

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF
ART AND DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF
FASHION AND TEXTILES

FACULTY : EMBROIDERY

VICTORIAN CORSETRY AND
WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION

BY

GENEVIEVE KING

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN
AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OR DESIGN 1996

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VICTORIAN CORSETRY

AND WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION

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AND WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS THESIS I WILL DISCUSS CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN'S POSITION IN THE LATE VICTORIAN ERA. I WILL DO THIS THROUGH EXAMINATION OF WOMEN'S FASHION AND CORSETRY. I WILL LOOK AT SOCIETIES' OPINIONS OF FASHION AND WOMEN'S CHANGING ROLE. THIS THESIS IS ABOUT LOOKING AT WHERE THE WOMEN OF TODAY EVOLVED FROM AND EXAMINING THE HISTORY OF HOW WOMEN CAME TO HAVE A MUCH MORE EQUAL ROLE THAN EVER BEFORE. TODAY WE ALMOST TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT WOMEN CAN HAVE PROFESSIONAL CAREERS, CAN VOTE AND CAN HAVE A CHOICE IN THEIR DESTINY. BEFORE THIS CENTURY WOMEN'S ROLE WAS ALMOST SOLELY DEFINED AS WIFE AND MOTHER, DAUGHTER OR SISTER. NOW SHE CAN BE BANKER, BUSDRIVER, STUDENT OR SPORTSWOMAN, AS WELL AS THE ROLES SHE PREVIOUSLY HAD.

IN THE LATER DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY WOMEN'S CLOTHES WERE VERY CONSTRICTING AND TIGHT LACING WAS IN ITS 'HAYDAY'. AT THE SAME TIME DRESS REFORM BEGAN TO BE DISCUSSED. THE FACT THAT MOVEMENTS IN FASHION REFORM AND WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION HAPPENED SIMULTANEOUSLY GAVE RISE TO A QUESTION I HAVE COME UPON FREQUENTLY IN MY RESEARCH . THIS IS WHETHER EMANCIPATION FOLLOWED FASHION REFORM OR FASHION REFORM FOLLOWED EMANCIPATION.

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THROUGH MY THESIS I WILL DISCUSS VARIOUS WAYS THERE TWO MOVEMENTS ARE INTERLINKED. I WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE IRONY OF HOW THIS ERA UNDOUBTEDLY ASSOCIATED WITH FEMALE REPRESSION IS

ALSO THE SAME ERA THAT BEGAN FEMALE EMANCIPATION AND WON MANY BASIC FEMALE RIGHTS IE THE RIGHT TO VOTE , PROPERTY RIGHTS AND EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS.

IN MY RESEARCH I HAVE DRAWN MAINLY FROM VALERIE STEELES' 'FASHION AND EROTICISM', STELLA MARY NEWTON'S 'HEALTH ART AND REASON', ELIZABETH EWINGS 'DRESS AND UNDRRESS' AND AILEEN RIBERIO'S 'DRESS AND MORALITY'. I HAVE RESEARCHED ALSO IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM WITH THE TEXTILE AND FASHION HISTORIAN AND I HAVE BEEN TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY TO LOOK UP FASHION MAGAZINES FROM THIS ERA. I HAVE VISITED ROTHE HOUSE IN KILKENNY TO STUDY THEIR CORSET AND COSTUME DISPLAY AND HAVE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO ACQUIRE A TURN OF THE CENTURY DRESS WHICH WAS AN INVALUABLE HELP IN UNDERSTANDING THE WOMEN OF THE ERA.

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CHAPTER 1

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IN THIS CHAPTER I AM DISCUSSING A FEW DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF VICTORIAN WOMEN . I AM LOOKING AT HER PLACE IN SOCIETY, HER CHANGING ROLE AND HOW SHE BEGAN TO ASSERT HERSELF. I AM LOOKING AT THE EVOLUTION OF FASHION AND REASONS FOR THE DIFFERENT FASHION EXTREMES LIKE TIGHT LACING. I WILL ALSO LOOK AT THE TIGHT LACER'S POSITION IN SOCIETY AS COMBINED GODDESS AND SOCIAL DEVIANT.

1 DISPELLING MYTHS AND LOOKING AT WHERE THE STEREOTYPES CAME FROM.

WHEN WE THINK OF THE VICTORIAN ERA OR VICTORIAN WOMEN OR EVEN THE WORD VICTORIAN WE IMMEDIATELY ASSOCIATE IT WITH REPRESSION PRUDISHNESS, HYPOCRISY AND EVEN CRUELTY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN RELATION TO VICTORIAN WOMEN. THE IMAGE OF THE VICTORIAN WOMEN IS DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH REPRESSION, SOCIALLY AND SEXUALLY. THEIR ROLE IS DEFINED AS WIFE , HOMEMAKER , MOTHER, SISTER OR DAUGHTER. HER CLOTHING HAS BEEN INTERPRETED AS AN OUTWARD MANIFESTATION OF HER SUBORDINATE POSITION IN SOCIETY.

WHEN WE THINK OF FASHION AND THE VICTORIAN WOMAN THE CORSET IS THE GARMENT WE MOST CENTRALLY ASSOCIATE WITH REPRESSION AND CRUELTY. IT IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MORE OBVIOUS AND CRUDE SYMBOLS OF THE HISTORIC OPPRESSION OF WOMEN. CORSET WEARING VICTORIANS WERE SEEN TO SUFFER TORTURE BY SQUEEZING THEMSELVES

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EXCRUCIATINGLY TIGHT TO LOOK BEAUTIFUL AND RESPECTABLE ON BEHALF OF THEIR HUSBANDS AND MENFOLK. WHILE ALSO COVERING THEMSELVES FROM NECK TO ANKLE LEST A SQUARE INCH OF FLESH BE REVEALED, TO CONFORM TO A SOCIAL IDEAL OF PRUDERY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME FITTING INTO THEIR HUSBANDS IDEAL OF A SIMPERING SEXUAL OBJECT.

AS VALERIE STEELE SUGGESTS THESE ARE ALL COMMON ATTITUDES ABOUT VICTORIAN WOMEN. ON CLOSER EXAMINATION HOWEVER IT IS CLEAR THEY WERE LARGELY MISUNDERSTOOD. THE CONVENTIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF VICTORIAN WOMAN AND VICTORIAN FASHION NEEDS TO BE RADICALLY REVISED AND NOT ANALYSED IN A CHICED WAY. THE FACT IS THAT WOMEN OF THAT TIME HAD CERTAIN CHOICES. THEIR MODE OF DRESS AND CONDUCT WAS NOT ENFORCED ON THEM BY MALE DESIRES, AND ALTHOUGH THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY TODAY IS A LOT MORE EQUAL . THE CHANGING FASHION FROM ELABORATE VICTORIAN COSTUME TO SIMPLER MORE PRACTICAL COSTUME OF TODAY CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED SOLELY TO THE LATE NINETEENTH MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS NOR THE SOCIAL CHANGE BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE FIRST WORLD'S WAR.

THE CHANGE IN WOMEN'S FASHION EVOLVED SLOWLY AND MAINSTREAM HIGH FASHION NEVER CHANGED DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF MAJOR SOCIAL HAPPENING. FASHION DID NOT DEVELOP TOWARDS RATIONAL DRESS OR NATURAL BEAUTY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, RATHER TOWARDS NEW VERSIONS OF SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE CLOTHING.

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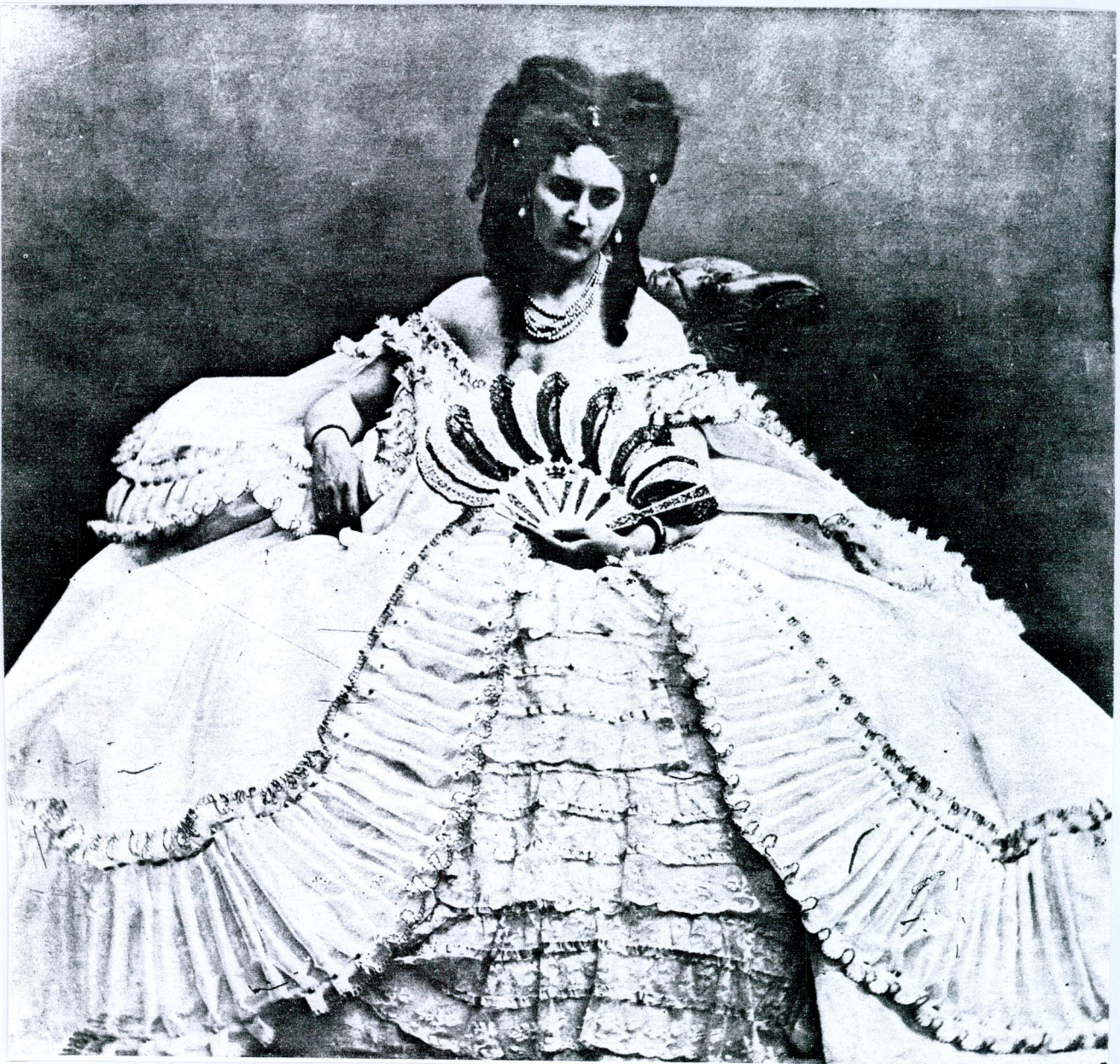
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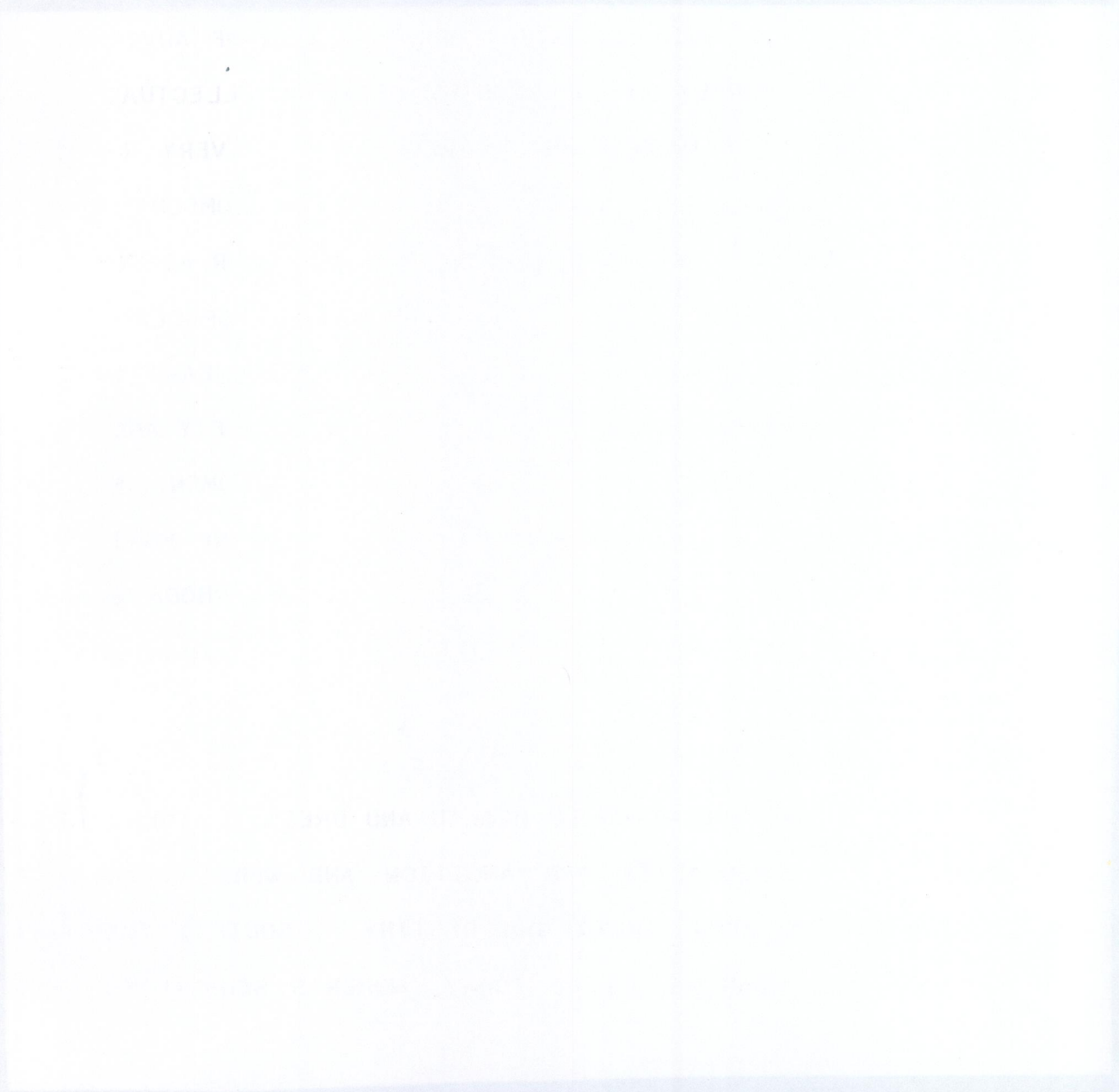
THE STEREOTYPE OF DELICATE, WEAK DEPENDENT VICTORIAN WOMAN WAS PERHAPS MORE OR LESS VALID FOR THE EARLIER PART OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD. HAVING A LIFE OUTSIDE THE HOME WITHOUT YOUR HOME WITHOUT YOUR HUSBAND WAS FROWNED UPON.

(PIC1)



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(P10)



BUT FROM THE 1860 AND 1870'S ONWARDS THAT POSITION WAS BEING NEGOTIATED AS CAN BE SEEN FROM THIS LETTER TO A WOMANS' MAGAZINE OF THE TIME.

" DEAR OWLET, BELIEVE ME, AMONG THE FEMALE SECTION OF OUR SOCIETY IN OUR SPHERE OF GRACES OF OUR TIME BEING, THERE IS A BRILLIANT BUT FLIMSY VEIL THROWN OVER THE STATUE OF IGNORANCE. EVERY WOMAN OUGHT TO BE THOROUGHLY INFORMED IN GRAMMAR, ARITHMETIC , HISTORY AND MODERN LANGUAGES.....THERE IS ANOTHER SUBJECT ON WHICH WE WOULD OFFER A WORD OF ADVICE, AND THAT IS DRESS. SURELY IT IS UNWORTHY OF AN INTELLECTUAL BEING TO BE ATTIIRED IN A MANNER WHICH PRECLUDES OF EVERY RATIONAL ENJOYMENT : HOW IT IS POSSIBLE TO WALK IN COMFORT IF THE DRESS IS EITHER SO LONG AS TO SWEEP THE STREET OR AS THE CASE IS AT PRESENT SO WIDE AS TO TAKE UP IMMEASURABLE SPACE?" (R)|

'STRONG- MINDED WOMEN' WERE MAKING THEMSELVES HEARD VOICING OPINIONS ON THEIR PLACE IN THEIR PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY AND THEIR NEED OF REFORMATION. THESE DISTINGUISHED WOMEN INCLUDED AMELIA BLOOMER OF THE DRESS REFORM MOVEMENT , JANE MORRIS AND ELIZABETH SIDDAL OF THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT AND RHODA GARRETT AND MILLICENT FAWCETT WHO SPOKE IN FAVOUR OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.

THESE WOMEN BEGAN TO INITIATE REFORM IN ALL KINDS OF AREAS FROM POLITICS AND EDUCATION TO HEALTH AND DRESS. THESE WOMEN HAD TALENT , PERSONALITY AND AMBITION AND WERE CAPABLE OF EXERTING CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN DESTINY. SOCIETY THEN WAS VERY DIFFERENT THAN IT IS TO TODAY, WOMEN'S BOUNDARIES WERE

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2 EXAMINING THE INCREASE IN SEXUAL DISPLAY IN THE 1880'S (PIC2)



UP UNTIL 1870 WOMEN'S POSITION HAD BEEN SIMILAR FOR CENTURIES. HOWEVER IN THIS DECADE SEVERAL CHANGES CAME ABOUT. AN IMPORTANT ONE WAS THE DECLINE IN THE BIRTH RATE. WOMEN HAD GAINED MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR BODIES BY DECIDING TO AVOID PREGNANCY. THE USE OF CONTRACEPTIVES, ABORTION , AND OTHER

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EXAMINING THE INCREASE IN SEXUAL DISPLAY IN THE 1960'S
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BIRTH REDUCING SYSTEMS BEGAN TO INCREASE. (R2) THROUGH THE REACCEPTANCE OF SEXUALITY IN THE SEVENTIES WOMEN BEGAN TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR SEXUAL DESIRES WERE NATURAL AND THAT THEIR IMPULSE COULD BE INDULGED WITHOUT INTENTIONS OF CONCEIVING CHILDREN. IT WAS THE DECADE THAT THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT WAS LAUNCHED, AND HIGHER EDUCATION WAS OPENED TO WOMEN.

FASHION ALSO UNDERWENT BIG CHANGES. THE MASSIVE CRINOLINE CAGE SKIRTS SUDDENLY WENT OUT OF VOGUE ABOUT 1865 AND AFTER A SHORT PERIOD OF VIRTUALLY NO SKIRT SUPPORT THE BUSTLE BECAME THE MOST IMPORT DRESS SUPPORT OR ACCESSORY.

THE OVERALL LINE OF THE DRESS BECAME VERY FIGURE- HUGGING EMPHASISING THE HIPS. AS A RESULT THE CORSETS BECAME LONGER AND THE OVERALL LOOK BECAME VERY FEMININE AND VERY SENSUAL. IT IS SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORY THAT IN THE SAME DECADE THAT STARTED THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS CLOTHES BECAME EVEN MORE CONSTRICTING.

WITH THIS SENSE OF CHANGE FOR WOMEN IN TERMS OF EMANCIPATION AND EDUCATION ONE MIGHT WONDER WHY TIGHT LACING WAS SO FASHIONABLE CONSIDERING THAT TO US IT IS A SYMBOL OF OPPRESSION. BUT IT WAS A DIFFERENT SOCIETY WITH DIFFERENT VALUES. WHILE EARLIER STYLES HAD EMPHASISED DEMURE MODESTY, TOWARDS THE END OF THE CENTURY THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN SEXUAL DISPLAY. WHILE THE LATE VICTORIANS DID TRY AND PRESERVE MODESTY IN DRESS THEY ALSO TENDED TO ACCENTUATE THE WEARERS SEXUAL BEAUTY, FOR EXAMPLE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN UNTHINKABLE TO WEAR A LOW CUT DRESS FOR DAYWEAR OR ONE THAT SHOWED ANY LEG

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PIC 3



WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THE WEARER'S CURVES WERE OVERTLY EMPHASISED. SO WE SEE THAT THE DREAD THE VICTORIANS WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE HAD OF THE HUMAN BODY WAS NOT ACTUALLY SO GREAT.

AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR THE IMAGE OF THE VICTORIANS AS MORAL HYPOCRITES WAS USED AS A WAY OF DIMINISHING THE OLDER



GENERATION (WHO WERE WIDELY BLAMED FOR THE WAR) AND OF
RIDICULING THE PAST . ALSO WRITERS AND SEXUAL REFORMERS AT
THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SUCH AS GRANT ALLEN, EDWARD
CARPENTER, AND HAVEROCK ^LELLIS HELPED REINFORCE THE IDEA THAT '
WE'RE SO LIBERATED AND YOU'RE SO REPRESSED'. THE SAME IDEAS
INSTILLED THEN OBVIOUSLY HAVE REMAINED WITH US.

THERE IS SOME BASIS FOR THIS ENDURING IMAGE DERIVING FROM THE
EARLY VICTORIAN MORAL REFORMERS. THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL
EARLY IN THE CENTURY IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA ESPECIALLY AMONG
THE MIDDLE CLASSES, WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A TONE OF INCREASED
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OPINION ON SEXUALITY AND THE EROTICISM OF FASHION, ESPECIALLY
IN THE PAGES OF THE POPULAR PERIODICALS 'THE QUEEN' AND 'THE
ENGLISHWOMANS' DOMESTIC MAGAZINE'.FOR EVERY DOCTOR THAT
BELIEVED THAT GOOD WOMEN DID NOT EXPERIENCE ANY SEXUAL
PLEASURE THERE WAS A DOCTOR THAT THOUGHT THEY DID AND FOR
EVERY MRS LYNTON WHO ATTACKED 'INDECENT FALSE AND
WHORISH 'DRESS (R3.), THERE WAS A MRS HAWEIS WHO ARGUED THAT
A BEAUTIFUL BODY AND A BEAUTIFUL DRESS WERE THINGS TO BE PROUD
OF. (R4).

.....

3 TIGHT- LACING, MORALLY ^{DECRIED} DEFINED BUT SEXUALLY APPLAUDED

GENERATION (WHO WERE WIDELY BLAMED FOR THE WAR) AND OF
RIDICULING THE EAST. ALSO WRITERS AND SEXUAL REFORMERS AT
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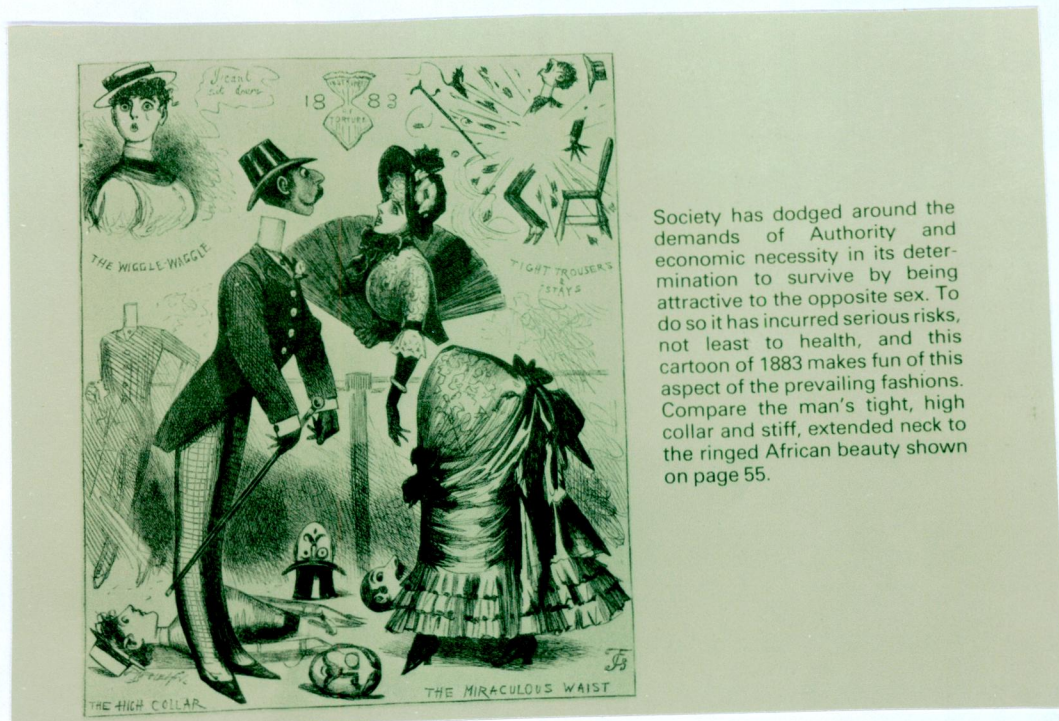
OF (RS)

3. LIGHT-LACING, MORALLY DETAINED BUT SEXUALLY APPRAISED

IN THE EIGHTEEN SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES A BEAUTIFUL FIGURE WAS AN HOUR GLASS SHAPE. WOMEN IN GENERAL WERE BECOMING TIRED OF HEARING AND READING ABOUT THEIR DUTIES TO MATERNALISM AND MODESTY. DRESSES BECAME VERY FIGURE HUGGING AND TIGHT LACING WAS FASHIONABLE. THE MODERN WOMAN OF THE PERIOD WAS ACCUSED OF GOING IN FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND OUTRAGEOUS FASHIONS INCLUDING AN EIGHTEEN INCH WAIST. IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT AN ARTIFICIALLY CULTIVATED FIGURE AND ARTIFICIALLY CULTIVATED MIND (EDUCATED) LED TO FEMININE NEURASTHENIA. IT WAS NOT THAT

THOSE WHO TOOK PART IN THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS WERE ALSO THE SAME PEOPLE WHO TIGHT LACED, RATHER THESE WERE TWO AREAS THAT WERE DEVIANT FROM THE ACCEPTED ROLE OF MATERNALISM IN WOMEN, SO BOTH WERE SUBJECTED TO EQUAL AMOUNTS OF SATIRE AND DISAPPROVAL.

PIC 4



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PLC 4



THE ACCUSATION OF TIGHT LACING WAS A SERIOUS ONE, HAVING CONNOTATIONS OF A DESTROYER OF POSTERITY AND A POTENTIAL INFANTICIDE. IN TRUTH THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES WERE EXTREMELY ANTENATAL. BIRTH RATES DROPPED AS WOMEN BEGAN TO DISCOVER BIRTH CONTROL THROUGH ABSTINENCE OR NEW DEVICES. A DOCTOR JOHN ELLIS WHO WROTE EXTENSIVELY AGAINST FREE LOVE, ALCOHOL AND SOCIALISM,(R5) WROTE A LETTER ON DEPOPULATION STATISTICS AS A DIRECT RESULT OF TIGHT LACING. HE SAID IN NEW ENGLAND (USA) THAT SEVENTY YEARS PREVIOUSLY FAMILIES AVERAGED FOUR OR FIVE CHILDREN AND NOW ONLY ONE OR TWO, AND WHEREAS IN MID CENTURY MOST AMERICAN MOTHERS COULD NURSE THEIR OWN CHILDREN NOW ONLY ABOUT HALF COULD. AS LATE AS NINETEEN ELEVEN STERILITY WAS BEING SERIOUSLY IMPUTED TO CORSETS . TO BLAME TIGHT LACERS FOR THE DECLINING BIRTH RATE WAS AN EASY WAY TO AVOID CONFRONTING THE REAL CAUSE. HIS LETTER WAS IN A SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION, AND IRONICALLY, IMMEDIATELY BELOW APPEARED AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR 'TOWELS PENNYROYAL AND STEEL PILLS' TO "CORRECT ALL IRREGULARITIES AND RELIEVE THE DISTRESSING SYMPTOMS SO PREVALENT WITH THE SEX". IT WAS SAID BY JOHN STUART MILL THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME WOMEN AND MEN REALLY BECAME EACH OTHERS COMPANIONS.

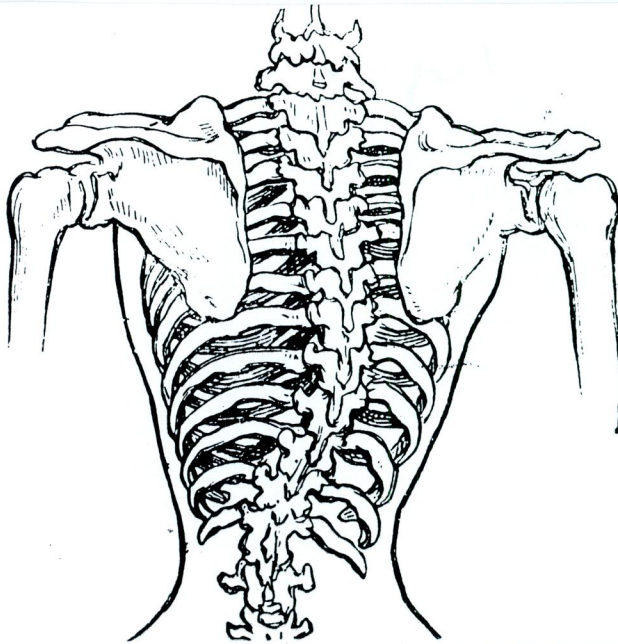
TIGHT LACING WAS NEITHER UNIVERSALLY HARMFUL OR FASHIONABLE. WHILE THERE ARE PROVEN CASES OF RIB CAGE DISTORTION AND STORIES OF FAINTING BY THE SCORE AND HAVING HYSTERICAL FITS, (PIC 5)THESE ARE USUALLY DRAMATISED BY THOSE WHO WERE OVERLY INTERESTED IN WOMEN'S MORAL WELL-BEING. ALSO STORIES OF WOMEN

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PIC 5

11. Effect of stays on the spine. 'Curvature of the spine' was diagnosed as frequently in the 19th century as slipped discs are today. From *Madre Natura* 1874



USING TIGHT LACING AS A FORM OF ABORTION WERE COMMON. IN EIGHTEEN SIXTY EIGHT THE CONSERVATIVE SATURDAY REVIEW WHICH WAS OPPOSED TO TIGHT-LACING PRINTED THAT SOCIETY HAS PUT MATERNITY OUT OF FASHION AND EIGHT YEARS LATER ACCUSED WOMEN OF REFUSING TO SUBMIT TO THEIR HUSBANDS SEXUAL DEMANDS FOR FEAR OF PREGNANCY.

THE 'ENGLISH WOMANS' DOMESTIC MAGAZINE' DARED TO PRINT AN ARTICLE IN 1877 ENTITLED "HAVE WE TOO MANY CHILDREN?".(R6) THE SAME YEAR THE SUBJECT OF BIRTH CONTROL GAINED WIDE PUBLICITY, IN THE WAKE OF THE SENSATIONAL PROSECUTION OF CHARLES BRADNAUGH AND ANNIE BESANT FOR PUBLISHING A PAMPHLET CONTAINING ADVICE ON THE PRACTICE.

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TODAY WE OFTEN WONDER WHY WOMEN WORE THESE GARMENTS BECAUSE WE HEAR ONLY OF THEIR NEGATIVE POINTS . BUT THE CORSET UNDOUBTEDLY GAVE PHYSICAL SUPPORT AND EROTIC PLEASURE. TIGHT LACERS WERE ARGUABLY ABUSED OUT OF FEAR OF WOMEN WHICH STEMMED FROM VICTORIAN IMPRESSION OF SEXUALITY. WOMEN'S SEXUALITY ESPECIALLY WAS REGARDED AS SUBVERSIVE OF THE SOCIAL ORDER. THE SEXUAL PHYSIOLOGY OF TIGHT- LACING AS UNDERSTOOD IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA MAY BE READ IN ONE OF THE BEST SELLING MANUALS OF THE AGE. DOCTOR J.H. KELLOGG'S "PLAIN FACTS FOR OLD AND YOUNG", WHICH IS TYPICALLY OBSESSIONAL AND TERRORISTIC IN CHARACTER, AND FULL OF PRURIENT BIBLICAL RHAPSODIES ON THE FILTH OF SEX. ON TIGHT-LACING IT SAYS "THE CIRCULATION OF THE BLOOD TOWARDS THE HEART IS OBSTRUCTED. THE VENOUS BLOOD IS CLOUDED BACK INTO THE DESICATE ORGANS OF GENERATION . CONGESTION ENSUES, AND WITH IT THROUGH ACTION, THE UNNATURAL EXCITEMENT OF THE ANIMAL PROPENSITIES" (R7)

WESTERN CIVILIZATION HAS RESTED FOR THE LAST FIVE THOUSAND YEARS ON THE MYTHOLOGY OF PATRIARCHY, THE AUTHORITY OF MEN AND FATHERS. AT THIS TIME THE MOULD WAS BEGINNING TO BE BROKEN. IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT THE YOUNG GIRL OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

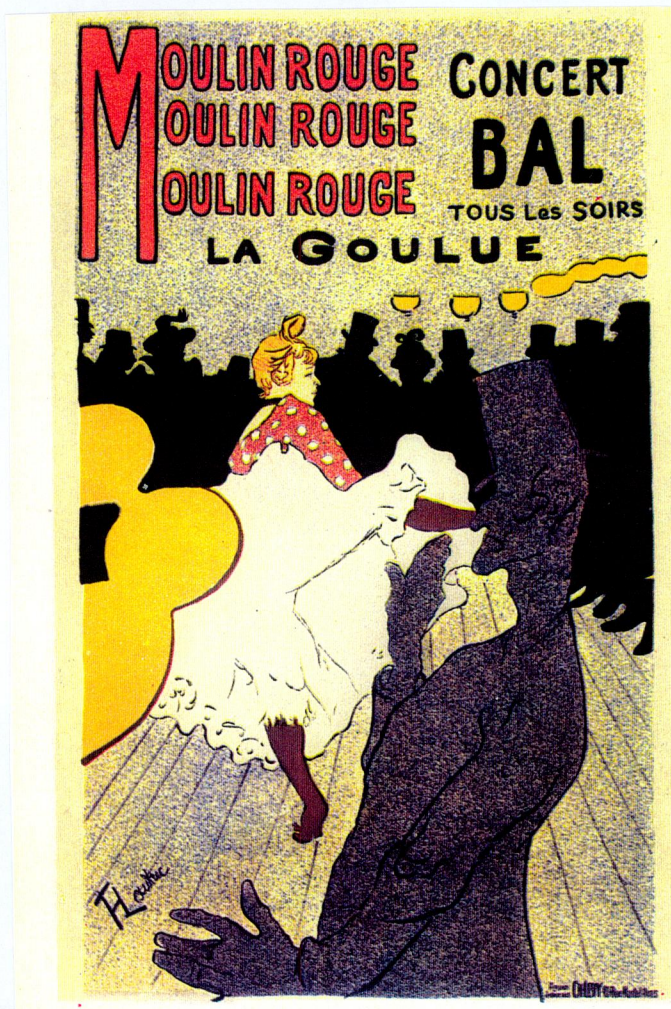
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IN ESSENCE IT WAS A KIND OF OVERT SEXUAL DISPLAY TO WEAR A CORSET WHETHER TIGHT- LACED OR NOT. ALSO THE PARISIAN INFLUENCE ON DECADENCE HAD AN INFLUENCE ON BRITAIN. THE MOULIN ROUGE WITH ITS HALF NAKED DANCING LADIES AND PARIS'S ASSOCIATION WITH NOCTURNAL PLEASURES AND DEBAUCHERY SEEMED TO SECRETLY EXCITE THE ENGLISH. THIS WOULD SEEM EVIDENT FROM THE CARICATURES OF THE TIME ANYWAY, WHERE THE ENGLISH REGARDED IT AS FASHIONABLE TO ADOPT CERTAIN HABITS, PHRASES AND CUSTOMS OF THE FRENCH . (PIC 6)



20
Moulin Rouge. Affiche.
1891.
Poster.

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THE FRENCH (PIC 9)



IN MRS MERRIFIELDS BOOK ' DRESS AS A FINE ART' 1854 SHE SAYS "WE ARE CONTENT TO ADOPT THE GREATEST ABSURDITIES IN DRESS WHEN THEY ARE BOUGHT FROM PARIS OR RECOMMENDED BY A FRENCH NAME. BUT AMERICAN FASHION HAS NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS IN ARISTOCRATIC ENGLAND"(R8)

TO WEAR A CORSET FOR MOST WOMEN MEANT TO FEEL SENSUAL, SUPPORTED AND SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE. IT REPRESENTED ALSO SELF DISCIPLINE AND ORDERLINESS WHICH WERE IMPORTANT VICTORIAN CHARACTERISTICS.

SO IT IS CLEAR IN THIS EXAMINATION THE COMPLETELY IMAGE OF THE VICTORIANS IS INNACURATE. THE VICTORIAN WOMEN WERE THE FIRST TO INITIATE EQUAL RIGHTS WITH MEN IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION , POLITICS AND SOCIAL HABITS. ALSO THEIR MODES OF DRESS WAS NOT ENFORCED UPON THEM, IT EVOLVED FROM PREVIOUS FASHIONS AND IT EVOLVED WITH SOCIETIES CHANGING IMAGE OF LABOUR AND DOMESTICITY AND WITH THE IMAGES OF GENDER DIFFERENCE.

BY THE 1880'S FASHIONABLE WOMEN WERE DISCARDING THEIR PRIMARILY MATERNAL, DOMESTIC IMAGE AND CELEBRATING A RENEWED DISPLAY OF SEXUALITY. A TIGHT-LACED CORSET WAS CENTRAL TO THIS PLAY AND DISPLAY SO THE SAME INSTRUMENT OR GARMENT THAT HAD BEEN SEEN TO RESTRICT WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CENTURY WAS USED AS A LIBERATING FORCE TOWARDS THE END OF THE CENTURY.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CORSET IN RELATION TO OTHER UNDERWEAR

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1 TYPE OF CORSETS WORN

"THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE STORY OF THE CLOTHES WE WEAR WHICH IS BEYOND THE CONTROL OF OUR CONSCIOUS MINDS. THAT IS THE REASON OF ITS IMPORTANCE AND THE SECRET OF ITS PERENNIAL FASCINATION"

JAMES LAVER (R9)

THIS QUOTE MIGHT GIVE AN INSIGHT INTO THE REASONS BEHIND CORSET- WEARING . WOMEN WORE THEM FOR A MULTITUDE OF REASONS, SOMETIMES REASONS THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE EVEN BEEN AWARE OF. THE CORSET WAS LIKE THE FOUNDATION BLOCK IN THE MOULDING OF THE FIGURE. IT PLUS THE OUTER GARMENTS WHICH WERE MADE ACCORDING TO THE LINE OF THE CORSET , PROJECTED AN IMAGE FOR THE WEARER. A WOMAN WHO WENT WITHOUT A CORSET WAS GENERALLY THOUGHT TO SHOW AN INDECENT STATE OF UNDRESS AND TO LACK

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BY THE END OF THE SIXTIES THE ROUNDER SILHOUETTE BERATED BY THE CRINOLINE HAD DISAPPEARED, TO BE REPLACED BY A NEW TIGHT FITTING DRESS WITH BACK FULLNESS WHICH PLACED A NEW EMPHASIS ON A TIGHTLY MOULDED TORSO FROM BUST TO HIPS. THIS GAVE A NEW IMPORTANCE TO THE CORSET WHICH BECAME INCREASINGLY SHAPED WITH CLOSE CORDING AS WELL AS BONING CONTRIBUTING TO ITS RIGIDITY. A NEW STYLE OF ARTIFICIAL AID WAS INTRODUCED CALLED THE BUSTLE WHICH REMAINED IN FASHION FOR ABOUT TWO OR THREE YEARS IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES, THEN DISAPPEARED BUT RECURRED IN AN ENLARGED FORM ABOUT A DECADE LATER.

