

Description List and Text Sheet

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Outside Cover Corset

Antique off-white ribbed jersey child undershirt waist with 4 celluloid buttons for front closure, 7 celluloid buttons for attaching to stockings/pantaloons, embroidered text.

Height w/shoulder straps: 11”

Width closed: 10”

Width opened: 22”

Vest & Book #1 of 3

“A Figure Educator”

Corset Cover 1: Antique white corded cotton sateen child vest with 3 plastic buttons for front closure and 10 hand sewn eyelet holes in back for cording lace.

Height: 6 1/2”

Width closed: 7 1/2”

Width opened: 13”

Interior Book *“Girl of the Future”*

Pages: Cotton sateen fabric with with ink jet printed images.

Page Height: 4 1/2”

Page Width: 4 3/4”

Vest & Book #2 of 3

“Charm of Form... and Construction”

Corset Cover 2: Antique off-white cotton Ideal child vest, size 0 child with 4 celluloid buttons for front closure, 3 waist buttons for attaching to stockings/pantaloons.

Height w/shoulder straps: 7 1/2”

Width closed: 10”

Width opened: 20”

Interior Book *“Youthful Ease of Person”*

Pages: Vintage cotton bed sheets with ink jet printed images.

Page Height: 4 1/2”

Page Width: 6 1/2”

Vest & Book #3 of 3

“Grammar of Ornament”

Corset Cover 3: Antique off-white cotton jersey child vest with 3 plastic buttons for front closure.

Height: 8”

Width closed: 10”

Width opened: 19”

Interior Book *“Love of Display, Artistic Dress”*

Pages: Vintage cotton bed sheets with inkjet printed images

Page Height: 5 1/4”

Page Width: 6 1/2”

Partial Bibliography and sources for text

Books:

Beauty of Form and Grace of Vesture, Frances Mary Steel and Eliz Livingston Steele Adams, 1892

Dress Reform, A Series of Lectures... Abba Gould-Woolson, et al. 1874

The Education of American girls. Considered in a series of essays, edited by Anna C. Brackett, 1874

“Go Right On, Girls!” Develop Your Bodies, Your Minds, Your Characters, Annie Ryder, 1891

Golden Steps to Respectability, Usefulness and Happiness, John Mather Austin, 1850

Health – beauty – sexuality – from girlhood to womanhood..., Bernarr Macfadden & Marion Malcolm, 1904

Individual Gymnastics, a Handbook of Corrective and Remedial Gymnastics, by Lillian Curtis Drew, 1922

Testament of Youth: an autobiographical study of the years 1900-1925, Vera Brittain, 1937

The well-dressed woman: a study in the practical application to dress of the laws of health, art and moral, Helen Gilbert Ecob, 1892

Woman in her various relations: containing practical rules... hints on the body, mind, and character, with a glance at woman's rights and wrongs, profession, costume, etc., Mrs L.G. Abell, 1851

The Young Ladies Friend. By a Lady., Mrs. John Farrar, 1837

Other:

Corset and Underwear Review, 1916

Godey's Ladies Book, June, 1857, 1867

The Queen Magazine, No. 1, 1861

Patent no. 124,891, May 7, 1872

Cover vest
outside front title
embroidered

Caution & Council

Cover vest
interior lining –
right & left sides
embroidered

...sister Margaret...was put into corsets at thirteen, ‘ran round and round the nursery screaming with rage.’
I ran away somewhere and took them off...endured sullenly the row that ensued when my soft-shelled condition was discovered, was forcibly re-corseted; and as soon as possible went away and took them off again.

One of my governesses used to weep over my wickedness in this respect.

I had a bad figure and to me they were instruments of torture; they prevented me from breathing, and dug deep holes into my softer parts on every side. I am sure no hair shirt could have been worse to me.

Inside Corset 1
front corset cover
embroidered

A Figure Educator

front corset cover
*inside, right &
left sides*

For girls from 10 to 13 years of age there is a corset waist called by the demonstrator, “**A Figure Educator**,” and the name is excellent, for a child’s figure must be trained, brought up, as it were, to the adult corset stage.

