, if the garment is to be always worn by one individual, and if that individual is not particularly large or obese, it might be desirable to reduce somewhat the transverse dimensions of the central portions of the side panels, and of course, other variations in size and shape to suit an individual wearer are considered to fall within the contemplation of this invention.

When the garment is worn, it is expected that the individual herself, or a hospital or ward attendant, can open the slide fastener 16 and insert or replace absorbent pads which are positioned in the area of the crotch for the reasons which have been discussed hereinabove. It is also within the contemplation of this invention that the zipper may be opened when it is desired to cleanse or treat the area covered thereby, and it will be seen that this is much more convenient than removing the entire garment.

It is within the contemplation of this invention that this garment may be easily and conveniently removed from the wearer whether she is standing in an erect position or is lying in a bed. When the wearer is standing erect, the exemplary garment, here illustrated, may be quickly and conveniently removed from the patient by releasing button 20 and two other buttons, preferably buttons 23, which are, as has been explained hereinbefore, on the second ends of the elongated panels. The release of these three buttons from their selected button holes 18 will allow the entire garment to drop to the floor, and the patient, or wearer, will not be required to step out of the garmen as has been required hereinbefore.

When it is desired to remove the garment from a female who is confined to a bed, whether as in a hospital or other institution, the garment is merely unbuttoned and lifted from the patient without the exertion of moving the limbs.

Having described only a typical preferred form and application of my invention, I do not wish to be limited or restricted to specific details herein set forth but wish to reserve to myself any variations or modifications that may appear to those skilled in the art and falling within the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A sanitary nether garment to be used by incontinent females or the aged comprising: a waist encircling band; a pair of elongated fluid resistant fabric panels; means permanently securing one of said panels to the other of said panels; securing means for fastening first corresponding longitudinal ends of said panels to said waist band; second securing means for fastening second corresponding longitudinal ends to said waist band; slide fastener means for separably securing adjacent longitudinally extending edges of one of said panels to the other of said panels; and means for locking the movable slide of said fastener means in a desired closed position including fastening means securable to said waist band.

2. A sanitary nether garment for use on incontinent persons or the aged comprising a waist encircling band having a plurality of fastener receiving openings formed therein; a pair of fluid resistant fabric panels suspended from said band intermediate the ends thereof; a slide fastening means attached to each of said panels substantially along longitudinal adjoining edges thereof whereby said panels may be separably joined into an essentially integral unit; second fastening means attached to the lower edges of said panels whereby said second fastening means can be extended through the crotch of the user and adjustably secured in the openings in said band; a tab attached to the slide, whereby the vertical position

of the slide is variable for adjusting the garment to persons of different size.

3. A sanitary nether garment to be used by incontinent females or the aged comprising: a waist encircling band; a pair of elongated fluid resistant fabric panels; securing means for fastening first corresponding longitudinal ends of said panels to said waist band, second securing means for fastening second corresponding longitudinal ends to said waist band; slide fastener means for separably securing adjacent longitudinally extending edges of one of said panels to the other of said panels, said slide fastener means comprising a slide fastener bight end integrally secured to said waist encircling band; and means for locking the movable slide of said fastener means in a desired closed position including fastening means securable to said waist band.

4. The structure defined in claim 3, and further comprising a plurality of button holes formed in said waist band, said securing means comprising buttons disposed on the same surface sides of said panels.

5. The structure defined in claim 4, in which said fastening means securable to said waist band comprise a plurality of buttons engageable with said button holes.

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