(PIC 7 & 8)

OTHER DEVICES FOLLOWED IN CONTINUOUS SUCCESSION, INCLUDING NUMEROUS STYLES AND SIZES OF BUST BADS, CELLULOID AND RUBBER SHAPES, AROUND THIS PERIOD. AN AIR OF HOT-HOUSE FEMININITY PERVADES FASHIONS OF THE LATE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES, WITH THEIR TINY WAISTS, MOULDED BUSTS AND CURVED HIPS AND MASSES OF ELABORATELY STYLED AND SOMETIMES FALSE HAIR. INSPIRED BY THE FRENCH 'FASTNESS' WHICH HAD SWEEPED INTO ENGLISH LIFE MANIFESTING ITSELF IN THE USE OF SLANG AND IN GROSSLY

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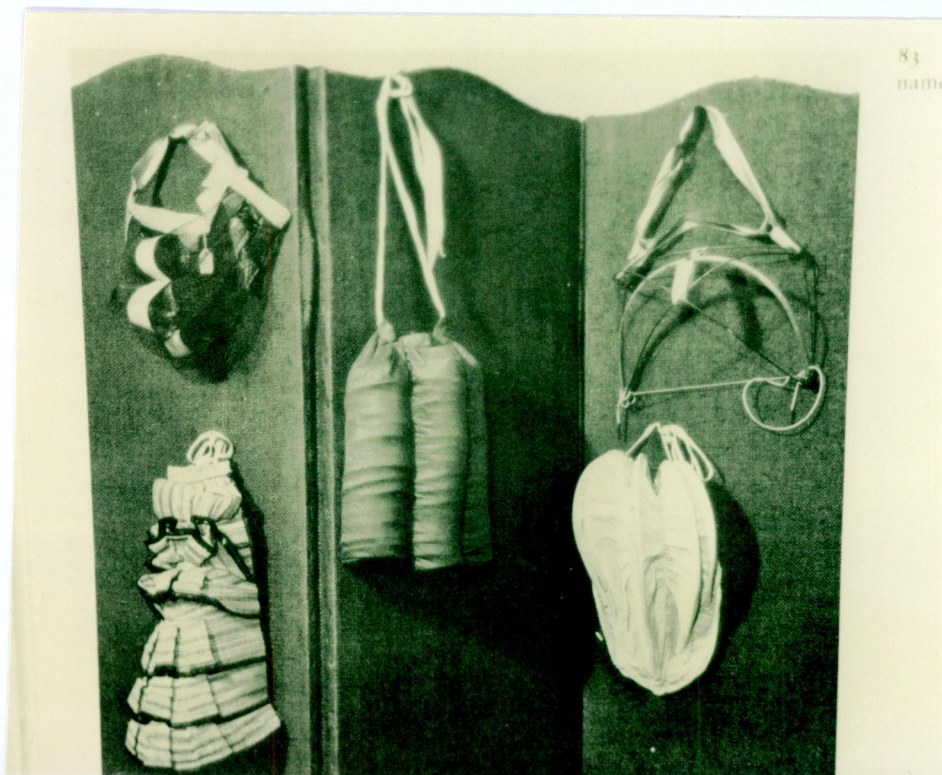
(PIC 7.48)

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PIC 7



PIC 8



83
name



ARTIFICIAL AIDS TO BEAUTY AND THE COPIOUS USE OF COSMETICS. AS WITH ALL THE NEW FASHION TRENDS IN THE VICTORIAN PERIOD THIS NEW STYLE RECEIVED ITS FAIR SHARE OF CRITICISM IN POPULAR MAGAZINES AND PAPERS. BUT FEMALE READERS WERE GROWING RESTLESS WITH ENDLESS MORAL REPROOFS AND 'GOODNESS' SEEMED TO BE SLIPPING OUT OF FAVOUR. (PIC9) THE 'CUIRASSE' BODICE WAS THE NAME GIVEN TO THE STYLE WHICH EVOLVED IN THE EIGHTEEN SEVENTIES (PIC10) WHICH WAS BECOMING VERY ELONGATED AND SLENDER.

.....

2 THE NEW INTEREST IN UNDERWEAR

UP UNTIL THIS TIME ONLY THE WEALTHY HAD INDULGED IN EXTRAVAGANT FADS IN FASHION, BUT NOW DUE TO MASS PRODUCTION UNDERWEAR (AND OUTER-WEAR) BECAME CHEAPER AND MORE AFFORDABLE TO WOMEN OF ALL CLASSES. NOW FAR GREATER ATTENTION WAS PAID TO UNDERWEAR; TO ITS MAKING AND ALSO TO HOW IT WAS WORN. VICTORIANS BEGAN ALSO TO REALISE THE APPEAL OF SEDUCTIVE AND LUXURIOUS UNDER-GARMENTS. FOR A LONG TIME HOWEVER, ELABORATE UNDERCLOTHING TENDED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN OF EASY VIRTUE. THE COURTESAN HAD LONG SINCE DISCOVERED THE ATTRACTIONS OF ELABORATE AND DECORATED UNDERCLOTHING. SO PERHAPS AS A KIND OF MORAL DENUNCIATION OF THIS BUSINESS THE

ARTIFICIAL AIDS TO BEAUTY AND THE SCANDALOUS USE OF COSMETICS
ALONG WITH ALL THE NEW FASHION TRENDS IN THE VICTORIAN PERIOD
THIS NEW STYLE RECEIVED ITS FAIR SHARE OF CRITICISM IN POPULAR
MAGAZINES AND PAPERS. BUT FEMALE READERS WERE GROWING
RESTLESS WITH ENDLESS MORAL REPROOFS AND "GOODNESS" SEEMED TO
BE SLIPPING OUT OF FAVOUR. (P. 103) THE "CULMINATE" BODY WAS
THE NAME GIVEN TO THE STYLE WHICH EVOLVED IN THE FIFTEEN
SEVENTIES (P. 104) WHICH WAS BECOMING EVER "LONGER" AND
DEEPER.

2 THE NEW INTEREST IN UNDERWEAR

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PIC 9



PIC 10





PIC 2

PIC 10

RESPECTABLE WOMAN CHOSE PLAIN AND MODEST UNDERCLOTHING,
USUALLY OF WHITE. IN 1861 A DOCTOR DAUMAS ARGUED THAT
"THE WOMAN'S CHEMISSE IS AN OBJECT OF RESPECT NOT CENSURE,
IT IS THE WHITE SYMBOL OF HER MODESTY THAT ONE MUST
NEITHER TOUCH NOR LOOK AT TOO CLOSELY" (R10) (PIC 11)

PIC 11



RESPECTABLE WOMAN - CHOSE PLAIN AND MODEST UNDERCLOTHING.

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IT IS THE WHITE SYMBOL OF HER MODESTY THAT ONE MUST
NEITHER TOUCH NOR LOOK AT TOO CLOSELY. (PIC 11)

PIC 11



HOWEVER AS THEY MOVED INTO THE EIGHTIES ATTITUDES BEGAN TO CHANGE . SOME COLOUR BEGAN TO APPEAR IN HUES OF BLUE, GOLD, NAVY AND AMBER. SATIN , SILK AND LACE BECAME FASHIONABLE FOR UNDERGARMENTS INSTEAD OF THE USUAL COTTON, LINEN AND 'PLAIN' FABRICS. (PIC 12)



SOCIETY BEGAN TO BELIEVE THAT AN INCREASE IN LUXURIOUS UNDERGARMENTS WAS PERFECTLY APPROPRIATE FOR THE MARRIED WOMAN . WHEN HIDDEN GARMENTS BECAME MORE DECORATIVE AND SEDUCTIVE IT SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT MORE WOMEN WERE DRESSING

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ATTRACTIVELY FOR INTIMATE MOMENTS WITH THEIR HUSBANDS.
FRENCH FASHION WRITER VIOLETTE (R) ARGUED THAT

"UNDERWEAR OCCUPIES A VERY LARGE PLACE IN MODERN
ELEGANCE. A TRUE REVOLUTION HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THIS
VERY INTIMATE SIDE OF THE FEMININE TOILETTE. IN THE
PAST THE LAW THAT RULED LINGERIE WAS ABSOLUTELY
UNCHANGEABLE. CHEMISSES AND STOCKINGS TRAVERSED
CENTURIES WITHOUT UNDERGOING THE LEAST REVOLUTION." (R11)

BUT SHE CLAIMED THE SITUATION HAD RECENTLY CHANGED
DRAMATICALLY. UNDERWEAR WAS NOW AS ELEGANT AND LUXURIOUS AS
OUTER-CLOTHING EVEN MORE SO.

"TOO BE PRETTY IS ONLY HALF THE SEDUCTION. LUXURY HAS
BECOME THE INDISPENSABLE COMPLEMENT OF BEAUTY"

THE CORSETS OF 1880 WERE LONGER . THE SPOON BUSK APPEARED IN
GREAT NUMBERS OF WHALE BONES WERE USED. AS THE ELEGANCE OF
CORSETS INCREASED THE DRESS MAKERS WERE ENCOURAGED TO SHAPE
THE SKIRTS MORE CLOSELY THAN EVER TO THE FIGURE. (PIC 13)

THE MOST FASHIONABLE FABRICS BEING OF SATIN WITH LACE-EDGING.
TO KEEP THE BONES IN POSITION EMBROIDERY WAS FREQUENTLY USED.
THE FIRST SUSPENDER BELT WAS AN IMPORTANT INNOVATION FOR THE
TIME. JAMES LAVER (R12) RECORDS THAT IN 1876 IN THE GRAND
OPERA 'BOUFFFE', LEICESTER SQUARE, GREAT EXCITEMENT
WAS ROUSED BY FRENCH DANCERS WITH 'NAKED THIGHS' AND
SUSPENDERS STRETCHED ACROSS THEM TO KEEP UP THE STOCKINGS.

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PIC 13



THESE SUSPENDERS BEGAN TO CREEP INTO REAL LIFE COSTUME BY ABOUT 1876 IN BRITAIN. THEY WERE FIRST WORN ATTACHED TO A KIND OF HARNESS AND LATER TO THE CORSET ITSELF

(1901) . THEY HAD A DOUBLE ADVANTAGE OF REPLACING GARTERS WHICH WERE RESTRICTING AND PROBABLY UNCOMFORTABLE AND ALSO HOLDING THE CORSET IN PLACE. THEY ALSO HELPED EVENTUALLY TO MAKE THE CORSET LESS CONSTRICTING BECAUSE THEY KEPT IT IN PLACE AND PREVENTED IT FROM RIDING UP.

THE CORSET DID NOT HAVE TO BE LACED SO TIGHTLY THEN. (PIC).



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3 MYTHS AND SENSATIONALISM IN ADVERTISING

IT IS A CURIOUS FACT THAT THE VICTORIANS, USUALLY DISMISSED FOR HAVING DREARY PRACTICALITY IN UNDERWEAR IE. FLANNEL UNDERCLOTHES, WOOLLEN STOCKING AND VOLUMINOUS PETTICOATS, WERE IN FACT REAL INNOVATORS IN THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW DESIGNS, FINE MATERIALS AND TRIMMINGS OF LACE AND EMBROIDERY.

IN THE HIGH VICTORIAN AND THE EDWARDIAN ERA WHEN THE LINE OF THE DRESSES WAS MUCH STRAIGHTER THAN BEFORE, CORSETRY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE MODERN SHAPE. IT WAS ALWAYS THE SUBJECT OF HEATED DEBATE WITH ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST BEING CONSTANTLY FORWARD AND BACKWARD IN FASHION AND FAMILY MAGAZINES. ON THE WHOLE THE CORSET PROBABLY GOT MORE BAD PRESS THAT IT DESERVED, WITH THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND THE CHURCH BEING UNDER SOCIAL PRESSURE TO DISCOURAGE THE WEARING OF IT. THESE DOCTORS WERE INCLINED TO ATTRIBUTE ANY LUNG , LIVER, REPRODUCTIVE OR BACK PROBLEMS TO THE CORSET. THE DIAGRAMS OF CURVED SPINES WERE JUST AS OR MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF TUBERCULOSIS AND SCOLIOSIS (THE LATTERAL CURVATURE OF THE SPINE). THESE DISEASES WERE, AND STILL ARE EIGHT TIMES AS PREVALENT IN GIRLS AS BOYS.

ONE POPULAR MAGAZINE 'THE ENGLISHWOMAN'S DOMESTIC MAGAZINE' HAD STARTED A CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN AND WELCOMED LETTERS OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF TIGHT-LACING. THESE PRESENTED EXTREME

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IN THE HIGH VICTORIAN AND THE EDWARDIAN ERA WHEN THE LINE OF THE CORSET WAS MUCH STRAIGHTER THAN BEFORE, CORSETS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE MODERN CHAPEL. IT WAS ALWAYS THE SUBJECT OF HEATED DEBATE WITH ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST BEING CONSTANTLY FORWARDED AND BACKWARD IN FASHION AND FAMILY MAGAZINES. ON THE WHOLE THE CORSET PROBABLY GOT MORE BAD

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VIEWS; THE EXAGGERATIONS OF HEALTH RISKS FROM THE DOCTORS AND MORAL REPROOFS FROM THE CHURCH, AND ON THE OTHER EXTREME THOSE MINORITIES OF WOMEN WHO DID TIGHT-LACE AS A FETISH PRESENTING THEIR UNHEALTHY PASTIMES AS THE NORM (R14).

THE TROUBLE WITH THIS WAS THAT THE MAGAZINE CULTURE ALONG WITH THE SERIAL NOVEL WAS TRANSFORMING THE VICTORIAN SOCIAL AND LITERARY SCENE, SELLING FIFTY TO A HUNDRED THOUSAND COPIES PER ISSUE. THEIR SUCCESS DEPENDED UPON THE EXTENT TO WHICH EDITOR OR AUTHOR CORRECTLY JUDGED COMMON NEEDS IN THEIR MASS-AUDIENCE. AS THE MAGAZINES WANTED TO SELL AS MANY COPIES AS POSSIBLE THEY WELCOMED SENSATIONALIST LETTERS. HENCE THE EXTREMIST VIEWS STILL PREVAILING TODAY. THE TRUTH WAS THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF WOMEN WORE CORSETS AND THE DEGREE OF TIGHTNESS VARIED ACCORDING TO THE DESIGN OF THE DRESS, THE SOCIAL OCCASION, THE AGE, PERSONALITY AND FIGURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL WOMAN. ACCOUNTS OF WAISTS MEASURING BETWEEN TWELVE AND EIGHTEEN INCHES ARE HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE AND AS THE TABLE SHOWS (PIC14) ONLY ONE EIGHTEEN INCH CORSET IS IN EXISTENCE.

PIC 14

TABLE 1. The Waist of Reality. Corset waist measurements from the Symington Collection. (Statistics courtesy of Ms. Annette Carruthers, Assistant Keeper of Decorative Arts, Leicestershire Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester.)

| | 18" | 19" | 20" | 21" | 22" | 23" | 24" | 25" | 26" | 27" | 28" | 30" | 34" | 40" | Average Size | Total Number Measured |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1856-1881 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 17 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 23.2" | 46 |
| 1881-1900 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 19 | 20 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 22" | 66 |
| 1900-1910 | 0 | 6 | 26 | 13 | 13 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21.9" | 85 |

VIEWED THE EXAGGERATIONS OF HEALTH RISKS FROM THE DOCTORS AND
MORAL REPROBS FROM THE CHURCH, AND ON THE OTHER EXTREME THOSE
MINORITIES OF WOMEN WHO DID NOT LIVE AS A FETTERED PRESENTING
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PIC 1A



4 THE TRENDS AND NAMES OF THE CORSETS

MOST FASHION JOURNALS AND OTHER WOMEN'S MAGAZINES DEVOTED RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE SUBJECT OF UNDERCLOTHING AND MOST ADVERTISEMENTS PRIOR TO 1880 DID NOT PORTRAY THE CORSETTED FEMALE , RATHER ONLY AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE CORSET ITSELF OR IN SOME CASES THE CORSET FOLDED. BUT AS IT CAME MORE 'DECENT' TO PRINT ILLUSTRATION OF WOMEN IN THEIR UNDERWEAR SOMETIMES FAIRLY EROTIC IMAGES OF WOMEN IN A STATE OF UNDRESS IN BOUDOIRS (PIC 15) WERE SHOWN.



THEY MIGHT HAVE ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES LIKE COMING HAIR BEING LACED UP OR IN THE COMPANY OF OTHER WOMEN. (PIC 16) LIKE TODAY THESE ADVERTISEMENTS WERE DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THE CONSUMERS PERCEIVED DESIRES AND FANTASIES. THESE ADVERTISEMENTS GIVE US AN IDEA OF THE SELF IMAGE THE WEARER MIGHT HAVE HAD. THE CORSETS WERE GIVEN NAMES SUGGESTIVE OF

THE TRENDS AND NAMES OF THE CORSETS

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MORE DECENT TO PRINT ILLUSTRATION OF WOMEN IN THEIR
UNDERWEAR, SOMETIMES FAIRLY EXOTIC IMAGES OF WOMEN IN A STATE
OF UNDRESS IN BODICIES (FIG. 12) WERE SHOWN.



THEY MIGHT HAVE ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES LIKE COMING HAIR-SCISSOR
FACED UP OR IN THE COMPANY OF OTHER WOMEN. (FIG. 13) LIKE
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PIC 16



MOODS OR IDEALS; FOR EXAMPLE IN THE 1890'S TO 1900'S WHEN THE S-BEND CAME IN' THE NAME SWANBILL WAS GIVEN TO ONE BRAND. THIS SUGGESTS GRACE AND A GENTLY CURVING FIGURE. THERE WERE MANY OTHERS ALSO. NAMES THAT EVOKED ROMANCE SUCH AS "L'AIMEE, LE REVE AND L'APPARITION" (AGAIN WE SEE FRENCHNESS BEING EQUATED WITH SENSUALNESS). ALSO NAMES EVOKED STATUS THE PRIMA DONNA, THE PRINCESS AND OTHER ARISTOCRATIC NAMES FITTED IN THIS CATEGORY. THERE WERE CORSETS WITH THE NAMES OF FAMOUS WOMEN FROM HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY ALSO. OF COURSE THESE ADVERTISEMENTS EVOKED CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION



DEPENDING ON HOW SEXY OF REVEALING THEY WERE. IN THE EIGHTEEN NINETIES THE NATIONAL VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION, A PROMINENT ENGLISH SOCIAL PURITY ORGANISATION ATTEMPTED TO CENSOR THEATRE POSTERS AND LINGERIE AND CORSET ADVERTISEMENTS

.....

5 JAEGER AND HIS INNOVATION

ALONG WITH THE TREND FOR DECORATIVE UNDERWEAR AND THE EMPHASIS ON SEXUALITY CAME ANOTHER MAJOR DIRECTION IN THE INNOVATION OF UNDERWEAR. THIS WAS THANKS TO A DOCTOR GUSTAV JAEGER MD, PROFESSION OF ZOOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF STUTTGART. HE WAS THE AUTHOR OF A NUMBER OF BOOKS ON HEALTH CULTURE AND ORIGINATOR OF DOCTOR JAEGER SANITARY WOOLLEN SYSTEM WHICH MAKE A HUGE IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERWEAR ALL OVER EUROPE AND ESPECIALLY IN BRITAIN. HIS RULE FOR UNDERWEAR WAS SIMPLE. IT HAD TO BE 'WOOL NEXT TO THE SKIN'. THE PRINCIPLE OF IT WAS THAT " THE ANIMAL FIBRES PREVENTED THE RETENTION OF THE NOXIOUS EXHALATIONS OF THE BODY WHILE ALSO KEEPING IN BENEFICIAL EMANATIONS OF THE BODY WHICH INDUCE A SENSE OF WELL-BEING AND ENSURED WARMTH AND VENTILATION".(R15) HE CONSIDERED THAT EVERY ITEM OF CLOTHING SHOULD BE MAKE OF WOOL INCLUDING HATS , POCKET LININGS, HANDKERCHIEFS AND BED LINEN AND OF COURSE CORSETS.

A MISTER TOM ALIN SET UP A BUSINESS MANUFACTURING JAEGER CLOTHING WHICH BECAME SO POPULAR IT WON A MEDAL FOR ITS STAND

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VENTILATION". (1878) HE CONSIDERED THAT EVERY ITEM OF CLOTHING
SHOULD BE MADE OF WOOL INCLUDING HATS, POCKET LININGS,
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A MISTER TOM ALIN SET UP A BUSINESS MANUFACTURING JACOB'S
CLOTHING WHICH BECAME SO POPULAR IT WON A MEDAL FOR ITS STAND

AT 'THE HEALTHIERIES'- THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EXHIBITION OF 1888.

