

Conventional Burdens... Pivot of Motion and Centre of Endurance

Tamar Stone © 2013 – 2020

Description List/Text Sheet

Antique Metal & Wood Bird Cage

Handmade turn-key metal gears with cotton string.

3 handmade metal attachment “lock” knobs at base of cage.

Metal wire hanging mechanism with hand forged hook and wood dowel book support.

Height: 31” (to top of turn-key)

Width: 19”

Circumference: 55”

Outside Cage Cover:

Sheer silk cotton voile. Trimmed with vintage cotton bird embroidery and crocheted pillowcases.

Handmade ribbon rosette – vintage Oklahoma “1956 ‘BEST in CLASS’ Eighth, National Cage Bird Show”

Ribbons

Height: 27”

Circumference: 55”

Ribbon Length: 10”

Ribbon Boutonniere Width: 4”

Outside Cover Corset:

Antique doll corset. 18 grommeted holes in back, laced with vintage corset lacing.

Hand embroidered text and bird silhouettes.

Height: 9” including straps

Width closed: 5” (11” in circumference with book rolled inside)

Width open: 9 ½”

Interior Book Pages:

Machine embroidered book title on 30mm silk satin fabric, with inkjet printed image.

Digital ink jet printed images on vintage cotton sheeting and sheer cotton voile fabrics.

Book attached via sewn section on 6 ½ wood dowel with hand forged hook.

Individual Page Height: 6”

Individual Page Width: 5”

Crinoline Skirt

Digital ink jet printed text and bird images on semi-sheer silk cotton voile fabric.

White ribbon at waist. Velvet trim, with floral rosettes.

Height: 16”

Width: 5 ½” at waist – 17” at bottom (W)

Bibliograph and other sources (partial list)

Patents:

No. 20,681, *Hoop Skirt*, I.R.J. Mann, June 22, 1848

No. 22,532, *Manufacturing Corsets and Bustles*, D. Lamoureux, January 4, 1859

No. 92,811, *Improvements in Hoop-Skirts*, Edward Fleischer, July 20, 1869

Books, Periodicals:

Arena, Vol. 6

- Letter, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1857

- "Symposium on Dress" Lady Haberton, 1892

The American Lady. Charles Butler, Esq. 1845

Daily Palladium, Memphis, TN, 1857

Dress-reform; a series of lectures delivered in Boston, on dress as it affects the health of women, Abba Goold Woolson, 1874

Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, Vol 8, 1860; Vol 1, 1865

Progress vs. Fashion, an Essay on the Sanitary and Social Influences of Dress, Mary Tillotson, 1873

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Mary Wollstonecraft, 1792

The Queen, "Sanitary Record: Stays and Dress Reform" by Lydia Becker, October 27, 1888

The Water-Cure Journal, "Women's Dress" Rachel Brooks Gleason, 1851

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

What to Wear? Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, 1873

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

Woman's Dress: its moral and physical relations [an essay delivered before the World's Health Convention, NYC, November], Maria Jones, 1864

Other:

Harpers Weekly, "The Monster Lady of Crinoline at Turin" image, April 3, 1858

H. De Marsan, "*Hoops. No. 2. What a ridiculous fashion*" - 19th c. song sheet.

Air: King of the Cannibal Islands. H. De Marsan, Publisher, 38 Chatham Street, N. Y. Monographic.

Online text, "*America Singing*" <https://www.loc.gov/item/amss.sb20175b>

Title
Exterior Corset
embroidered

Conventional Burdens

Interior Corset
Front Book Cover
embroidered

[Image: large crinoline woman]

Pivot of Motion and...

Side 1, p1

Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's scepter, the mind shapes itself to the body, and, roaming around its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison.
Mary W., 1792

1862 – The Crinoline: During the American. Civil War skirts reached their largest circumference – supported by cage crinolines, or hoops – made of whalebone or steel.

1875-77: The Bustle. The hoop skirt collapsed and fullness was concentrated at the back of the skirt. The accumulation of drapery in the back required another form of another cage-like support = bustle. The skirts were worn fairly tightly, hampering the gate.

Side 1, p2

The day comes when they tell us that “everyone wears” this or that...and this is an irresistible argument with most of us; few can struggle against the tide; and be the fashion ever so ugly or unbecoming we are forced to adopt it. EDM, 1865

Side 1, p3

Hoop Skirt – Pat No. 20,681, R.J. Mann, June 22, 1848

I have invented new and useful Improvements in Ladies' Hooped Skirts...
..made on my improved plan, with the corrugated bustle *a, a*, attached.
R.J. Mann

Side 1, p4

The nature of my improvement consists in making skirts for ladies by forming a series of hoops placed at stated distances, and made in such manner that they can be enlarged or diminished by means of slides, and also the peculiar manner of fastening the said hoops, to the perpendicular straps, by means of a small clamp, the said clamp, being made with teeth or otherwise; and also forming on the two top hoops (next to the waist band) an extra spring or hoop, after the manner of a corrugated surface, the said corrugation fitting in the plaits or folds of the dress, thus presenting an agreeable effect, and affording an extension of the crinoline so desirable in such costumes.