In fitting an “Educator” only one inch less than the actual waist measurement should be sold—such a corset waist could not be laced tightly for the health and comfort of a child. It might be if the “three inches less than the waist measure” allowed in fitting an adult were adopted.

Inside Book 1,
Front cover
embroidered

Girl of the Future

Back of front cover

Few girls are aware of the force they employ when they lace their corsets; the mode of doing it deceives them; it is so easy to gain inch by inch of that treacherous silken cord, that they are not conscious of the effect they are producing.

Inside Book 1, p. 1
front

Make your body vigorous and fine; then by further study learn to clothe that body charmingly.
Do not be dismayed by mistakes or failures; *you are striving* to make a beautiful picture of yourself.
Do not expect to succeed with the first effort.

back

In your early girlhood and young womanhood, cultivate a love for physical perfections. It is thought which directs action, and *our actions shape our bodies*.

Inside Book 1, p. 2 front	We must educate the child from the first into a habit of controlling and directing her naturally drifting and capricious attention by the will. The power of the child is very limited in this respect. Her eyes, the index of her attention, wander easily from one external object to another, and consequently our work must be very gradual, for, if we attempt to hold the attention one moment longer than the mind has strength for, the tense bow snaps, and the overstrained activity lapses into insanity.
<i>back</i>	Self-possession and self-reliance in all places, are the result of a well-disciplined mind and cultivated manners, and gives the poser of being well <i>prepared and fully equal</i> to any occasion.

Inside Book 1, p. 3 front	<i>The true Secret of Dress is to make it harmonize with the style of countenance and figure so as to identify it, as it were, with the character of the wearer.</i>
<i>back</i>	Gracefulness and Ease are always desirable, but any affected “ <i>jiggling</i> ” of the body is undignified, unmeaning, and ungraceful.

Inside Book 1, p. 4 front	Clothing with Regard to the Mechanical Effects of Pressure. <i>We have been continually told that our girls ought not to wear corsets.</i> The truth is, that it is not the corsets in themselves that are injurious; they become so only when they are so tightly drawn that they prevent free inspiration, or when, by their great pressure, they force the yielding ribs from their normal curve, compress the lungs, and displace the organs of the abdomen, crowding them into the pelvis, and thus displacing or bending out of shape the organs therein contained.
<i>back</i>	<i>Let the girls keep on their corsets, but instead of the unyielding cotton, linen, or silk braid, let these be laced by round silk elastic cord. They will then give support where it is needed, and yet will yield freely to the expansion of the chest, returning again as the air is expelled, and so preventing discomfort. ... elastic cord, and not ribbon, because the elastic ribbon is too strong, and does not sufficiently yield.</i>

inside Book 1 p. 5 front	Girls do not know that they dress too tightly. They will repel indignantly the idea that they “Lace;” and yet, if they be asked to take a full inhalation, it becomes perfectly evident that the outside resistance is a very positive element.
<i>back</i>	For Children: Be Yielding and Pleasant. Check the first rising of anger or ill-will, and rule your own spirit, or you will be <i>unhappy and unbeloved</i> .

inside Book 1 p. 6
front
(Back cover *inside*)

Propriety of Deportment is a happy union of the moral and the graceful, and is the result of a Knowledge of Oneself and Respect for the Rights of Others.

Back
(Back cover *outside*)
embroidered

From Youth to Age

Inside Corset 2
front corset cover
embroidered

Charm of Form....and Construction

front corset cover
inside, right & left sides

I believe the case of this modification of respiration is the change in dress which is usually made about the time of puberty. The young girl is now becoming a woman and must acquire the Art of Lacing, wearing corsets, stays, and sundry other contrivances which will aid in producing a “fine form“ *Dr. J. H. Kellogg*

I suffered sometimes perfect torture from my stays, especially after dinner, not that I ate heartily, for that I found impossible, even if we had been allowed to do so by our schoolmistress, who considered it unladylike...[some girls were] incased in corsets at an early age, and thus became gradually accustomed to tight-lacing, while I did not wear them till I went to school, at fourteen, and I did not wear them voluntarily... my waist had grown large before it was subjected to the lacing, and had to be reduced its present tenuity ...a young lady, 1867

Inside Book 2,
Front cover
embroidered

Youthful Ease of Person

Back of front cover

The easiest and safest mode, however, of attaining smallness of girth is for a girl to wear, between the age of ten and seventeen, an *elastic* and accurately-fitting corset {those with the usual lacing at the back are the best}.