JAEGER'S CUSTOMERS INCLUDED FASHIONABLE LADIES BROUGHT BY OSCAR WILDE WHO WAS AN ARDENT DISCIPLE. JAEGER INSISTED THAT ALL GARMENTS SHOULD BE A HUNDRED PER CENT WOOL, CLOSE FITTING, MADE IN NATURAL COLOURED MIXED WHITE AND BROWN WOOLS' UNDYED AND UNBLEACHED.

THE SANITARY WOOL CORSET APPEARED IN HIS 1884 CATALOGUES IN LONDON AND CONTINUED TO APPEAR INTO THE PRESENT CENTURY. HE COMMENTED

"THE FAULT DOES NOT CONSIST WHOLLY IN THE WEARING OF A CORSET BUT PARTLY IN THE MATERIAL OF WHICH IT IS MADE. THIS IS USUALLY SUBSTANTIAL (POSSIBLY EVEN PASTED LINEN CLOTH) (1) CONCENTRATES, IN AN INTENSIFIED DEGREE, THE DISADVANTAGES OF CLOTHING MADE FROM VEGETABLE FIBRE.(2) IS AS A RULE LACED TO TIGHTLY, BECAUSE THE GREAT ENERVATION OF THE BODY, CAUSED BY BEARING THE MOST UNHEALTHY MATERIAL, INDUCES A FEELING OF WANT OF SUPPORT AND TENDENCY TO UNSHAPELY INCREASE OF BULK , ONLY TO BE RESTRAINED BY USE OF FORCE UDER WHICH THEE ORGANS SUFFER. (PIC)" (R16)

HE ALSO STATES;

"LADIES, HOWEVER WHO HAVE ADOPTED, AND ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE GROWN UP UNDER THE SANITARY CORSET, NEED TO USE NO FORCE IN ORDER TO PRESERVE SHAPE. THEIR COMPACT FIRM

1888

AT THE HEALTHIER THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EXHIBITION OF

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AND TENDENCY TO UNUSUALLY INCREASE OF BODY ONLY TO BE
RESTRAINED BY USE OF FORCE OVER WHICH THE ORGAN

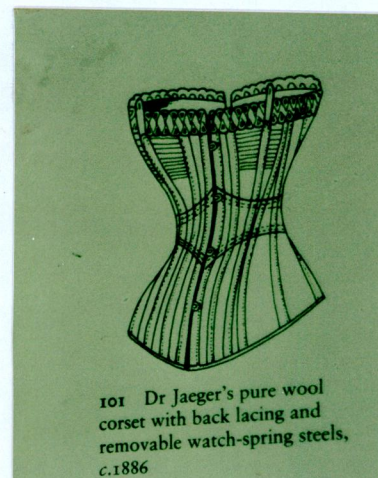
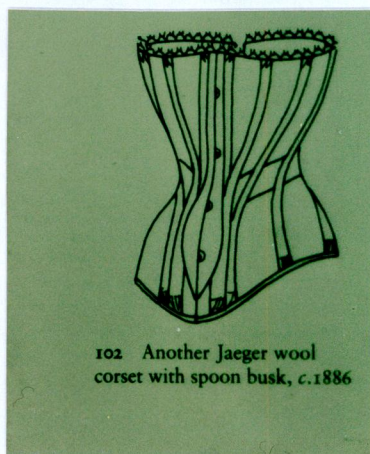
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FIGURES WILL NOT REQUIRE SUPPORT. THEY DO NOT THEREFORE LACE TOO TIGHTLY AND IN THE SANITARY WOOLLEN CORSET THEY HAVE ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF GIRDED LOINS WITHOUT THE DISADVANTAGES "(R17)

HE WAS AN INNOVATOR IN THE SENSE THAT HE WAS THE FIRST TO COMBINE BEAUTY AND PRACTICALITY. HOWEVER IN THE ABOVE QUOTE HE STRESSES THE LACK OF NEED OF TIGHT LACING WITH HIS CORSET WHICH MIGHT SUGGEST THAT PERHAPS THE CORSET WAS NOT STRONG ENOUGH.

THE 1884 'SANITARY WOOLLEN SPRING CORSETS' (PIC 17)

PIC 17



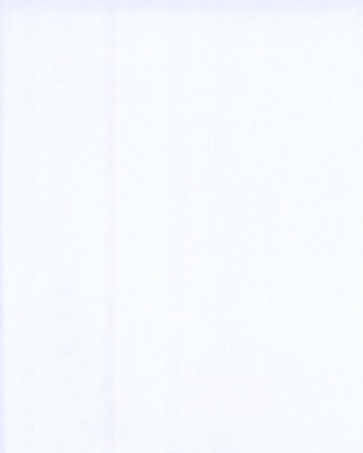
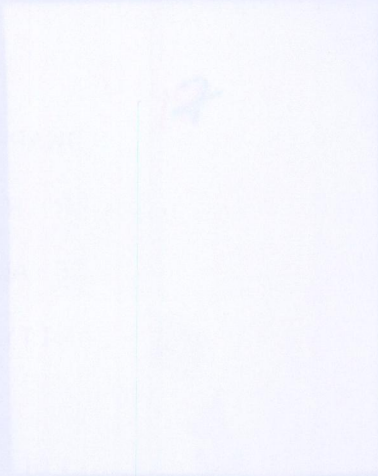
WERE DESCRIBED AS 'FLEXIBLE ELASTIC DURABLE WITH SPRING STEELS AND AS RESPONDING TO EVERY MOVEMENT OF THE BODY.(R18)'. THE STEELS WERE BUTTONED IN AT THE UPPER END SO THAT THEY COULD BE REMOVED FOR CLEANING. THE CORSETS WERE MADE IN UNDYED SHEEPS' WOOL, IN WHITE GREY AND CAMEL HAIR.

FIGURE 1. WILL NOT SECURELY RESIST. THEY DO NOT
THEREFORE EXERT TIGHTLY AND IN THE SANITARY
CORSET THEY HAVE ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF GIRDLE
WITHOUT THE DISADVANTAGES (P. 17)

HE WAS AN INNOVATOR IN THE SENSE THAT HE WAS THE FIRST TO
COMBINE BEAUTY AND PRACTICALITY. HE HOWEVER IN THE ABOVE QUOTE
HE STRESSES THE LACK OF NEED OF TIGHT LACING WITH HIS CORSET
WHICH MIGHT SUGGEST THAT PERHAPS THE CORSET WAS NOT STRONG
ENOUGH

THE 1894 'SANITARY WOOLLEN SPRING CORSETS' (P. 17)

PIC 17



WERE DESCRIBED AS 'FLEXIBLE ELASTIC OVERABLE WITH SPRING STEELS
AND AS RESPONDING TO EVERY MOVEMENT OF THE BODY (P. 17)'. THE
STEELS WERE BUTTONED IN AT THE UPPER END SO THAT THEY COULD BE
REMOVED FOR CLEANING. THE CORSETS WERE MADE IN ONE-PIECE
SHEETS, WOOL, IN WHITE, GREY AND CAMEL HAIR.

JAEGER GARMENTS REMAINED POPULAR UNTIL ABOUT THE 1930'S WHEN THEY BEGAN TO ADVERTISE ESPECIALLY FOR THE ELDERLY AND FOR CHILDREN. THE RULE OF 'WOOL ONLY' IS STILL RECOGNIZED AS GOOD FOR HEALTH BUT PEOPLE OF THE 1880'S AND 1890'S WANTED ALSO THE FINE FABRICS OF SILK AND SATIN AND WANTED THEM IN DIFFERENT COLOURS. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY WHICH WAS, AS ANN BUCK SAYS, " WAS THE GREAT EPOCH OF UNDERWEAR"

.....

6 STRIKING A BALANCE IN CORSETRY BETWEEN FASHION AND HEALTH
RESULTING IN THE S-BEND

THERE WERE CHANGING MORAL ATTITUDE ALSO IN THE EDWARDIAN ERA. MRS PRITCHARD SAID IN 1903 "UGLINESS NO LONGER REPRESENTS VIRTUE" (R19) AND BY LINKING EXQUISITE LINGERIE AND SEXUAL SATISFACTION WITHIN MARRIAGE DIMINISHED THE POPULARITY OF HEALTHY AND SENSIBLE GARMENTS.

"A WOMAN MIGHT BE THE MOST VIRTUOUS AND CAREFUL OF WIVES BUT IF SHE WERE WITHOUT MYSTERY AND WITHOUT COQUETRY SHE SHOULD BE FAR FROM ATTRACTIVE TO THE ORDINARY MAN". (R20)
(PIC 18)

AND IN A PERIODICAL 'LA VIE PARISIENNE' WE SEE HOW THE BRIDE ENJOYS HOW HER HUSBAND SPENDS TIME OVER HER STAYS.

"TREMBLING , HAPPY, YOUR HUSBAND UNLACES YOU WITH AN UNCERTAIN AND CLUMSY HAND AND YOU LAUGH MISCHIEVOUSLY,

JAGGER GARMENTS REMAINED MORE OR LESS ABOUT THE 1930'S WHEN
THEY BEGAN TO ADVANCE ESPECIALLY FOR THE ELDERLY AND FOR
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THE CENTURY WHICH WAS, AS ANN GUCK SAYS, "WAS THE GREAT
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STRIKING A BALANCE IN CORSETRY BETWEEN FASHION AND HEALTH
RESULTS IN THE 2-STRAP

THERE WERE CHANGING MORAL ATTITUDES ALSO IN THE EDWARDIAN ERA.
MRS. PRITCHARD SAID IN 1903: "COURTESY NO LONGER REPRESENTS
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(1910-1920)
AND IN A PERIODICAL "LA VIE PARISIENNE" WE SEE HOW THE BRIDE
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"TREMBLING, HAPPY, YOUR HUSBAND UNLACES YOU WITH AN
UNCERTAIN AND CLUMSY HAND AND YOU LAUGH MISCHIEVOUSLY."

PIC 18



JOYOUSLY ASCERTAINING THAT HIS CONFUSION IS CAUSED BY THE SIGHT OF YOUR BEAUTY. YOU ARE HAPPY TO FEEL YOUR OMNIPOTENCE: YOU TAKE CARE NOT TO HELP HIM TIE THE KNOTS OR FIND HIS WAY AROUND THE LACEHOLES, ON THE CONTRARY YOU TAKE PLEASURE IN PROLONGING HIS TENTATIVE GROPPING, WHICH TICKLE YOU DELICIOUSLY'. (R21)

WOMEN DID NOT DISMISS THE HYGIENIC CORSET, THEY SIMPLY WANTED A CORSET THAT WAS ALSO SEDUCTIVE AND ELEGANT. THE HEALTH CORSET HAD BEEN A NOTABLE INNOVATION IN CORSETRY DESIGN AND AFTER IT CAME OTHER DESIGNS WITH SIMILAR AIMS. ONE SUCH PERSON WAS MADAME INEZ GACHES-SARRAUTE. SHE WAS A FRENCH CORSETIERE WITH A MEDICAL DEGREE AND INTENDED AGAIN TO DESIGN A CORSET THAT WAS BOTH HYGIENIC AND FASHIONABLE. SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTUAL INTRODUCTION OF THE STRAIGHT-



JOYOUSLY ASCERTAINING THAT HIS CONFUSION IS CAUSED BY THE
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A CORSET THAT WAS BOTH HYGIENIC AND FASHIONABLE SHE WAS
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTUAL INTRODUCTION OF THE STRAIGHT-

FRONTED BUSK, WHICH INSTEAD OF COMPRESSING AND FORCING THE ABDOMEN DOWNWARDS AIMED TO SUPPORT AND RAISE IT. IN ALL PREVIOUS CORSETS THE WAIST CURVED CONSTRICTINGLY INWARDS. BY GETTING RID OF THIS SHE AIMED TO REMOVE PRESSURE FROM THE VITAL FEMALE ORGANS WHICH WERE THE DIAPHRAGM AND ABDOMEN.

WOMEN WOULD AT LAST HAVE ROOM TO MOVE AND BREATHE FREELY AND THERE WOULD BE NO MORE HARMFUL COMPRESSION ROUND AND BELOW THE WAIST. FURTHERMORE HER CORSET, BEING LOWER ON TOP WOULD NOT SUPPRESS THE BUST.

(PIC19)

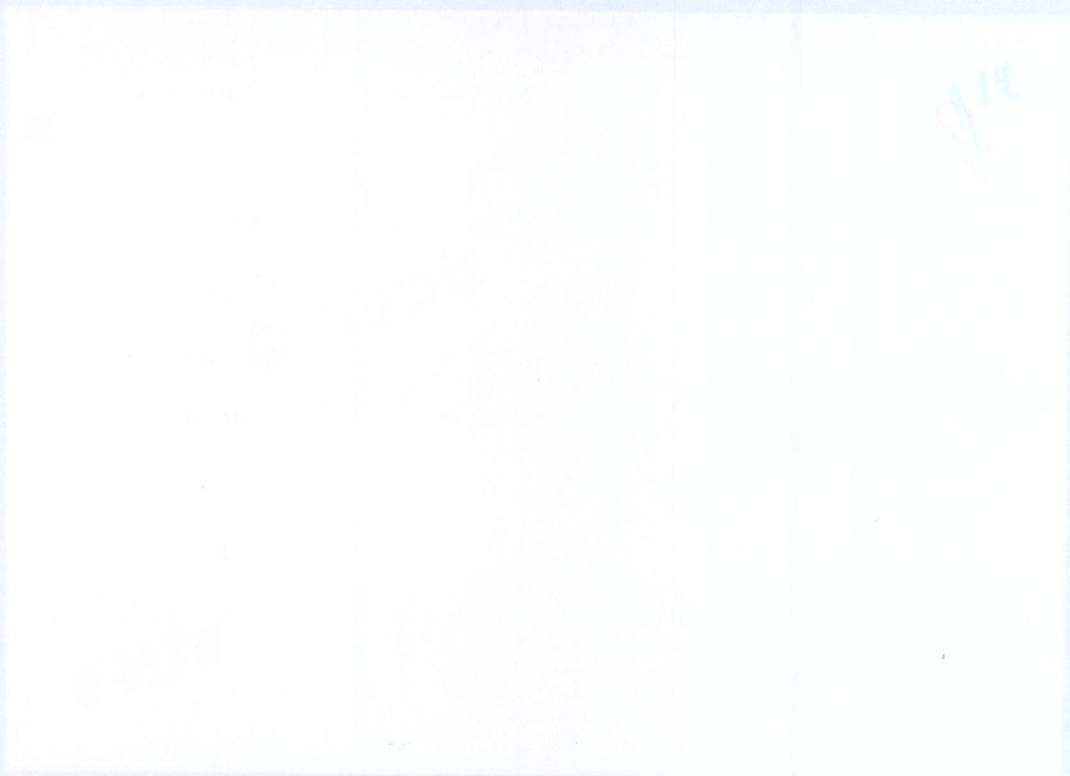


THEORETICALLY , IT WAS A BETTER DESIGN BUT THE CRAZE FOR SMALL WAISTS PERSISTED AND WHEN THIS IS WAS LACED EVEN MODERATELY TIGHTLY, IT PRODUCED AN EVEN MORE DISTORTED FIGURE THAN HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY WORN. THIS WAS THE FAMOUS S-CURVE. THE

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(P1612)



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TIGHTLY IT PRODUCED AN EVEN MORE DISTORTED FIGURE THAN HAD
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STOMACH WAS PUSHED BACK, THE BUST PUSHED PROMINENTLY FORWARD AND THE HIPS THROWN BACK TO AN EXTREME DEGREE.

THIS SHAPE CONFORMED TO THE EDWARDIAN IDEAL OF BEAUTY. IT WAS THE LAST TIME THAT A VOLUPTUOUS MATURE FIGURE , WITH EMPHASIS ON BUST AND HIP AND A NARROW WAISTLINE WAS IN VOGUE. THIS NEW STRAITER CORSET COULD NOT, LIKE EARLIER STYLES, SUPPORT THE BUST BECAUSE IT DID NOT COME UP FAR ENOUGH. FOR THIS REASON, AND ALSO BECAUSE A BUST WAS FASHIONABLE VARIOUS STYLES OF BUST IMPROVER WERE USED TO CREATE AN IMPRESSIVE BOSOM.

IN 1902 THE NEW LOOK HAD BEEN IMMORTALISED BY THE AMERICAN ARTIST CHARLES DANA GIPSON, WHO PORTRAYED MISS CAMILLE CLIFFORD (AMERICAN ACTRESS) THE NEW FOCUS ON THE FIGURE HAD SHIFTED FROM THE WAIST TO THE BOSOM.(PIC 20) THE FIGURE WAS SENSUOUS WITH FLOWING LINES AND THE;E UNDERGARMENTS OR LINGERIE AS THEY WERE NOW CALLED WERE MADE TO FIT INTO THIS IDEAL. THE UNDERCLOTHES OF THE WOMAN OF THE NINETIES CONSISTED OF A CORSET, A LINEN SHIFT, A PAIR OF SHORT KNICKERS,

ADORNED WITH RIBBON AND OVER THEM TWO OR MORE FRILLED SKIRTS. LINEN WAS WIDELY USED BUT FOR ELEGANCE SILK WAS ALSO POPULAR, ESPECIALLY IN PETTICOATS. THIS NOT ONLY ADDED LUXURY TO THE ENSEMBLE BUT GAVE THE SKIRT A SWISHING NOISE THAT CAME TO BE KNOWN AS FROU-FROU WHICH MALE OBSERVERS FOUND EXTREMELY SEDUCTIVE. IT IS CURIOUS THAT ALONG WITH THIS FROU-FROU AND

STOMACH WAS PUSHED BACK. THE BUST PUSHED PROMINENTLY FORWARD
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ON BUST AND HIP AND A NARROW WAISTLINE WAS IN VOGUE. THIS NEW
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BUST BECAUSE IT DID NOT COME UP FAR ENOUGH. FOR THIS REASON
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ALLURENCE. IT IS CURIOUS THAT ALONG WITH THIS FRONT-THROW AND

PIC 20



85 'The "Extinction" of Species: or, The Fashionable Lady without Mercy and the Egrets'. Punch, 1899.

The ultra-fashionable lady, who deforms her body in the name of fashion, is the kind who, according to Punch, plunders the birds of their plumage in order to decorate her hats.

AIR OF SEDUCTION IN UNDERWEAR, THERE WAS AN INCREASED PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN SPORT AND ACTIVITY. THIS IS SOMETHING I WILL ELABORATE ON IN CHAPTER 3

PIC-20

2

SOMETHING I WILL ELABORATE ON IN CHAPTER 3
PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN SPORT AND ACTIVITY
AIR OF SEDUCTION IN UNDERWEAR, THERE HAS AN INCREASED

THE RISE IN THE POPULARITY OF UNDERWEAR AT THE END OF THE SEVENTIES AND BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTIES WAS REFLECTED IN NEW FIGURE IMPROVING DEVICES AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL GIVEN TO GARMENTS WHICH REFLECTED THE NEW AIR OF SENSUOUSNESS WHICH WAS BEGINNING TO HAPPEN.

THE FASHION GAP BETWEEN THE UPPER AND LOWER CLASSES WAS BECOMING LESS APPARENT AS MASS PRODUCTION LOWERED PRICES, REFLECTING AN OVERALL MERGE OF THE CLASSES. THE CORSETS CONTROVERTIAL IMAGE WAS LARGELY DUE TO THE CHURCH AND MEDICAL PROFESSION WHO FELT OBLIGED TO DISREGARD IT AS AN IMMORAL DEVICE AND THE SENSATIONALIST CORRESPONDENCE OF NEW FASHION AND FAMILY MAGAZINES HELPED PROPAGATE A STEREOTYPED IMAGE.

AS THE CENTURY PROGRESSED A NEW HEALTH CONSCIOUS IMAGE BEGAN TO TAKE ITS PLACE ALONGSIDE THE DESIRE FOR SENSUAL UNDERWEAR.

JAEGERS REFORMS FOR HEALTHY WOOLLEN UNDERWEAR REPRESENTED A RATIONAL STEP IN THIS DIRECTION, SIMULTANEOUSLY HAVING TWO IDEALS WHICH WERE NEVER SEEN TOGETHER BEFORE. WE SEE A KIND OF ACCEPTANCE OF SEXUALITY THROUGH CORSETRY AND A DESIRE FOR A HEALTHY BODY ALSO. THIS IDEA GAVE WAY TO THE NEW S-BEND FIGURE WHICH WAS THE LAST TIME A MATURE , WOMANLY FIGURE WAS IN FASHION.