Side 1, p5

...fearful jars and strains these sudden jerks of the body from stumbling on the dress-hem imposed upon a woman's intricate organism, and how much less injurious to her direct fall would be than this start and rebound of nerve and muscle, and how the strongest man would suffer from such accidents;...

Side 1, p6 & sheer 6

[Sheer Image: Fig 1 of crinoline with corset attachment]

“Everything [woman] wears has some object external to herself.

The comfort and convenience of the woman is never considered; from the bonnet-string to the paper shoe, she is the hopeless martyr to the inventions of some Parisian imp of fashion.

Her tight waist and long trailing skirts deprive her of all freedom of breath and motion. No wonder man prescribes her sphere. She needs his help at every turn.”

Elizabeth C.S., 1857

Side 1, p7

[Fig 1 image: woman sitting in folding crinoline]

Patent No. 52,637, patented 1866

The new crinolines...are made so as to fold in nicely whenever a lady sits down or is standing in a crowd of people, which is extremely convenient for both the wearer and for her neighbors.

A lady of taste will not mind wearing a simple dress, but she will be very particular about the minutiae of her toilette. A nice-fitting pair of stays, a good-shaped crinoline, with petticoats cut out on the same pattern that fall nicely over it, and, especially, neat boots and gloves are what they think most about; and, in truth, any dress that fits well will look nicely if the details of the toilette are chosen with taste and care.

EDM, 1865

Side 1, p8

A lady's dress cost three times as much as that of a gentleman; and, at the present time, with the prevailing fashion (1856) one lady occupies three times as much space in the world as a gentleman. William C.

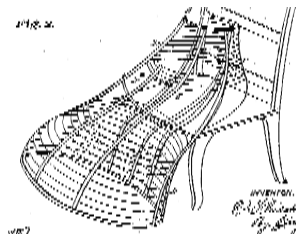
Side 1, p9

[Fig 1 image: crinoline hoops sitting on chair]

Patent No. 92,811, patented 1869

This invention relates to an improved form of ladies' hoop-skirt, combing the advantages of graceful elegances with ease and comfort to the wearer at all times

It will also be seen, that in other positions which embarrass the wearer, such as ascending and descending stairs, entering or alighting from carriages, &c., the customary annoyance and inconvenience arising from the use of hoop-skirts are avoided. . Moreover, the wires being omitted from one-third of the skirt, those in the upper and lower portions can be of such weight and stiffness as to hold their shape and position, even in a storm; nor are the wires liable to injure children in the lap, as sometimes occurs with the common form.



Side 1, p10

There is a grim wealth of tragedy in the terse popular phrase descriptive of a fashionable-attired woman. It has ceased to be a metaphor that she is “*dressed to kill.*” Six new diseases...have come into existence with the styles of dress which require the wearing of multitudinous and heavy skirts.

Side 1, p11

If a woman dares to put off an inconvenient form of dress, and adopt another, without the sanction of fashion, she is at once vulgar, lacks taste, and refinement. None of us should *wish* to be singular, but all should be *willing* to be so for the sake of the good and the right.

All unnecessary violation of public opinion is censurable, for to it we all look for protection; but we should never allow it to enslave our bodies or our spirits.

Rachel B.G., 1851

Side 1, p12

So preposterous and fantastic are the disguises of the human form which modern fashion has exhibited, that her votaries, when brought together in her public haunts, have sometimes been found scarcely able to refrain from gazing with an eye of ridicule and contempt each on the other. And while individually priding themselves on their elegance and taste, they have very commonly appeared in the eyes of an indifferent spectator to be running a race for the acquisition of deformity.

Charles B., 1845

Side 1, p13

The amount of calculable injury wrought upon our sex by the *weight* of skirting brought upon the hips, and by thus making the seat of all vital energies the *pivot of motion* and *centre of endurance*... Elizabeth S.P., 1873

Side 1, p14

Hoops as a lightning-conductor.

As Mr. James R. M'Shane was walking out one day last with his wife, who was attired in the full rotundity of the fashion, they were overtaken by a violent thunder-storm. The gentleman received a severe shock, but the Lady escaped uninjured, the steel hoops which expanded her crinoline proving a perfect lightning conductor.