By this means, when the young lady has done growing, the inconvenient tight-lacing will be unnecessary, as her waist will be several inches smaller than its natural size. The elastic stays will not interfere with her health or the freedom of her limbs.

I think...that an elegant taper figure accords well with the present style of dress; but *I hardly think the health should be sacrificed in attaining one.*

Inside Book 2, p. 1
front

This Invention consists in providing a child’s corset with socket shoulder-straps, which are adapted, from their peculiar construction to retain their position under all circumstances and hold the corset in place.

Heretofore, corsets for children have been supported by a simple strap, which was exceedingly liable to get out of place by falling down or slipping up on the shoulder, and thus cause great discomfort to the wearer.

back

Our *improvement* consists in providing corsets of otherwise ordinary construction for children, with a socket shoulder-strap made of any suitable flexible material, which is attached to or forms a part of the corset itself, and holds it in place, and at the same time permits free movement of the body and arm with out possibility of displacement.

*March 26, 1872 by Harriet Emery and Margaret Fuller
Patent no. 124,891*

Inside Book 2, p. 2
front

This invention consist of a corset which is adapted by means of its peculiar construction to retain its position under all circumstances on the shoulder to permit the movement of the arms with perfect freedom to hold the stockings and also the clothing attached to the corset from the shoulder and also to sup-port in a convenient and effective manner the under-drawers...

back

One of the strongest reasons for the adoption of the corset, though it is not commonly avowed, is the belief that it conduces Beauty and Symmetry of the figure.

Slender forms are usually praised and chiefly because they are associated with the liteness and undeveloped Graces of Youth. AGW, 1874

Inside Book 2, p. 3
front

To know ourselves, even as far as our faces and figures go, *is a knowledge which we can only acquire after some study.*

Fashion can never of itself be a sufficient guide in matters of dress...

...its dictates must be modified to suit the characteristics of each individual.

back

Here is another secret for young ladies: - All the attraction they can ever posses by means of dress, will be derived from...Plainness, Neatness, and Appropriateness.

Inside Book 2, p. 4
front

Little has been said on the best mode of applying the corset in order to produce Elegance of Figure.

It seems to me that nearly all those who suffer from tight-lacing, do so form an *injudicious* use of the corset, and in such cases the unfortunate corset generally gets all the blame, and not the wearer who makes an improper use of it.

back

I can easily understand that a girl who is full grown, or nearly so, and who has been unaccustomed to wear tight stays, should find it difficult and painful to lace in her waist to a fashionable size; but if the corset be worn at an early age and the figure gradually moulded by it, I know of no terrible consequences that need be apprehended.

inside Book 2 p. 5
front

A *strong erect* posture expresses to the world at large, Strength of Will, Alertness, Poise, and the Joy of Living. All of which makes the individual a more useful social unit and a greater asset to the community.

back

A well-formed body is elliptical at the so-called waist-line, and not round. These contours should be so thoroughly understood as to be always in mind, else a beautiful form will not be recognized.

inside Book 2 p. 6
front
(Back cover *inside*)

Girls nowadays know the harm that corsets cause them.

They know how these contrivances push the stomach and liver out of place, and crowd the delicate pelvic organs into spaces so small that they cannot possibly perform their functions on a satisfactory manner.

Corsets are responsible for bad complexions, red noses and irritable tempers.

They prevent all *ease of movement*, and make a girl immovable in just the places where *perfect freedom of action* is most necessary in order to insure her a graceful bearing.

Worse than anything else is their effect on the abdominal organs, by which a girl is deprived of sex impulse and feeling.

When a girl puts on a corset she is dwarfing and perverting the instinct most essential to her development, her physical and mental welfare and her happiness in general.