THE FIRST IN THE HISTORY OF UNDERWEAR AT THE END OF
THE REVOLUTION AND BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH WAS
REFLECTED IN NEW FIGURE IMPROVING OBJECT AND
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REPRESENTED A RATIONAL STEP IN THIS DIRECTION
STIMULATEDLY HAVING TWO IDEALS WHICH WERE NEVER
SEEN TOGETHER BEFORE. WE SEE A KIND OF ACCEPTANCE OF
SEXUALITY THROUGH CORSETRY AND A DESIRE FOR A HEALTHY
BODY ALSO. THIS IDEA GAVE WAY TO THE NEW DRESSING
FIGURE WHICH WAS THE LAST TIME A NATURAL WOMANLY
FIGURE WAS IN FASHION.

CHAPTER 3
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND DRESS
REFORM

CHAPTER 3
WOMEN'S
REFORM
SUFFRAGE AND DRESS

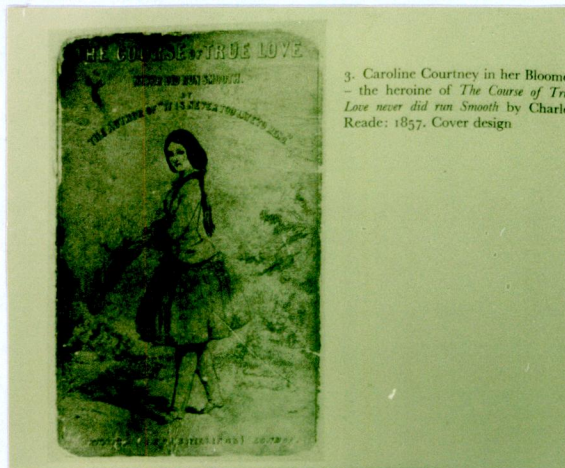
UP TO NOW I HAVE EXAMINED CONVENTIONAL TRENDS IN FASHION AND CORSETRY AND THE REASONS THE WOMEN OF HIGH VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN ERAS HAD FOR FOLLOWING THEM.

IN THIS CHAPTER I WILL DISCUSS THOSE WOMEN WHO CHOSE TO BE DIFFERENT AND WHERE THEIR INFLUENCES CAME FROM. I WILL LOOK AT THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT AND ITS INFLUENCES ON DRESS REFORM.

1 MRS BLOOMER AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITE INFLUENCE

THE FIRST WOMAN TO TRY AND CURB THE EXTREMES OF DRESS WAS MRS AMELIA BLOOMER (1857), ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THE FOUNDER OF 'THE LILLY', A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN INCLUDING DRESS REFORM. MRS BLOOMER WAS CREDITED WITH THE PROMOTING A NEW COSTUME WHICH COMPRISED A KNEE LENGTH SKIRT WORN OVER BAGGY TROUSERS.

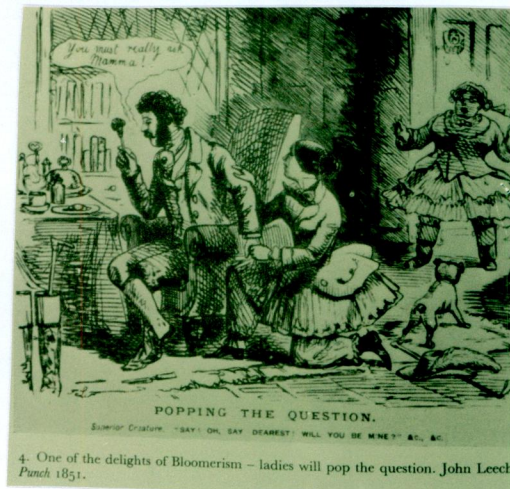
(PIC 21)



HER AIM WAS TO FREE WOMEN FROM THE DISCOMFORTS OF CONVENTIONAL FASHION NOT JUST THE CORSET BUT THE OUTFIT AS A WHOLE. HER DESIGN WAS AN ADVANCE IN THE DIRECTION OF HYGIENE AND FEMALE EMANCIPATION. IT WAS INSPIRED BY TURKISH ENGRAVINGS OF

BEAUTIES IN TURKISH TROUSERS THAT FOLLOWED THE ROMANTIC REBELLIOUS INSPIRATION OF BYRON AND THE FRENCH CONQUEST. TODAY IT WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED OUTRAGEOUS , IN FACT FAIRLY MODEST BUT IN MID NINETEENTH CENTURY IT WAS REGARDED AS HIDEOUS, HORRIFYING, IMMODEST AND MANLY. HER ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE THIS COSTUME TO EUROPE PROVOKED A STORM OF CRITICAL AND AMUSED COMMENT.

(PIC 22).



NOT SURPRISINGLY THIS HOSTILITY CAME MANLY FROM MEN WHO SUSPECTED

A SEXUAL REVOLUTION. THE OUTFIT DID NOT CATCH ON , BUT INTERESTINGLY A VARIATION OF THE STYLE EMERGED AT THE END OF THE CENTURY WHEN CYCLING BECAME A GENERAL PASTIME (PIC 23).

THE FIRST REAL MOVEMENT AWAY FROM CORSETS WAS PRESENTED BY THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD. AMONG THIS GROUP WERE JOHN

MILLAIS, WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT AND DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI .

THE PAINTERS TRIED TO MAKE THEIR OWN COSTUMES UP TO FIT IN

PIC 23

BEARLY IN THE LINE THAT THE OTHER THE
NEEDING INSISTING OF STON AND THE OTHER
TODAY IT WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED OUTCASTS IN FACT EARLY
MOORE BUT IN HIS NINETEENTH CENTURY IT WAS REGARDED AS
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NOT SURPRISINGLY THIS INDUSTRY CAME MAINLY FROM MEN WHO
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THE FIRST REAL MOVEMENT AWAY FROM CLOTHING WAS PRESENTED BY
AND RAPIDLY THE BROKENNESS OF THE FASHION THIS GROUP WERE
MILITARY WHITE AND DANCE DRESS POSSIBLY
THE PAINTERS WERE TO MAKE THEIR OWN CLOTHING TO FIT

PIC 23



WITH WHATEVER ERA THEY WERE TRYING TO DEPICT. THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH RATHER THAN BEAUTY WAS THEIR AIM. THE GROUP HELD AN ADMIRATION FOR THE SOFT, UNRESTRICTING LINES OF MEDIEVAL DRESS.

LOOSE FLOWING GOWNS WHICH WERE UNRESTRICTING AND SLACKLY GIRDLED AT THE WAIST AND OFTEN WITH WIDE SLEEVES BECAME THEIR FASHIONABLE IDEAL. FEMALE FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF THE GROUP BEGAN TO ADOPT THIS FORM OF DRESS FOR EVERYDAY WEAR. WILLIAM MORRIS'S WIFE, JANE WAS PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1865 IN A DRESS THAT WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF DRESSES WORN BY LADIES IN THE AESTHETIC CIRCLES LATER IN THE CENTURY.(PIC 24) IN THIS DRESS THE SLEEVE IS SET LOOSELY BELOW THE SHOULDER AND THE BODICE IS NOT TIGHTLY LACED BUT DRAPED IN FRONT

PIC 24



PIC 24

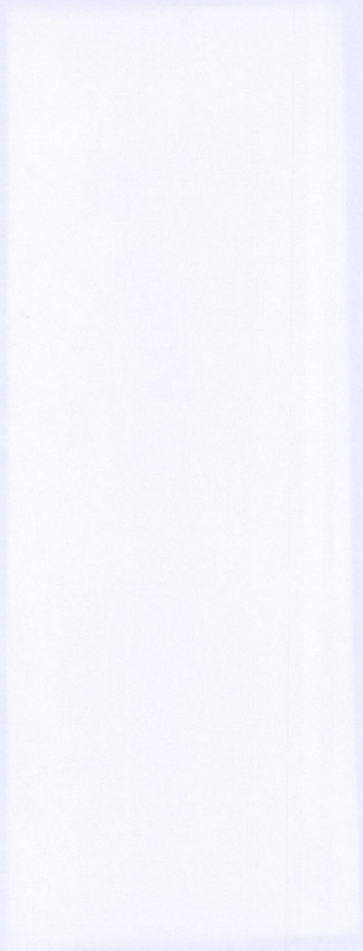


PRE-RAPHAELITE DRESS OR AESTHETIC DRESS DID GET A LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE OVER TIME. AS THE WORK OF THE ORIGINAL PRE-RAPHAELITE BECAME BETTER KNOWN IN THE 1870'S, "A LARGE SECTION OF ENGLISH SOCIETY AT LEAST A SEMI-AESTHETIC DRESS". (R22). OR AS WALTER CRANE WROTE BITTERLY IN 1894

"WE SAW THE FASHIONABLE WORLD AND THE STAGE APING WITH MORE OR LESS GROTESQUE VULGARITY, WHAT IT WAS FAINT TO THINK WERE THE FASHIONS OF THE INNER AND MOST REFINED ARTISTIC CULT"(R23).(PIC 25)

ALTHOUGH THE ORIGINATORS OF THE AESTHETIC DRESS MIGHT HAVE BELIEVED THEIR STYLE OF DRESS WAS OUTSIDE THE WORLD OF FASHION, FOR AWHILE MANY FASHION JOURNALISTS AND ORDINARY

PIC 25



PIC 25



PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT ASPECTS OF AESTHETIC DRESS COULD BE INCORPORATED INTO MAINSTREAM FASHION. ESPECIALLY IN THE 1870'S AND 1880'S WHEN HEALTH ISSUES REGARDING DRESS BEGAN TO BE DISCUSSED, THE AESTHETIC LOOK MUST HAVE BEEN GIVEN CONSIDERATION. ALSO THE FACT THAT IN THE LATE SEVENTIES THE BUSTLE WAS TEMPORARILY OUT OF FASHION AND THE STRAIGHT 'PRINCESS LINE' WAS 'IN' HELPS EXPLAIN WHY THE AESTHETIC ARGUMENT GOT A HEARING. (PIC 26)

HOWEVER FOR THE MAJORITY OF WOMEN AESTHETIC DRESS WAS A LITTLE TOO LEFT-WING. MOST BELIEVED (WHETHER TRUE OR NOT) THAT THE FORM OF DRESS ALSO ENCOMPASSED A FORM OF MANNERS AND A WAY OF THINKING THAT WAS SEPARATE FROM THE NORM. W.GRAHAM ROBINSON



11-11-23

FROM THE THOUGHT THAT ASPECTS OF AESTHETIC TASTE COULD BE
INCORPORATED INTO MAINSTREAM FASHION - ESPECIALLY IN THE
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PRINCIPALLY WAS IN THE HANDS OF A FEW PEOPLE WHO WERE
ARGUMENT NOT A HEARING. (11-11-23)

HOWEVER FOR THE MAJORITY OF WOMEN AESTHETIC LOOK WAS A
TOO LITTLE-KNOWN FACT BECAUSE EITHER TRUE OR NOT THAT
FORM OF PRESS ALSO EMPHASIZED A FORM OF FASHION AND A WAY OF
THINKING THAT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE MAINSTREAM. (11-11-23)

ADMIRER MANY ASPECTS OF THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT BUT HE WAS NOT
UNAWARE OF ITS AMUSING ASPECTS.

PIC 26

"

15. 'La Balancoire', detail 1876. Pierre
Auguste Renoir, Paris, Jeu de Paume.
The long 'princess' line, fashionable
between the disappearance of the original
crinoline of the early '70s, and the
appearance of the new crinoline in the
early '80s

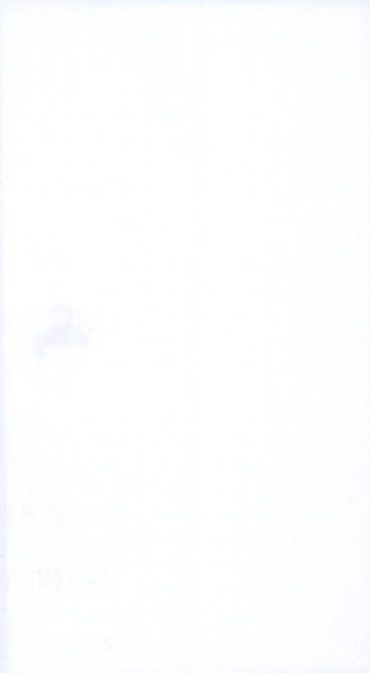


DETERMINED AT ALL HAZARDS TO BE 'ARTISTS', WOMEN ARRAYED
THEMSELVES IN AMAZING GARMENTS.....THEIR DESHEVELLED
HAIR STREAMED DOWN THEIR BACKS BY A PROJECTION OF THEIR
EXTRAORDINARY IMITATIVE GIFT THEIR FACES GREW

THIN AND CADAVEROUS.....ALL THE WOMEN AT ONCE SAW
THEMSELVES AS WAN LILLIES AND - WELL IT IS NOT A STYLE
BECOMING TO EVERYBODY" (R24)

(PIC 27).





ALSO AESTHETIC DRESS HAD A REPUTATION OF BEING FOR PLAIN WOMEN. MRS HAWEIS DID NOT LIKE AESTHETIC DRESS , PREFERRING CONVENTIONAL FASHION BECAUSE IN HER OPINION IT WAS MORE CONDUCIVE TO GOOD LOOKS. "IF PRETTY" SHE ARGUED "YOU CAN DO AS YOU LIKE.....IF PLAIN, YOU CANNOT.....YOU MUST ADOPT QUAINTESS OF GARB". SHE ALSO DESCRIBED THE PRE-RAPHAELITES AS "THE PLAIN GIRLS BEST FRIENDS".

GENERALLY THOSE WOMEN WHO WORE AESTHETIC DRESS BELIEVED THAT A BEAUTIFUL DRESS SHOULD NOT CONTRADICT THE NATURAL FORM OF THE HUMAN FRAME. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES IN A GRACEFUL FIGURE WAS THE WAIST. THEIR FIRST AIM WAS TO HAVE 'AN ANTIQUE' WAIST OR A NATURAL ONE.

(PIC 28)





SOME STILL WORE THE CORSET , BUT WORE IT LOOSE AND IN THE NATURAL POSITION .FOR

ITS TIME THIS WAS A MORE DRAMATIC AND DRASTIC CHALLENGE TO FASHION THAN ANY OTHER IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. IT BROKE AWAY FROM THE FASHIONABLE FIGURE AND THE ACCEPTED PANOPLY OF UNDERWEAR OF THE TIME.

.....

2 THE GRECIAN INFLUENCE

IN GENERAL, THE VICTORIANS LED QUITE AN UNHEALTHY LIFESTYLE. IN THE CITIES THERE WAS VERY LITTLE EMPHASIS ON SPORT OR PHYSICAL EXERCISE, EXCEPT PERHAPS THE UPPER CLASSES WHO OFTEN HAD COUNTRY DWELLINGS AND PURSUED SPORTS LIKE RIDING AND CROQUET. THIS SEDENTARY WAY OF LIFE RESULTED IN PEOPLE THAT WERE EITHER TOO FAT OR TOO THIN. EVEN IF THE VICTORIAN IDEAL OF BEAUTY WAS FAIRLY RIGID WITH ALL ITS COMPLICATED ACCESSORIES IT DID SERVE ITS PURPOSE IN CONCEALING PHYSICAL FLAWS AND SIGNS OF AGE, THEREFORE MAKING THE WOMEN FEEL MORE ATTRACTIVE.

THE VICTORIAN WOMAN WAS MUCH CONCERNED WITH THE CONCEALMENT OF PHYSICAL 'FLAWS'. MRS HAWEIS STATED

"WE ARE NOT LIKE THE GREEKS WHO HAVE MADE THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE BODY THEIR DEAREST STUDY AND NOT HAVING REDUCED

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OUR SUPERFLUOUS FAT AND CULTIVATED OUR MUSCLES INTO
PERFECTION WE OUGHT TO BE CAREFUL HOW WE EXPOSE THEM" (R

NOT EVERYONE WAS IN FAVOUR OF ARTIFICIAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE
FIGURE, FOR EXAMPLE THE AESTHETES. CERTAIN GROUPS OF WOMEN
WERE BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNHAPPY WITH THEIR SITUATION IN
SOCIETY AND WITH THEIR MODE OF DRESS WHICH THEY CONSIDERED TO
BE OPPRESSIVE AND IRRATIONAL. ESPECIALLY FROM THE 1880'S
ONWARDS DRESS REFORM BECAME AN ISSUE OF HEATED DEBATE. THERE
WERE MANY DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON DRESS REFORM. SOME
CONSIDERED REFORM ON THE GROUNDS OF EMANCIPATION, SOME
THOUGHT THAT HEALTH WAS MOST IMPORTANT AND SOME THOUGHT DRESS
SHOULD BE REFORMED FOR SOCIAL REASONS OR MORAL REASONS.

FEMINIST DRESS REFORMERS HAD THREE MAIN AREAS OF ARGUMENT,
ITS UNHEALTHINESS, ITS IMMODESTY AND IMPLICIT INCITEMENT TO
IMMORALITY AND ITS ROLE IN RESTRICTING WOMEN PHYSICALLY AND
PSYCHOLOGICALLY. ANTI FEMINIST DRESS REFORMERS INCLUDING MANY
DOCTORS BELIEVED DRESS WAS BOTH UNHEALTHY AND IMMORAL BUT
WERE IN FAVOUR OF RESTRICTING A WOMEN'S ROLE TO THE HOME.
THEY REGARDED BOTH THEIR EDUCATED AND THEIR FASHIONABLE LADIES
AS MISFITS.

THERE WAS ANOTHER GROUP WHO WERE TIRED OF BEING 'SLAVES TO
FASHION'. THEY SAW THE COSTUME OF THE GREEKS WHICH WAS LOOSE
AND FLOWING AS AN APPROPRIATE ATTIRE AND BEGAN STEPS TO
POPULARISE IT AS 'MAINSTREAM FASHION'. AT THE SAME TIME IN
THE 1870'S AND 1880'S THERE WAS A NEW CLASSICAL AND GREEK

OUR CHURCH NOW HAS ABOUT 1,000 MEMBERS AND
PERFECTED WE WANT TO BE CAPABLE HOW WE EXPECT TO BE

NOT EVERYONE WAS IN FAVOR OF AN OFFICIAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE
FLOOR FOR EXAMPLE THE ASSOCIATION OF CERTAIN GROUPS OF WOMEN
WENT BECOMING INTERESTING IN HISTORY WITH THE CITY OF NEW
SOCIETY AND WITH THEIR ROOM OF GREEN WITH THEY GAVE OTHER TO
BE OPERATIVE AND INFLUENTIAL IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
ONWARDS DRESS FASHION BECAME AN ISSUE OF PLATED DRESSING THAT
WENT MANY DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AND DRESS FASHION IN SOME
CONSIDERED A RETURN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN
THOUGHT THAT HEARTY WAS MOST INTERESTING AND COME THOUGHT DRESS
SHOW OF BE RETURNED FOR SOCIAL REASONS OR MORAL REASONS

FEMINIST DRESS REPORTS HAD THREE MAIN ASPECTS OF ASSUMPTION
THE FASHION DESIGNER'S IMMUNITY AND HIS ASSUMPTION TO
IMMUNITY AND HIS GOAL IN RESISTANCE WHEN PHYSICALLY AND
PSYCHOLOGICALLY WITH FEMINIST DRESS REPORTS ASSUMPTION THAT
DOCTORS AT HEAVY DRESS WAS BOTH EMERGENCY AND TEMPORAL BUT
WERE IN FAVOR OF RESISTING A WOMAN'S BODY TO THE BODY
THEY REJECTED BOTH THEIR EDUCATED AND THEIR FASHIONABLE CLOTHES
A RESISTANCE

THERE WAS ANOTHER WOMAN WHO WAS THE FIRST BEING HELD TO
FASHION TO HAVE THE LOOKING OF THE STREET WHICH WAS A LOOK
NO CLOTHING AS AN APPROPRIATE ATTIRE AND BEING HELD TO
TO CLOTHING IT AS FASHIONABLE FASHION THAT WAS THE
HE LOOKED AND THERE WAS A NEW LOOK AS FASHION BEING

REVIVAL, WHICH WAS REFLECTED IN AN INCREASED INTEREST IN PAINTING ON CLASSICAL THEMES.