Side 1, p15

She was terrified and fainted away, however; but here the hoops proved their utility in another direction, and supported her, so that it was impossible for her to fall to the ground. *Harpers Weekly*, October 3, 1857

Side 1, p16 sheer

[Sheer Image: Fig 1 of crinoline, skirt supporter]

Patent No. 22,532, patented 1859

My said invention consists in combining in one garment a corset and bustle which may also serve as a skirt supporter, the necessary rotundity and fullness for the bustle being attained by hoops or their equivalent inserted in the lower part of the corset, which extends down, and is enlarged at the bottom to form the bustle.

Side 1, p16

The use of stays tends to cause an upright carriage while the suspension of clothing from the waist and hips relieves the spine from the weight, and the lungs from the pressure of burdens thrown upon the shoulders. Another mechanical advantage gained by suspending skirts from the hips is shortened leverage. Skirt a yard in length is lighter and more easily carried than a garment a yard and half in length, which difference roughly represents the difference in length of clothing suspended from the hips and shoulders.

{Men who recommend women to discard stays and hang their clothes from the shoulder seem to overlook a considerable difference in both physical configuration of men and women and in the character and weight of their clothes...}. Lydia B., 1888

Side 1, p17

The really mischievous element in the ordinary dress of women is not the corset, but the layers of long skirts with which the back and limbs are overloaded...

The overskirt alone, if properly made and hung, is not necessarily a cumbersome garment. The drag and discomfort are principally caused by a multiplicity of underskirts.

If substantial, close-fitting undergarments are worn, the underskirts... may be discarded altogether, while the dress-skirt made according to the prevailing style preserves the traditional and orthodox fashion of women's dress, and enables the really radical dress reformer to effect whatever changes are desirable without inviting persecution or observation. Lydia B., 1888

Side 1, p18

When she does follow the dictates of her own conscience, her friends often feel it incumbent upon them to reward her good sense by saying, "*She always was peculiar.*"

Mary SB, M.D., 1874

Side 1, p19

{The fashion of petticoats and dress skirts has had a potent influence in the formation of a woman's character.} Helen E, 1892

The weight of our clothing increases every year; and, if much more is added, women will be compelled to maintain a sitting posture the greater part of the time, in order to render their dresses durable. Abba G.W., 1874

Side 2, p20

The principles from which the Laws of Dress are derived are found in the structure of the human form, and, until we have learned to appreciate the functions and beauty of the body, no advance can be made in its vesture.

Conventional dress had divided the feminine form into two distinct sections: the trunk, which is encased in a bodice, and the legs, which are transformed by stuffed petticoats and skirts into a solid, immovable mass, sometimes resembling in outline a beehive, sometimes a bell, sometimes a fan, sometimes a donkey with panniers.

Side 2, p21

Probably most women have sold their bodies for means to drape them finely than for all other objects; then the heavy drapery enfeebles, and less and less ability to earn it exists, increasing the aggravation; and so the sale increases and price diminishes.

Mary Tillotson, 1873

Side 2, p22

Shall We Wear a Crinoline?

The eyes grow accustomed to that which is continually before it, and it is perfectly in accordance with all known rules or our physical and moral nature that violent contrast should be disagreeable, absurd, and even revolting. 1861

Side 2, p23

While under bondage to smothering corsets, entangling skirts and trailing fetters, reason pronounces it impossible for them to acquire the independence of character and moral firmness by which to exert the ennobling influence requisite to the momentous work which the present state of progress lays before them. Mary T., 1873

Side 2, p24

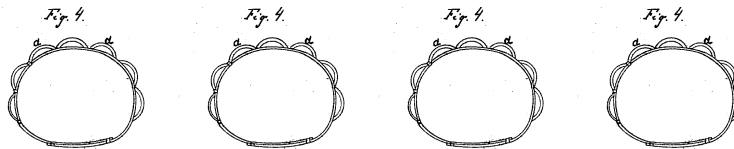
Neatness, purity and sweetness, are a part of the *natural* characteristics of womanhood, and when we see a lady wearing a long trailing dress, raking up the filth and mire of the gutter, we are filled with amazement.

The long flowing dress or train...not only interferes with the proper movements of the trunk, and the extremities of the human body, but it is so horribly filthy and unhealthy.

Indeed, there is not a beast, or a bird in all creation, that will drag its own tail down in the dirt, as many women will do their dresses. 1874

Side 2, p25 sheer

[Sheer image – repeat pattern of patent image 20,681, 1858]



In the days when germs and microbes play such an important part in social life, I question very much whether these trains should be permitted by law.