Back
(Back cover *outside*)
embroidered

The Figure Trust

Inside Corset 3
front corset cover
embroidered

Grammar of Ornament

front corset cover
insides, right &
left sides

I would therefore recommend the early use of a corset that fits the figure nicely and no more.

Now, simply wearing stays that only *fit*, will, when a girl is growing, in a great measure prevent the waist from becoming clumsy.

If, however, on her reaching the age of fourteen or fifteen, her waist be still considered too large, a smaller corset may be worn with advantage, which should be *gradually* tightened till the requisite slimness is achieved.

I know of so many instances in which, under this system, girls have, when full grown, possessed both a good figure and good health, that I can recommend it with confidence to those parents who wish their children to grow up into elegant and healthy women.

**Inside Book 3,
Front cover**
embroidered

Love of Display
Artistic Dress

Back of front cover

The most artistic dress is worse than lost on a figure lacking poise.
As no amount of ornament can atone for bad construction.

Inside Book 3, p. 1
front

The Toilet

...to learn the Valuable Art of *imparting a charm* to the most simple article of dress, so its proper adjustment to the person, and by its harmonious blending, or agreeably contrasting with the other portions of the attire.

back

The agreeable effect that all wish to produce in the eyes of others, depends much more on just proportions in the parts, thus forming a pleasing whole, than a little ornamental additions, which, though pretty in themselves, add nothing to the general effect.

Inside Book 3, p. 2
front

Let your deportment suite your age and *your figure*.

Let the movements be easy and flexible, and accord with the style of the lady.

Let your demeanor be always marked by *modesty and simplicity*; as soon as you become forward or affected; you have lost your greatest *charm of manner*.

back

I shared the general hankering after an adult wardrobe which would be at least partly self-chosen, since all girls' clothing of the period appeared to be designed by their elders on the assumption that decency consisted in leaving exposed to the sun and air no part of the human body that could possibly be covered with flannel... Vera B., 1937

Vera Brittain, 1937, (1893-1970)

Inside Book 3, p. 3
front

If we were required to condense the reigning system of the *Brilliant Education of a Lady* into a aphorism, it might be comprised in this short sentence, *to Allure, and to Shine*.

back

I am seized with an angry resentment against the conventions of twenty years ago, which wrapped up my comely adolescent body in woolen combinations, black cashmere stockings, “liberty” bodice, dark stockinette knickers, flannel petticoat and often, in addition, a long-sleeved, high-necked, knitted woolen “spencer.” Vera B., 1937

Vera Brittain, 1937, (1893-1970)

“Caution and Counsel”

Tamar Stone © 2012-14

- Inside Book 3, p. 4**
front
- No, a girl cannot do without ornaments anymore than a rose-bush can do without roses, or a column without a capital.
- It is *every girl's duty* to look as well as she can, and to make *as much beauty as she can*.
- back*
- Do not take the charm out of your dress, any more than out of your hair, or out of your face...
-

- Inside Book 3, p. 5**
front
- It is desirable that the Dress of Women should be pleasing to the eye as well as convenient for the uses for which it is designed.
- The Element of Beauty is everywhere visible...*
- We should not therefore despise the charms that a dress can give, nor neglect the adorning of our persons; but we should also remember that the health and comfort are not to be sacrificed to beauty, nor our families deprived of the necessaries of life that we may shine in beautiful garments.
- Mercy B. Jackson, M.D., 1874*
- Back*
- So long as the entire underwear remains ill-formed and ill-adjusted, no fitness in the externals can confer the *ease and freedom* which our clothing should secure.
- ...hasten the day when woman shall be more than her dress... Abba G.W., 1874*
- Abba Gould Woolson , 1874
-

- Inside Book 3, p. 6**
front
(Back cover *inside*)
- It is a truth, which should ever be borne in mind, that a Higher Order of Taste is often displayed, and a better effect produced by a paucity or total absence of ornament, than by the most profuse and splendid decorations. *The Queen*, 1861
- Back*
(Back cover *outside*)
embroidered
- Use no Ornamentation to Excess.**
-