(PIC 29)



16. (above left) Following the lines of the figure, an apparently 'natural' fashion in dress in which it was difficult to move. From *The Art of Dress* by Mrs Haweis, 1878



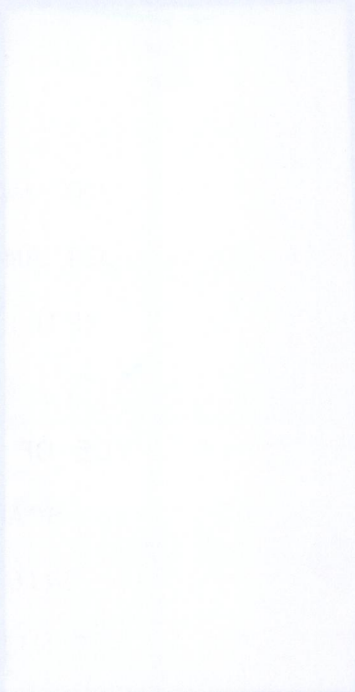
THE INTEREST SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY EXPRESSED FIRST AT A CONGRESS OF THE COUNCIL OF GERMAN WOMEN HELD IN STUTTGART IN 1868. THE IDEALS OF THIS MOTION WERE CHERISHED BOTH IN ENGLAND AND GERMANY . THE TERMS WERE

" (A) THAT NOTHING THAT HAS ALREADY PROVED TO BE BEAUTIFUL AND CONVENIENT TO BE DECLARED OLD FASHIONED OR OUT OF DATE .

(B) NOTHING TO BE ADOPTED THAT DOES NOT MEET DEMANDS OF TASTE AND SUITABILITY.

(C) TO HOLD ALOOF FROM GARMENTS AND ARTICLES OF TOILET THAT ARE INJURIOUS TO HEALTH, AND THAT WOMEN SHOULD ADOPT

LEVEL 4 WHICH WAS OFFERED IN THE DISCOUNT MARKET IN
MAINTAINING THE CLASSICAL THEORY
IN 1970



THE INTEREST SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN OFFERED IN THE FIRST
A CONCEPT OF THE CONCEPT OF BEING WORK WITH THE INTEREST
1980 THE TREASURY THIS MONTH WERE BEING BORN IN
INVEST AND DEMAND THE FIRST WEEK
AT THAT TIME THAT WAS A HEAVY PRODUCTION
MEASUREMENT AND INVESTMENT TO BE OFFERED TO THE
OUT OF DATE
INVESTMENT TO BE OFFERED TO THE FIRST WEEK
THE FIRST WEEK
TO BE OFFERED TO THE FIRST WEEK
THE FIRST WEEK

A STYLE OF DRESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR HUSBANDS
AND FATHERS INCOMES." (R27)

INTEREST WAS TAKEN IN A NUMBER OF THE FASHION MAGAZINES TO
THIS EFFORT OF REFORM. AT LEAST IN THE MODIFIED VERSIONS OF
THE GRECIAN DRESS. PRAISE WAS GIVEN TO THOSE "MAKING EARNEST
EFFORTS TO REVIVE A PURE TASTE IN DRESS AND TO AWAKEN THAT
APPRECIATION OF TRUE BEAUTY WHICH SEEMS TO BE LOST AMONGST US
(R).SO THERE WAS NO INDUCEMENT TO TIGHT-LACING."(PIC) (R28)

SOCIETY STILL HOWEVER REMEMBERED THE EMPIRE STYLE OF THE EARLY
NINETEENTH CENTURY AS BEING TOO LOOSE FITTING, SCANTILY AND
IMMODEST. THIS FORM OF COSTUME HAD SIMILAR ORIGINS BEING
MODELLED ON GRAECO-ROMAN COSTUME. HENCE WAS MET WITH SIMILAR
REACTION. PEOPLE WERE WORRIED THAT IT WAS TOO REVEALING. MRS
GRUNDY WAS WORRIED THAT "GRECIAN DRAPERY.....DISPLAYS THE
FORM" APPRECIABLY MORE THAN EVEN TIGHT SKIRTS OF CONVENTIONAL
FASHIONS. (ENGLISHWOMANS DOMESTIC MAGAZINE 1871) (R29). EVEN
MRS HAWES REJECTED GREEK DRESS AS BEING TOO REVEALING:

"THE HUMAN BODY UNCOVERED IS NOT NECESSARILY A SHOCKING
THING. BUT WHAT WAS HARMLESS IN THE EARLY GREEKS WOULD
BE IMPOSSIBLE IN NATIONS WHO HAVE LOST TO GREAT EXTENT
THE SIMPLE INSTINCT OF NATURAL BEAUTY, WHILST THEY HAVE
GROWN ABNORMALLY SELF-CONSCIOUS AND REFLECTIVE "(R30)

A style of dress, a program, with their hands

and taking money from them

It was taken into a number of the fashion magazines to
this point of view, at least in the middle of the
the British press, there was a view that those making fashion

efforts to revive a pure taste in dress and to make a
revelation of the reality which seems to be lost among
the fashion world was not intended to enlighten the public

For the style, however, remembered the English style of the
nineteenth century, at least for the middle class, and
the fashion of the time had been as the English style

modeled on Greek Roman costume, which was not without
reaction. People were worried that it was a return to
the Greek world, that it was a return to the Greek world

and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world
and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world
and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world

and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world
and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world
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and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world
and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world
and, especially, that it was a return to the Greek world

PIC 30



3 FASHION VIEWS FROM FEMINISTS AND ANTI- FEMINISTS

A GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONSIDERED DRESS REFORM A TOP PRIORITY IN THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN. FEMINIST DRESS REFORMERS BELIEVED THAT

"REFORMED DRESS WOULD CHANGE THE WHOLE POSITION IN SOCIETY. FREE FROM THE THRALLDOM OF MALE SEXUAL DEMANDS AND FROM SOCIALLY CONDITIONED FEMALE VANITY".

WOMEN WOULD

"ATTAIN HEALTH AND AND COMPETE EQUALLY WITH MEN IN ALL ACTIVITIES" (R31). ANTI FEMINISTS BELIEVED THAT DRESS WOULD MAKE WOMEN HEALTHIER AND MORE 'NATURAL ' MOTHERS (R32)

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WAS BY NO MEANS A MOVEMENT FOR GREATER



SEXUAL FREEDOM, BUT RATHER IN PART AN ATTEMPT TO EXTEND AND COMPOUND A RIGID SEXUAL MORALITY TO INCLUDE MEN AS MRS PANKHURSTS' FAMOUS SLOGAN ENCAPSULATED:

"VOTES FOR WOMEN AND CHASTITY FOR MEN" (R33).

SYMPATHETIC MODERN ACCOUNTS TEND TO DESCRIBE FEMINIST HOSTILITY TOWARD SEXUALITY IN TERMS OF WOMEN GAINING GREATER PERSONAL FREEDOM AND CONTROL OVER THEIR BODY AND ITS REPRODUCTIVE FUNCTIONS AND WITH EFFORTS TO KEEP FROM BEING CONSIDERED OR TREATED AS A SEX OBJECT.

ALSO STRANGELY ENOUGH MOST FEMINISTS ACCEPTED THE VERY 'VICTORIAN' IDEA THAT MEN HAD A STRONGER SEX DRIVE THAN WOMEN MOST SEEMED TO REJECT BIRTH CONTROL AS 'IMMORAL' AND INSTEAD SOUGHT TO CURB MEN'S SEXUAL DESIRES AS A MEANS OF EQUALITY.

THERE SEEMED TWO MAIN DIRECTIONS IN FEMINIST DRESS REFORM. ONE GROUP BELIEVED THAT THE QUESTION OF DRESS REFORM WAS A VERY MINOR ISSUE. THEY TENDED TO WEAR ORDINARY FASHIONABLE DRESS AS A WAY OF EMPHASIZING THEIR RESPECTABILITY AND SHOWING THAT THEY WERE NOT ATTEMPTING TO BLUR ALL DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE SEXES. THE GROUP WHO WERE IN FAVOUR OF FREE REFORM WERE OFTEN OPPOSED TO FASHIONS THAT INCREASED WOMEN'S SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS WHICH LIMITED THEIR APPEAL FOR MANY (PIC 31).

REFORM WERE OFTEN OPPOSED TO FASHIONS THAT INCREASED WOMEN'S SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS WHICH LIMITED THEIR APPEAL FOR MANY

(PIC 31).



25. Meeting in the Hanover rooms, 1874. Rhoda Garrett, artist cousin of Millicent Fawcett, is speaking. Seated beside her is John Stuart Mill.

BY THE END OF THE SIXTIES FEMALE EMANCIPATION WAS BEING SERIOUSLY DISCUSSED. JOHN STUART MILL WAS ELECTED PARLIAMENTARY MEMBER FOR WESTMINISTER IN 1865 AND IN 1867 HE PROPOSED A REFORM BILL WHICH WOULD REPLACE THE WORD 'MAN' WITH THE WORD 'MANKIND' (MEN AND WOMEN). BUT THIS WAS DISCARDED IN TIME TO PREVENT SUCH A HUGE CHANGE. LATER IN 1887 HE PROPOSED THAT HOUSEHOLDERS THAT WERE SINGLE (SPINSTERS) OR WIDOWS SHOULD HAVE THE VOTE. IT WAS ALSO DEFEATED BUT IT GOT STRONG SUPPORT ON BOTH LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE SIDES.

ALBION WERE OFFERED TO FASHION THAT IMPROVED WOMEN'S
SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS WHICH LIMITED THEIR APPEAL FOR MANY



BY THE END OF THE SIXTIES FEMALE EMANCIPATION WAS BEING
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PARLIAMENTARY MEMBER FOR WESTMINSTER IN 1805 AND IN 1806
PROPOSED A REFORM BILL WHICH WOULD REPLACE THE WORD MAN WITH
THE WORD MAN AND WOMEN. BUT THIS WAS CLOSING IN
TIME TO PREVENT SUCH A HUGE CHANGE. IN 1831 HE PROPOSED
THAT HOUSEHOLDS THAT WERE SINGLE-RESPONSIBLE OR WIDOWS
SHOULD HAVE THE VOTE. IT WAS ALSO BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD
SUPPORT ON BOTH LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE SIDES.

ONE AREA WHICH DID IMPROVE WAS FEMALE EDUCATION. UNIVERSITIES WITH SOME RESERVATIONS WELCOMED FEMALE STUDENTS. IN A CAMPAIGN HELD TO TAKE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMS, MRS EMILY DAVIS MADE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOME WELL DRESSED AND GOOD LOOKING YOUNG WOMEN TO FILL UP THE FRONT ROW. THERE WAS GREAT ANXIETY WHEN WOMEN WERE FIRST ADMITTED TO OXFORD THAT THEY SHOULD DRESS CAREFULLY AND HAVE GOOD MANNERS. ALSO THE RULES OF CHAPERONAGE WERE FOLLOWED AS STRICTLY AS IN THE CONVENTIONAL SOCIETY OF THE TIME.

IN THE 1870'S WOMEN WERE UNDERTAKING PIONEER ACTIVITY OF ADDRESSING PUBLIC MEETINGS ALL OVER BRITAIN IN SUPPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTE FOR WOMEN. IT WAS NOTED THAT " WHEN AN AUDIENCE EXPECTED TO FIND A FIERCE AND

STRINGENT VIRAGO AND FOUND INSTEAD A YOUNG LADY WHOSE VOICE DRESS AND MANOR WERE NOT ONLY QUIET BUT EXQUISITE, THEN THEY INDEED WERE STARTLED TO ATTENTION". AS IT WAS 'THIS NEW WOMAN' , INTERESTED IN POLITICS EDUCATION AND EQUALITY CAME UP AGAINST STRONG OPPOSITION AND RIDICULE. THEY DID NOT WISH TO ENCOURAGE THIS BY LOOKING FREAKISH IN DRESS. OPPOSITION TO THIS STRONG MINDED WOMAN IS ILLUSTRATED BY JOKES AT HER EXPENSE IN 'PUNCH'. THEY CULTIVATED A LOOK FOR HER WITH SEVERE DRESS IN DARK COLOURS WITH MANNISH QUALITIES AND SHORT CROPPED HAIR (PIC 32)

SECTION OF BOTH THE FEMINIST AND THE ANTI-FEMINIST DRESS REFORMERS HATED THE FACT THAT WOMEN FOLLOWED FASHION. FASHION

ONE AREA WHICH DID IMPROVE WAS THE
INTERESTED WITH CONSERVATION. IN THE
A CAMPAIGN HELD TO TAKE CARE OF THE
WAS ONLY A MASS SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE
PROCEEDED AND GOOD LOOKING WOMEN TO THE FRONT ROW
HERE WAS GREAT ANXIETY WHEN WOMEN WERE FIRST ADMITTED TO
ORDERED THAT THEY SHOULD DRESS CAREFULLY AND HAVE A
ALONG THE CURVE OF THE BODY. THE WOMEN WERE FIRST ADMITTED TO
THE CONVENTION. ABOUT THE TIME

IN THE 1920S WOMEN WERE PROMPTLY REJECTED. IN THE
ADDRESSING PUBLIC MEETINGS AND ONLY BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY FOR WOMEN. IT WAS NOT THAT WHEN A
WOMAN ENTERED TO SPEAK AT A MEETING AND

STAINLESS STEEL AND TUBES. IN THE 1920S WOMEN WERE
DRESS AND RACE WERE NOT ONLY NOT ADMITTED TO THE
INDICATED WERE STABLE TO ATTENTION. IT WAS NOT THAT
WOMAN. INTERESTED IN THE EDUCATION AND ABOUT THE
AGAINST WOMEN. POSITION AND ABOUT THE. THEY DID NOT
ENCOURAGE THIS BY LOOKING. MEETING IN THE 1920S. BUT
THIS STRONG WOMEN. IT WAS NOT THAT BY EXIST AT THE
EXPERIENCE. WOMEN. THEY WERE NOT ADMITTED TO THE
DRESS. IN THE 1920S WOMEN WERE NOT ONLY NOT ADMITTED TO THE
HAIR (1920S).
WOMEN. THE CONVENTION. WOMEN. THE CONVENTION. WOMEN.
STAINLESS STEEL AND TUBES. IN THE 1920S WOMEN WERE

PIC 32



WAS CONSIDERED AN EVIL WHOSE DEPRIVED FOLLOWERS WERE THREATENED WITH ALL KINDS OF DISEASE AND RUINATIONS. HOWEVER THE CONCLUSIONS THEY DREW FROM THIS WERE DIFFERENT. IF WOMEN WOULD ONLY

"DISCARD ALL PROMINENT DEVICES TO DISTINGUISH SEX THEY WOULD TAKE ONE OF THE MOST EFFICIENT STEPS TOWARD THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN" (R34) DECLARED ON AMERICAN DRESS REFORMER.

A FRENCH FEMINIST MADELINE PELLETIER SAID WOMEN SHOULD ADOPT MASCULINE ATTIRE, WHILE CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON ADVOCATED ASEXUAL CLOTHING AND ANNOUNCED IN THE 1880'S THAT "ALL CLOTHES WERE PROVOCATIVE AND THAT NUDITY WOULD ENCOURAGE HIGHER MORALITY" (R35).



HOWEVER THESE EXTREME IDEAS ONLY SERVED TO PROVOKE EVEN MORE RIDICULE TOWARDS THE FEMINISTS. IN THE 1880'S THE IDEA OF NUDITY OR MULTI-SEX CLOTHES WAS ACTUALLY QUIET A FAR REACHING ONE CONSIDERING IT TOOK UNTIL ABOUT THE NINETEEN SEVENTIES BEFORE IT WAS ACCEPTED.

"MEN CANNOT RESPECT US , OR ACCORD US DUE CONSIDERATIONS SO LONG AS WE BEHAVE SO FOOLISHLY IN THE MATTER OF OUR GARMENTURE. IF MEN WERE TO SKIP ABOUT IN THIS STYLE FROM ABSURDITY TO ABSURDITY DOTTING THEMSELVES OVER WITH ONE IRRELEVANCY AFTER ANOTHER IN THE SHAPE OF HIDEOUS HUMPS FIRST IN ONE PLACE THEN IN ANOTHER , WHAT WOULD WE THINK OF THEM? COULD WE ACCORD THEM ANY RESPECT WHATSOEVER? THEY WOULD NOT LONG HOLD THE SUPERIOR POSITION THAT IS NOW THEIRS IN THE POLITICAL WORLD. THEY WOULD BE ON OUR OWN LEVEL OF INCAPACITY AND SILLINESS"

(R36)

.....

4 IN INFLUENCE OF SPORTS ON DRESS REFORM, PARTICULARLY THE BICYCLE

ANTI-FEMINISTS RECOGNIZED ALSO DRESS NEEDED REFORM BUT THEIR CONCERN WAS ABOUT HEALTH. THEY STILL REGARDED WOMEN AS TOO FRAIL, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY TO ENDURE THE EXTRA RESPONSIBILITY OF LIFE OUTSIDE THE HOME. THE DREAM-WOMAN OF

THE TIME WAS STILL SOFT -SPOKEN AND SELFLESS AND AS THESE WERE IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN VIRTUES THEY WERE HARD TO SHIFT.

THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE OF ALL IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S DRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CAME AS OFTEN HAPPENS IN HISTORY NOT BY THE CONCENTRATED CONSCIOUS EFFORTS OF POLITICAL , SOCIAL OR HEALTH REFORMERS BUT BY SOMETHING ELSE THAT ARRIVED RIGHT OUT OF THE BLUE. IT WAS THE BICYCLE. IN 1885 THE SAFETY BICYCLE WAS INTRODUCED AND BY THE EARLY NINETIES WOMEN HAD TAKEN UP CYCLING WITH FERVOUR. BLOOMERS AND VARIOUS STYLES OF DIVIDED SKIRTS AND KNICKERBOCKERS NATURALLY SPRANG INTO FASHION FOR SPORT AT LEAST, DRESS WAS BECOMING RATIONAL THOUGH SLOWLY. THE COMBINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF SPORT AND THE GREATER NUMBERS OF WOMEN SEEKING EMPLOYMENT, MAINLY IN OFFICES AND TEACHING WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HUGE SPEED UP OF REFORM IN THE AREA OF DRESS.

IN 1893 ADA S. BALLIN IN 'HEALTH AND BEAUTY IN DRESS' ADVISED THAT WOMEN CYCLISTS SHOULD WEAR "NEAT DARK CLOTH COSTUMES LINED WITH WOOLEN MATERIAL" AND THE IDEAL WAS OF WEARING THEM IS WOOLLEN COMBINATIONS NEXT TO THE SKIN, A FLANNELL BODY (BODICE) FITTING CLOSELY TO THE FIGURE TO TAKE THE PLACE OF STAYS, AND BUTTONED TO THIS A PAIR OF KNICKERBOCKERS OR TROUSERS OF CLOTH TO MATCH THE DRESS"

WHILE POPULARITY INCREASED IN UNDERWEAR FROM THE LATE SEVENTIES ON, THERE WAS A WHOLE MOVEMENT AWAY FROM HIGH FASHION AND THE CORSET HAPPENING ALSO. IT SEEMED THAT WHEN

STRONG OPINIONS WERE VOICED ABOUT ASPECTS OF FASHION THEY WERE USUALLY TWO SIDED.

WHILE SOME WOMEN USED AN OVERTLY SEXUAL IMAGE FOR LIBERATION THERE WAS ALSO A SECTION WHO BELIEVED NON-CONSTRICTING GARMENTS TO BE A MARK OF EMANCIPATION AND AESTHETICS. THE REFORMERS RADICAL NEW STYLES OF DRESS WERE NEVER ACCEPTED INTO MAINSTREAM FASHION BECAUSE OF THE HUGE CHANGE IN STYLES SO QUICKLY. PEOPLE FELT MORE COMFORTABLE WITH SLOW CHANGES THAT DID NOT SUGGEST BLATANT REBELLION AGAINST A SOCIETY.