This lady left her street sweepings on the curb-stone, but it might be remembered that many convey them into their own or their friends' houses.

Side 2, p25

[the fashionable female who]

"...frantically grasping her skirts in front with one hand, with the other lifts hoops and all behind her, and tip toes across the street, with her clothing in the rear at an altitude of which she has no conception, revealing, not only feet and ankles, but even limbs, to an extent which a neatly-clad Bloomer would blush to think of." Maria J., 1864

Side 2, p26

In 1900 could not breathe freely for the dust raised by the skirts...

A lady attired in a dress with a long train that answered the fashion of the day. After a short walk... she got into a cab. She consequently left behind her on the pavement all the rubbish which her skirt had collected... and left on the curbstone.

...an inventory of the collection by an observer:

2 cigar ends,

9 cigarette ends,

A portion of a pork pie,

4 toothpicks,

2 hairpins,

A stem of a clay pipe,

3 fragments of orange peel,

1 slice of cat's meat,

Half a sole of a boot,

1 plug of of tobacco (chewed),

Straw, mud, scraps of paper, and misc. street refuse. Lady H., 1892

Side 2, p27

...clinging to that worst form of barbarism in our dress, the trailing skirts. Shorn of them, we are told, we should be bereft of our grace, our loveliness, our womanliness.

...For women who go thus hampered, there can never be one step free from filth and annoyance of some kind, unless the skirts are clutched and held up by main force. Even at summer resorts...where people flee from all that is wearisome to the spirit and to the flesh, even here only an occasional woman is found brave enough to remove this objectionable feature of her dress, and to let the poor, overburdened body become really free.

Side 2, p28

The very lightest and most ethereal textures seem to have been chosen by the great despot, Fashion.

... all these adornments have the merit of being pretty – they are so light, so clear and fresh-looking, and, alas that we must add, so useless! For they catch in everything that can by any possibility be caught in' and we have seen ladies dressed in their fragile garments entangled in the fire-irons, taken prisoners by the door handles, transfixed by an accidental nail, and attempting to move away, quite unconscious of the disaster.
1861

Side 2, p29

Frightful Accident *as reported on July 13, 1861*

A woman named Mary Jeffries went to the works of Messrs. R&D, timber merchants, with the supper of her husband, who is an engine-driver in the employ of that firm. As she was passing the sawmills...her dress was caught by one of the wheels, and she was instantly drawn into the machinery and crushed in a shocking manner. The engine was stopped immediately, and the body extricated, but it was frightfully mangled, and life was quite extinct.

An inquest was held on the following day, when a verdict of “Accidental Death” was returned.

Side 2, p30

Another Death Through Crinoline

“How dreadful it is that women will wear such inordinate skirts, and of such inflammable materials! Nothing – not even an accident a week – seems to influence them in this absurd fashion.”

It is, at all events, sufficiently obvious that serious calamities will have no effect in retarding the progress or diminishing the extend of this costume. It may, on the other hand, be perpetuated and strengthen by repeated martyrdoms in its cause. 1862

Side 2, p31

Two girls burn to death *as reported on August 10, 1861*

Some days ago Mdlle. Schelles and Mdlle Fossli, dancers at the theatre at Strassund, were severely burnt, in consequence of the dress of the former coming in contact with a gaslight, and that of the latter running to her assistance. Both have since died from the injuries they received.

Side 2, p32

Another case of burning by crinoline. *as reported on November 16, 1861*

...rushing to the spot he found the deceased, (Alice Elford, age 14) enveloped in flames, and uttering piercing screams, he immediately endeavoured to extinguish the fire with his hands, but, failing to do so, he threw her down and rolled her over. At this time many persons were present, who, by throwing water over her finally succeeded in extinguishing the flames. On examination it found that she was burnt literally from the soles of her feet to the crown of her head. The necessary appliances were resorted to, but with out effect, and the poor girl, after 14 hours of suffering, expired.

The sad event is supposed to have been caused by crinoline. It is believed, by a chair having been found near the kitchen fire, and which was partly charred, that the clothes of the deceased, while she was sitting there, had come into contact with the grate, and thus been set a blaze.

The court returned a verdict of Accidental Death.

Side 2, p33

Arrayed in this fashion, they really ought not to brave the ordinary perils and inconveniences of life... they ought to move in some broad expanse of light and and air, just to be looked at and admired from a distance. 1861

Side 2, p34

When I see woman’s skirts... lying inches deep along the foul floors, which man, in delicate appreciation of our concessions to his fancy in such respects, has inundated with tobacco juice, and from which she sweeps up and carries to her home the germs of stealthy pestilences... when I read of the sinking steamers at sea, with “nearly all the women and children on board,” and the accompanying comments, “every effort was made to assist the women up the masts and out of danger until help arrived, *but they could not climb*, and we were forced to leave them to their fate;” ...