THERE WERE MANY DIFFERENT ARGUMENTS ON WHAT POSITION WOMEN SHOULD HAVE , NOW THAT WOMEN HAD CERTAIN RIGHTS. SECTIONS OF WOMEN CHOOSE TO REFLECT THEIR PARTICULAR STAND-POINT IN THE WAY THEY DRESSED, WHETHER THEY WERE TRADITIONALLY FASHIONABLE FEMINISTS WITH TIGHT CORSETS OR CORSET HATING FEMINISTS , OR ANTI-FEMINISTS ALTOGETHER. THE CHANGES NOT SOLELY THROUGH ARGUMENT OR DISCUSSION BUT EVOLUTION AND NECESSITY IE. SPORT AND WOMENS CHANGING ROLE AND MORE EVENLY DISTRIBUTED WEALTH.
(PIC 33)

PIC 33





IN MY RESEARCH I HAVE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO ACQUIRE A DRESS OF THE HIGH VICTORIAN PERIOD. THERE ARE SEVEN SURVIVING PARTS BELONGING TO THIS OUTFIT, SIX BODICES AND ONE SKIRT.

AND SURPRISINGLY ENOUGH STILL IN VERY GOOD CONDITION. ALL THE GARMENTS ARE BLACK, APART FROM TWO WITH , CREAM TRIMMINGS AND ONE LIGHT LACE NEGLIGEE TYPE BODICE WHICH IS COMPLETELY CREAM. THIS LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT THE OUTFIT WAS FOR MOURNING PURPOSES AND DUE TO THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF DETAIL IN THE BODICES I WOULD DETERMINE THEY WERE OWNED BY A FAIRLY WEALTHY UPPER CLASS WOMAN. ALSO THEY MOST LIKELY BELONGED TO THE SAME WOMAN BECAUSE THE SIX BODICES ARE ALMOST THE SAME SIZE.

THROUGH MY RESEARCH I HAVE FOUND THAT THE GARMENTS WERE IN FASHION IN THE EARLY 1900'S. I HAVE COME TO THIS STATE BECAUSE AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME THE LEG-O-MUTTON SLEEVES THAT HAD BEEN IN FASHION PREVIOUSLY, (PIC 34 & 35). HAD REDUCED TO NORMAL SIZE AGAIN . IN FACT THE STYLE OF THE EARLY 1900'S WAS QUITE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE EARLY 1890'S BEFORE THE VERY 'EDWARDIAN ' SLEEVE BECAME FASHIONABLE AND AFTER THE BUSTLE. FROM ABOUT 1890 ON THE EMPHASIS HAD CHANGED FROM SKIRT TO BODICE.

THE COMPLEX DRAPERY OF EARLIER YEARS WAS NOW MUCH LESS OF A FOCAL POINT AS CAN BE SEEN FROM (PIC 36A & 36B). THE CONSTRUCTION IS SIMPLE ON MY SKIRT AND THE TRIMMING NOT AS ELABORATE AS BEFORE. (PIC 37) ANOTHER IMPORTANT FEATURE OF

IN MY RESEARCH I HAVE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO ACQUIRE A GREAT
MANY VICTIMIAN PERIOD - THERE ARE SEVEN SURVIVING PARTS
TO THIS PERIOD, SIX BOOKS AND ONE SET
AND A REPLY TO THE FIRST IN VERY GOOD CONDITION. ALL THE
ELEMENTS ARE BACK, AS FAR FROM TWO WITH A CLEAN FINISH AND
ONE LEFT IN THE FIRST TWO BOOKS WHICH IS COMPLETELY
THESE LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT THE OUTLET WAS THE MAIN
PURPOSE AND ONE OF THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF THE
BOOKS I WOULD BE ASKING THEY WERE GIVEN BY A FAMILY MEMBER
UPPER CLASS WOMAN, ALSO THEY WERE LIKELY BELONGED TO THE
WOMAN BECAUSE THE SIX BOOKS ARE ALMOST THE SAME.

THROUGH MY RESEARCH I HAVE FOUND THAT THE OUTLET WAS
FASHION IN THE EARLY PERIOD - I HAVE COME TO THE
BECAUSE AT THIS EARLY PERIOD THE OUTLET WAS
HAD BEEN IN FASHION PREVIOUSLY IN A 19th
TO NORMAL SIZE AGAIN - IN THE PERIOD OF THE EARLY PERIOD
HAS ONE STYLAR TO THAT OF THE EARLY PERIOD AND I BELIEVE THE
REASON FOR THIS BECAUSE FASHIONABLE AND AFTER THE PERIOD
FROM ABOUT 1850 ON THE FASHION HAS CHANGED FROM SKIRT
BOOKS.

THE COMPLEX CHARTER OF EARLY YEARS HAS NOW BEEN
THE POINT AS THE PERIOD PERIOD IS
CONSTRUCTED ON THE PERIOD PERIOD AND
AS A RESULT OF THE PERIOD PERIOD.

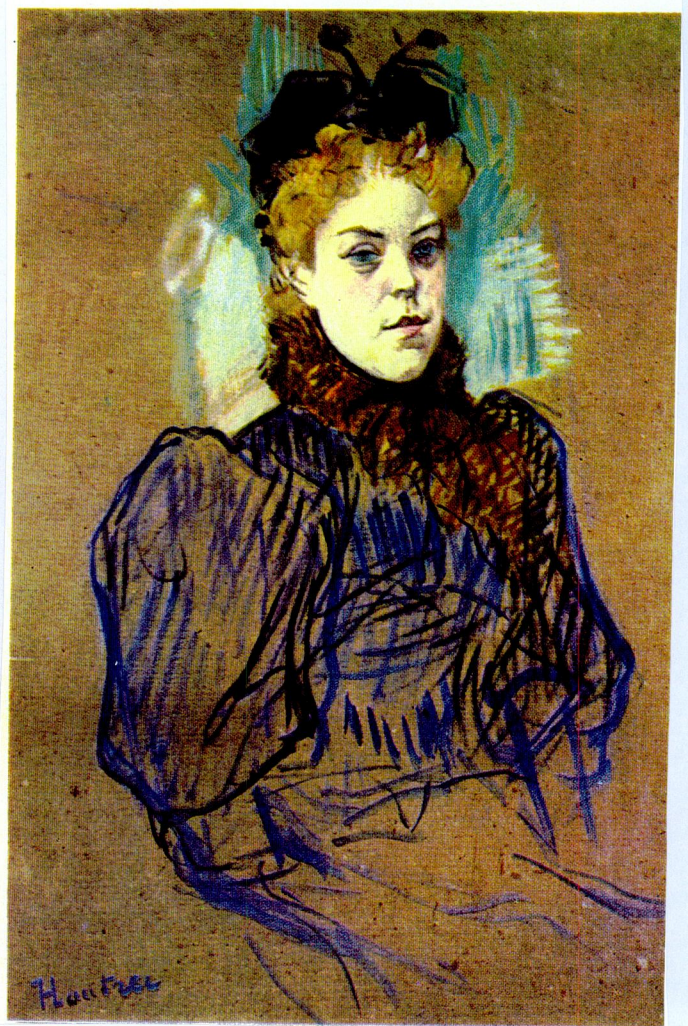
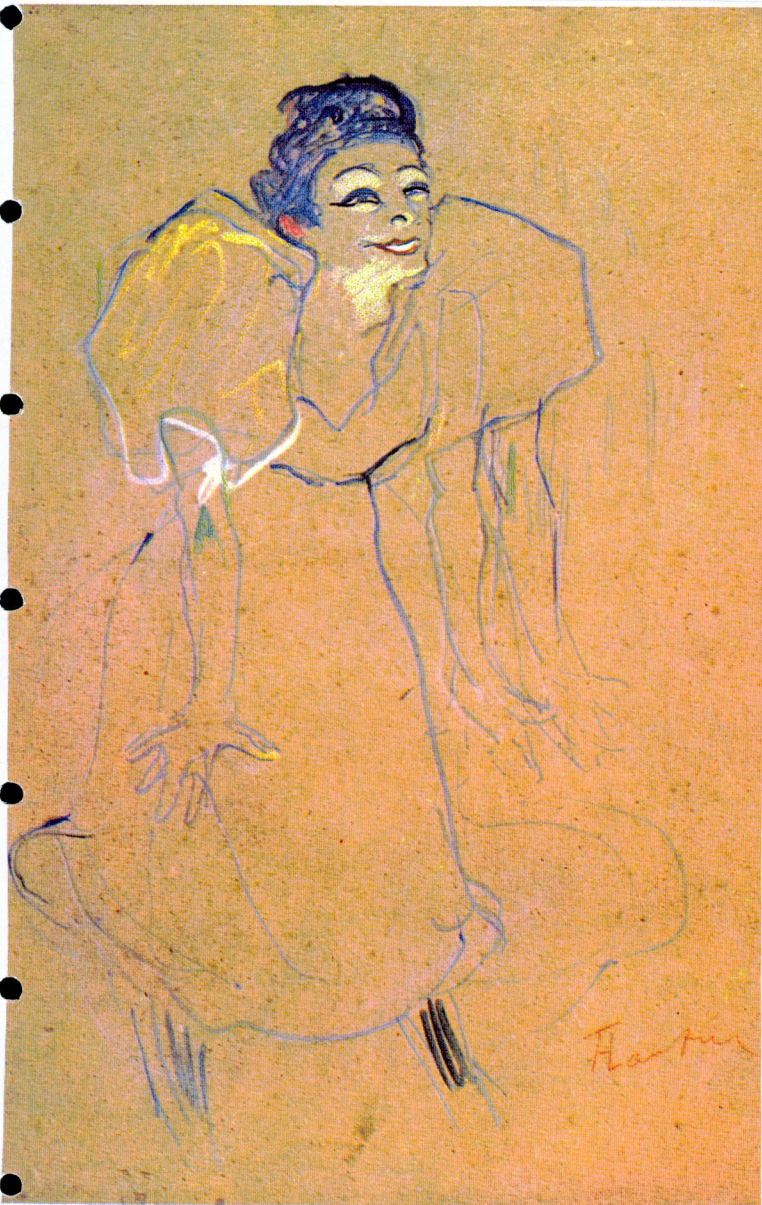
CHAPTER 4
EXAMINING VICTORIAN DRESS

CHAPTER 4
EXAMINING VICTORIAN DRESS

THIS TIME WAS THE ABSENCE OF SKIRT SUPPORT, SUCH AS THE BUSTLE OR STEELS. SKIRTS FITTED CLOSELY AT THE WAIST AND FULLNESS WAS CONCENTRATED AT THE BACK WITH THE AID OF PETTICOATS.

PIC 34 & 35

42
Mademoiselle
Polaire.
1895.

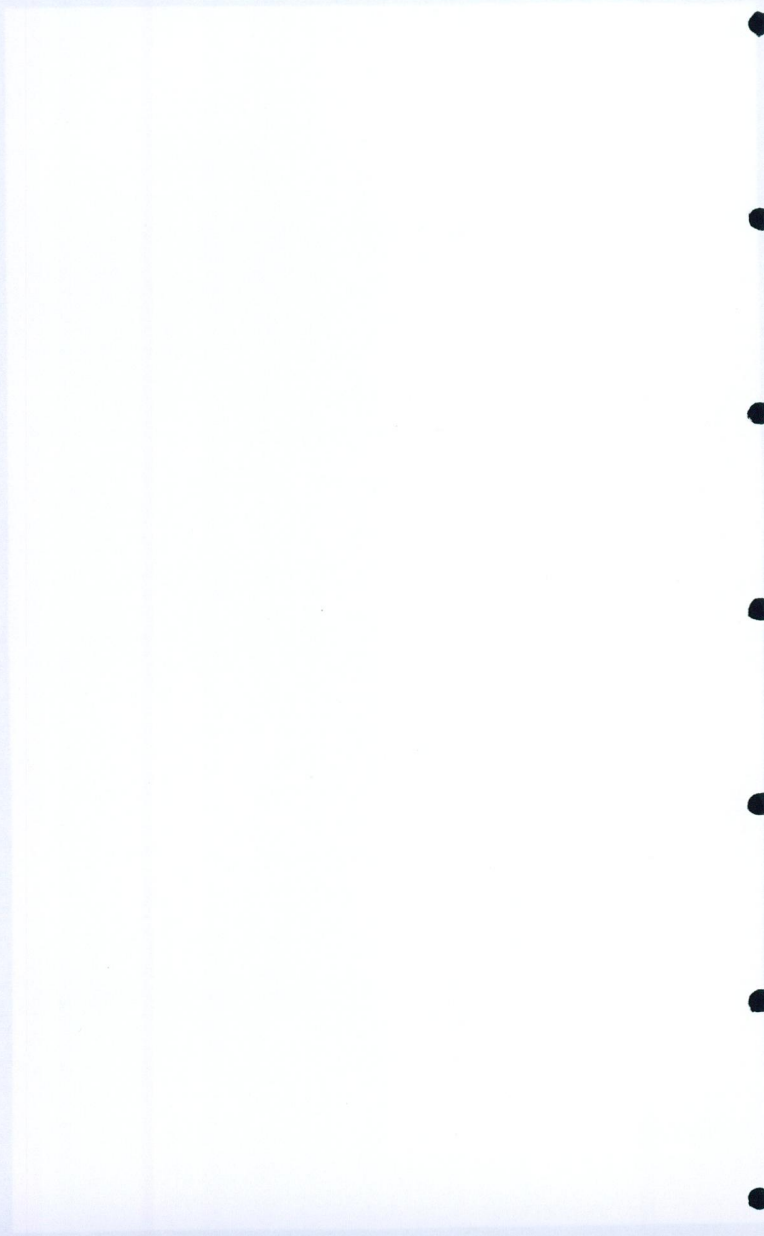


43
May Milton.
1895.

THIS TIME WAS THE ABSENCE OF SILENT SUPPORT, SUCH AS THE
BUSTLE OR SKIRT, WHICH LITTED CLOSELY AT THE WAIST AND
FOLLOWS WAS CONCENTRATED AT THE BACK WITH THE AID OF

RETTICONS

OTC 14 8 30



PIC36A

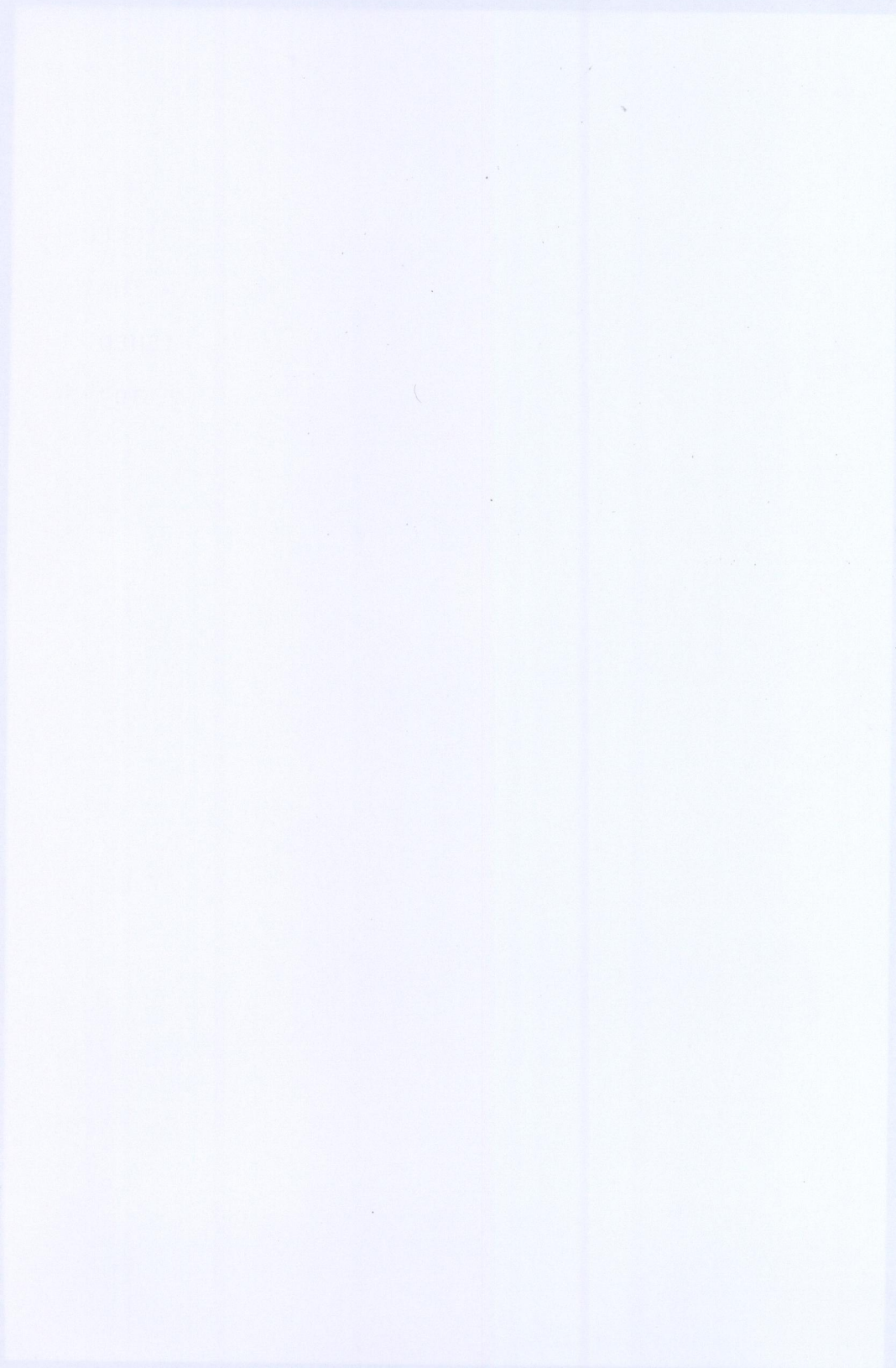


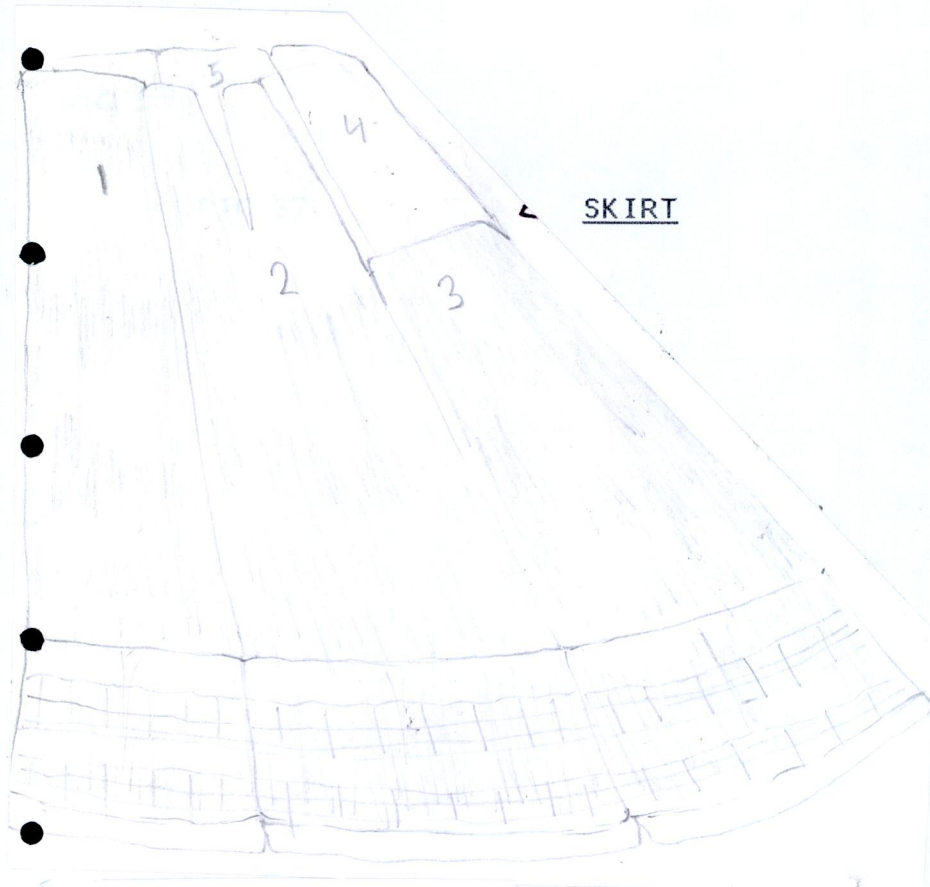


36
11/13

PIC 36B



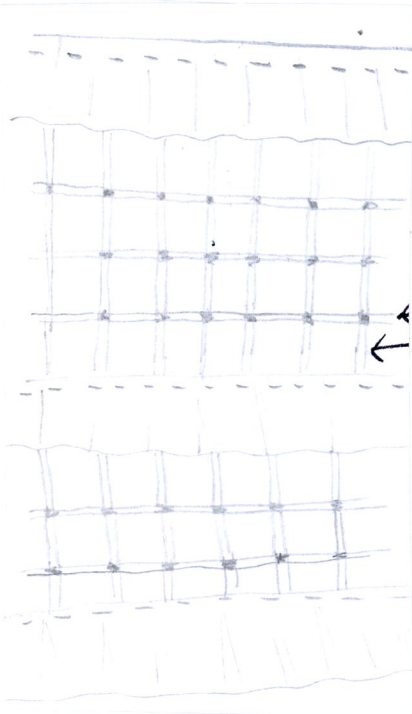




*BACK FULLNESS EVIDENT
SUGGESTING ROOM FOR A
SMALL BUSTLE

*PIECE CUT OUT OF
PANEL, UNPICKED FOR
ALTERATION THAT WAS
NEVER FINISHED

*SEEMS 32" 30" 29" 26"
26" 36.5"