Side 2, p35

- when I consider these things I feel that I have ceased to deal with blunders in dress and have entered the category of crimes.

{It is not to be supposed that women properly dressed from infancy, and acquiring the freedom and courage which a proper mode of dress imparts, would have met such a death in such a wholesale manner.}. Helen G. E., 1892

Side 2, p36

The woman who would be well dressed must keep constantly in mind the long, oval contour of the feminine figure and dress so that this outline will be preserved.

Festoons and draperies should be disposed with reference to the points of the radiation in the body, the hips and shoulders. Helen G. E., 1892.

Side 2, p37

Another rule should be *forever established*, dictated by an innate sense of propriety and *neatness*. The dress should never be worn so long as to touch the pavement, *or drag upon the walk*. In a drawing-room, it is out of place, and *good sense* will banish the “*trains*,” and make a better use of the *extra yards*, than to display them in the way of others upon the carpets. Mrs. L.G., Abell, 1851

Side 2, p38

The muscular masculine physique could not endure the conventional burdens which the nervous feminine organization supports. The man would have yielded and sunk, where the woman has struggled and climbed. Elizabeth S.P., 1873

Side 2
Back Book Cover
embroidered

[Image: large crinoline woman]

Center of Endurance

Crinoline Skirt printed text

Now Crinoline is all the rage with ladies of whatever age,
A petticoat made like a cage – oh what a ridiculous fashion!
'Tis framed with hoops and bars of steel, or tubes of air which lighter feel,
And worn by girls to be genteel, or if they've figures to conceal,
It makes their dresses stick far out, a dozen yards at least about,
And please both the thin and stout, oh what a ridiculous fashion

CHORUS *[on ruffle]*
Balking, walking all the day, always getting in the way
All except the ladies say, O, what a ridiculous fashion!

One female takes up half the street, and can't sit clear in any seat,
You walk half round each girl you meet, oh what a ridiculous fashion.
Or in her dress you hitch your stick, and tear it if you're walking quick,
Of crinoline all men are sick, it forces them their way to pick;
A carriage with a lady's clothes, if she rides in it, overflows,
And people shout where'er she goes, oh, what a ridiculous fashion!

CHORUS *[on ruffle]*
Balking, walking all the day, always getting in the way
All except the ladies say, O, what a ridiculous fashion!

In church the very widest pew will hold of ladies but a few,
Its door their skirts protruding through, oh what a ridiculous fashion!
And when the go to routs and balls, they fill chock full the largest halls,
And squeeze the men against the walls, a man might wish his wife wore smalls,
An omnibus they occupy, so that your knees are covered by
Their muslin, while you softly cry, oh what a ridiculous fashion,

CHORUS *[on ruffle]*
Balking, walking all the day, always getting in the way
All except the ladies say, O, what a ridiculous fashion!

[continued on next page]

There's not a door that's wide enough, for girls to pass with all their stuff,
Without a squeeze and struggle tough, oh, what a ridiculous fashion,
The posts their spreading dresses scratch, the bushes scrape, the brambles catch
And, what is worse the Congreve match, they interfere with all dispatch,
'Tis tiresome quite to see how slow, with held up skirts the ladies go,
Their ankles, it would seem to show, oh, what a ridiculous fashion,

CHORUS [*on ruffle*]

Balking, walking all the day, always getting in the way
All except the ladies say, O, what a ridiculous fashion!

There was a time when every lass, just wore a "bustle"—which might pass
But now 'tis one enormous mass, oh, what a ridiculous fashion,
Before as bulky as behind, by moderation unconfined,
Just one point stretched we shouldn't mind, to suit the whim of womankind,
But Crinoline is more than such, it really is a deal too much,
And makes the contour worse than Dutch, oh, what a ridiculous fashion,

CHORUS [*on ruffle*]

Balking, walking all the day, always getting in the way
All except the ladies say, O, what a ridiculous fashion!

How long will our ladies troop, about encircled by a coop,
Composed of air-tub, bar, and hoop, oh, what a ridiculous fashion,
The more you scoff, the more you jeer, the more the women persevere,
In wearing this apparel queer, which is in cost extremely dear,
So much material it requires, which every husband's patience tires
The fashion not one man admires, oh, what a ridiculous fashion;

CHORUS [*on ruffle*]

Balking, walking all the day, always getting in the way
All except the ladies say, O, what a ridiculous fashion!