*SHINY RIBBON ATTACHED ON , HAND SEWN

*LOOKS LIKE DEVORE

*LITTLE SQUARES OF VELVET

*TINY STRIPS OF RIBBON

*SEE THROUGH AREA LIKE NET BUT

A PLAIN WEAVE

*UNDERNEATH THAT LAYER IS THE MAIN SKIRT, WHICH HAS A SMALLER
REINFORCEMENT ADDED

*ALL HAND SEWN

*IT IS FRAYED AT BUTTON

SUGGESTING IT GOT A LOT OF WEAR

FC 37

PIC 37

BACK - THE LEFT EYE

SHOULDER - THE RIGHT

SHOULDER - THE LEFT

SHOULDER - THE RIGHT

SHOULDER - THE LEFT

SHOULDER - THE RIGHT

SHOULDER - THE LEFT

SHOULDER - THE RIGHT

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SHOULDER - THE RIGHT

SHOULDER - THE LEFT

THE BODICES OF THE 1900'S ARE STILL AS RIGID AS BEFORE AND THE EMPHASIS WAS STILL ON THE SMALL WAIST. IN FACT THE STATISTIC TABLE I HAVE IN CHAPTER TWO ON WAIST MEASUREMENTS SHOWED THEY WERE A SMALLER AVERAGE OF TWENTY INCHES AS OPPOSED TO THE PREVIOUS DECADE OF TWENTY THREE INCHES IN THE EIGHTIES. ALL THESE BODICES ARE TWENTY ONE INCHES. THE WAISTLINE IN 1900 WAS LOW AND THERE WAS EMPHASIS ON VERTICAL LINES THROUGHOUT THE DRESS. THE BODICE WAS OFTEN CUT IN A DEEP V. SHAPE ON FRONT TO GIVE AN ILLUSION OF ELONGATION. THE TIGHT-FITTING BODICE WAS USUAL, BUT MANY BODICES WERE MADE WITH A LOOSE SECTION AT THE CENTRE FRONT OVER A CLOSELY FITTED LINING. ALMOST ALL THE FULLNESS AND LOUSINESS WHICH APPEARED IN THE BODICES OF THE 1900 WAS DECEPTIVE. THIS CAN BE SEEN IN BODICE NUMBER FIVE (PIC 38).

ANOTHER REASON FOR COMING TO THIS DATE IS BECAUSE OF SOME INTERESTING INFORMATION I GOT FROM 'FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF FASHION ON THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM'. IT IS WRITTEN ON THE RESTORATION OF ANCIENT COSTUME AND SAYS;

"THE FEMALE CLOTHING FROM 1900 TO ABOUT 1907 CONTINUED THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY TREND WITH ITS DEPENDENCE ON TIGHT CORSETS. A SEPARATE BODICE AND SKIRT WAS USUAL AND ALTHOUGH NUMEROUS BODICES HAVE SURVIVED THE ACCOMPANING SKIRTS HAVE OFTEN VANISHED. THEY WERE COMPOSED OF MANY YARDS OF MATERIAL WHICH COULD BE UNPICKED AND RESTYLED TO SUIT LATER FASHIONS. IN CONTRAST , THE BODICES ATTACHED TO COMPLEX BONED FOUND

THE BODIES OF THE TWO MEN WERE STILL AT RIGHT ANGLES AND THE
EMERGENCY WAS STILL ON THE WALL. WAITING. THE STALLS OF
TABLE. I HAVE MEASURED TWO BY WAIST MEASUREMENTS SHOWED THE
WELL. AVERAGE OF TWENTY INCHES AS OPPOSED TO THE
PREVIOUS RECORD OF TWENTY THREE INCHES IN THE FIFTIES. ALL
THESE BODIES ARE TWENTY ONE INCHES. THE WAIST IN 1900
WAS. AND THERE WAS A TENDENCY OF THE TAILOR TO BE THROUGHOUT
THE 1920S. THE BODIES WERE THEN IN A LITTLE CHART ON
FROM TO GIVE AN ILLUSION OF DIMINUTION. THE 1920S
BODIES WERE USUAL. NOT MANY BODIES WERE MADE WITH A
SECTION AT THE CENTER FRONT OVER A CLOSTLY FITTED BUSTLE.
MOST ALL THE TAILORS AND DRESSMAKERS WITH A TAILOR IN THE
BODIES. IN THE 1920S WAS DESTRUCTIVE. THIS CAN BE SEEN IN
A NOTE NUMBER ONE (1923).

ANOTHER REASON FOR GOING TO THE 1920S WAS THE TAILOR AND THE
INTERESTING INFORMATION I GOT FROM FOUR BODIES. EACH OF
FASHION ON THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM. IT SEEMED TO BE
THE RESTORATION OF AN ANCIENT COSTUME AND DAYS.
THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR.
THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR.
ON THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR.
AND ALTHOUGH THE BODIES WERE SURVIVED THE
ACCOMPANYING SKIRTS HAVE BEEN VANISHED. THE TAILOR.
COMPLETED. A TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR.
UNFINISHED. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR.
THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR. THE TAILOR.

PIC 38

BODICE NO. 5

LOOSE LOOKING BODICE LIGHTLY BONED

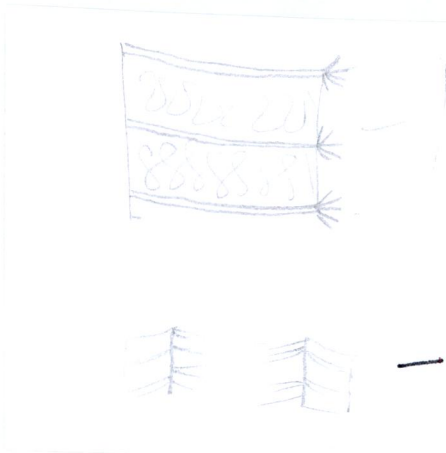


*CREAM LACE MISSING ON RIGHT HAND SHOULDER

*SLEEVES ELBOW LENGTH

*ORGANZA OVER TULLE OR CREPE

*LOTS OF IRONED IN TUCKS EITHER SIDE OF OPENING



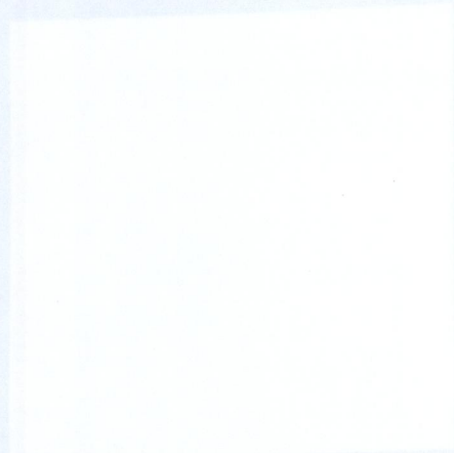
*STAND UP LACE COLLAR WITH TINY
VELVET RIBBONS SEWN ON

*3 VELVET ROSES IN MIDDLE

*SLEEVE ENDS ORGANZA PULLED UP
IN SECTIONS.

*2 DARTS

*ONLY ONE EXISTING BONE, BUT PROBABLY ORIGINALLY THREE



WERE INTRICATE CONSTRUCTIONS WITH DECORATIVE INSERTIONS OR OVERLAY. IT WAS UNREWARDING TO DISECT THESE GARMENTS . AT BEST ONE COULD REUSE THE ELABORATE TRIMMINGS, BUT THE SMALL SHAPED PIECES HAD TO BE DISCARDED"(R38).

THIS WOULD EXPLAIN WHY THE SKIRT IN MY COLLECTION IS UNPICKED AND WHY THE WAISTBAND IS GONE. ALSO IN THE LESSER BONED BODICES, ESPECIALLY IN BODICE NO. 3 THERE IS EVIDENCE OF REWORKING (PIC 39).



FROM 1890 TO 1892 THE SLEEVES WERE NARROW WITH A SMALL PUFF RISING ABOVE THE LEVEL OF THE SHOULDER . AFTER 1892 THE SLEEVE BECAME WIDER AS A WAY OF EMPHASISING THE WAIST. THIS PARTICULAR BODICE IS QUIET CHARACTERISTIC OF ITS AGE BECAUSE OF THE AMOUNT OF LACEWORK INVOLVED IN IT. IT BECAME A FASHION TO USE DELICATE FABRICS. MUSLINS AND SILK GAUZES WERE VERY



MUCH IN FASHION , ESPECIALLY CHIFFON-A FINE SILK MUSLIN. THE LADIES 'REALM' IN 1898 SAID OF THE FASHION " EVERYTHING IS VEILED OR TRIMMED IN CHIFFON, JEWELLED NET AND THE FILMIEST OF GAUZES "(R39).

ALL TYPES OF LACE WERE USED AND OLD LACE WAS BROUGHT OUT AGAIN FOR ANOTHER WEARING ON DRESSES AND BLOUSES OF THESE YEARS.

"WE ARE TO USE A GOOD DEAL OF LACE OLD AND NEW" SAID QUEEN VICTORIA IN EIGHTEEN NINETY THREE ".

AND

"IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CONDUCT OF ALL GOOD WARDROBES THAT THEY POSSESS A LACE BODICE , IF NOT TWO, THE ONE HIGH THE OTHER LOW". (GENTLE WOMAN 1897) (R40)

PIC 40



LOU TAYLOR'S BOOK ON MOURNING DRESS TELLS US THAT DURING THE PERIOD OF 1850 TO 1890 MOURNING SUCH A CULT THAT HARDLY DARED DEFY IT. MOURNING WEAR WAS CONSIDERED SO ESSENTIAL A PART OF A LADIES WARDROBE THAT THE UPPER CLASS WOMAN NEVER TRAVELLED WITHOUT IT. IN THE INCREASE IN POPULARITY IN MOURNING WEAR



AT THIS TIME WAS LARGELY DUE TO QUEEN VICTORIA. FOLLOWING THE SUDDEN DEATH BY TYPHOID OF PRINCE ALBERT IN 1861, THE MUCH RESPECTED QUEEN WORE MOURNING DRESS FOR THE REMAINING FORTY YEARS OF HER LIFE. HER EXAMPLE WAS COPIED BY MANY MIDDLE SUBJECTS.

THERE WERE STRICT RULES TO FOLLOW WHILE IN BEREAVEMENT. GENERALLY , THE CLOSER THE RELATION THE LONGER THE MOURNING PERIOD. THIS WOMAN PROBABLE LOST A HUSBAND OR FATHER BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF BODICES. THE SIX BODICES ARE FOR DIFFERENT PERIODS OF THE MOURNING IE. THE COMPLETELY BLACK ONE WITH THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF DETAILS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF MOURNING.

WHEN A WOMAN WAS WIDOWED BY HER HUSBAND FOR EXAMPLE SHE SPENT A TOTAL OF TWO AND A HALF YEARS IN MOURNING DRESS. POPULAR MAGAZINES LIKE, THE 'QUEEN', 'THE GENTLEWOMAN', THE 'LADY', 'THE LADIES PICTORIAL' AND 'THE LADIES YEAR-BOOK' ADVISED ON FINE DETAILS OF FASHION AND WERE BASIC GUIDES ON ETIQUETTE TO MOST WOMEN. 'THE QUEEN' FOR INSTANCE SAID A DAUGHTER SHOULD MOURN HER FATHER OR MOTHER FOR A TOTAL OF TWELVE MONTHS, SIX IN CREPE THREE IN BLACK AND THREE IN HALF MOURNING, WHICH IS WHEN A TOUCH OF COLOUR IS ALLOWED TO THE COSTUME.(R42) THREE OF MY BODICES CONTAIN CREAM WHICH FIT INTO THE HALF MOURNING CATEGORY. (BODICE NO 2 IS AN EXAMPLE PIC 41)

PIC 41 BODICE NO.2

*VERY ELABORATE, TWO LAYERS OF FABRIC, ORGANZA OVER CREPE,
HEAVILY BONED



*23 TUCKS ON 2 FRONT PANELS AND TWO BACK PANELS

*LACE INSERTION ON BOTTOM PANEL. DECORATED ORIGINALLY WITH
FOURTEEN LIME GREEN ROSES, NOW TWO MISSING

*STRANGE WAY OF CLOSING , 2 CLOSING PANELS

*TOP CLOSING IS CREAM LACE PANEL.

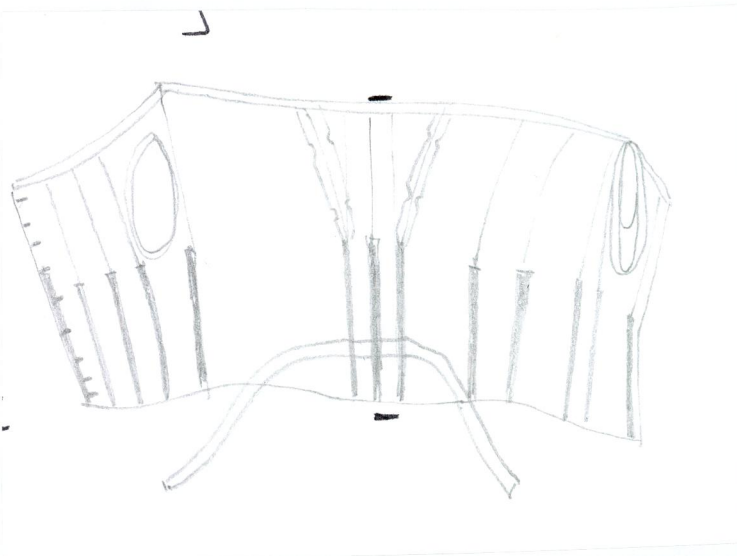
*UNDERNEATH CLOSING IS SILK PANEL

*21" WAIST

*MADE WITH

10 PANELS

*12 FASTENERS





A COMMON FEATURE OF ALL OF THEM IS THE HIGH NECKLINES WHICH WAS STANDARD FOR DAY DRESSES. USUALLY LOW NECK LINES WERE ONLY WORN FOR EVENING WEAR. THE LACK OF ANY BODICE WITH A LOW NECKLINE IN THIS COLLECTION MIGHT SUGGEST THAT WHILE A WOMAN WAS IN MOURNING SHE DID NOT SOCIALISE IN THE EVENING, EITHER THAT OR SHE WORE THE HIGH COLLAR IN THE EVENING ALSO WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN UNUSUAL BUT WOULD HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE IN TERMS OF MODESTY AND RESPECT. THE HIGH COLLAR CAN BE SEEN IN BODICE NUMBER FOUR ALONG WITH SOME OTHER VERY FINE DETAIL AND UNUSUAL TOUCHES. (PIC 42)

PIC 42 BODICE NO. 2

*FRONT VIEW



*NET NECK WITH STAND -UP COLLAR

*END OF BODICE FAIRLY TORN

*WIRE INSERTIONS TO MAKE COLLAR STAND

*SMALL RIBBON FOR TYING AROUND

THE WAIST .

PIC 42A BODICE NO. 2 BACK VIEW

A COMMON FEATURE FOR ALL OF THEM IS THE HIGH HEEL SHOES WHICH
WAS STANDARD FOR THE 1950S. USUALLY THE HEEL LINE WAS
ONLY WORN FOR EVENING WEAR. THE LACK OF AN EVIDENCE WITH A
HOW MUCH WE IN THIS COLLECTION WOULD REPORT THAT WHILE
WOMAN WAS IN MORNING THE DIT WAS NOT ALL THE EVENING
EITHER THAT OR CHEMIST THE HIGH COLLAR IN THE EVENING WOULD
WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN UNUSUAL. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE
IN TERMS OF HOW THEY WERE WORN. THE HIGH COLLAR WAS COMMON
IN BOOZIE WOMEN. THEY WOULD WITH SOME OTHER VERY FASHIONABLE
AND UNUSUAL TOPPED. IT IS A
PILAS BOOZIE WOMEN.



NET WITH STAND-UP COLLAR
STAND-UP COLLAR FAIRLY TIGHT
WITH FASTENERS TO HOLD COLLAR STAY
SMALL EMBROIDERED TIEING WOUND
THE WHIST
PILAS BOOZIE WOMEN.

PIC 42A BODICE NO. 2 BACK VIEW



*UNUSUAL FEATURE-A KIND OF SHAWL TO THROW OVER SHOULDERS WHICH TIES AT THE CHEST

*LITTLE BALLS ATTACHED TO 'SHAWL' (29")

*FAKE BELT, ORGANZA OVER SATIN, LEFT SIDE VERY DAMAGED.

*SKETCH OF OUTSIDE FASTENINGS

*16 HOOK AND EYES ON
WAY UP

*SILK INSIDE
HAND STITCHED

*7 HOOK
& EYES

*OPENING BEGINS
AT BACK OF NECK





BUCKLES BECAME AN IMPORTANT ACCESSORY IN THE EIGHTEEN NINETIES. THEY WERE OFTEN USED ORNAMENTALLY AS IN BODICE ABOVE. BUCKLE FORMS FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WERE ESPECIALLY POPULAR AND IT WAS COMMON ALSO TO USE SURVIVING BUCKLES FROM THAT TIME (R43). ANOTHER INTERESTING FEATURE , WHICH CAN SEEN FROM PIC 44 IS THE INSCRIPTION ON THE BELT SAYING WHERE THE DRESS WAS MADE AND BY WHO.

PIC 44



AFTER EXAMINING THIS DRESS I AM LEFT IN COMPLETE AWE AT THE PERSON WHO WORE IT. IT SUGGESTS THE DELICACY AND FEMININITY OF THE WEARER AND ALSO EMPHASISES HOW DIFFERENT THE FASHIONS OF TODAY HAVE BECOME. THE ACTUAL SIZE OF THE WAIST IS QUITE SHOCKING TO BEHOLD ALTHOUGH TWENTY ONE INCHES IS AN AVERAGE FOR THE TIME, IT COULD EASILY BE A THIGH MEASUREMENT FOR MANY 'NOT SO LARGE' WOMEN OF TODAY. SO I WONDER ARE WOMEN MUCH LARGER TODAY OR WAS THE GROWTH OF THE VICTORIAN WOMAN THAT STUNTED BY COMPRESSION OF THE CORSET.

BUCKLES OCCUR AS A FREQUENT ACCESSORY IN THE FEMININE
WARDROBE. THEY ARE OFTEN USED ORNAMENTALLY AS TO POLICE
ABOUT THE BUCKLES. FROM THE EVIDENCE, IT IS APPARENT
ESPECIALLY POPULAR AND IT WAS COMMON ALSO TO USE BUCKLES
FROM THE TIME THAT THE WOMEN INTERVIEWED WERE
WHICH CAN BE SEEN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH FOR THE TEST
SAID WHERE THE BUCKLE WAS MADE AND BY WHOM.

PIC 2A

ALSO EXAMINING THIS BUCKLE, IT WAS FOUND THAT AT THE
BANDS WHO WERE IN IT SUGGESTED THE BUCKLE AND FEMININITY
OF THE BUCKLE AND ALSO INDICATED HOW DIFFERENT THE BUCKLES
OF TODAY HAVE BECOME. THE BUCKLE OF THE PAST IS DIFFERENT
SHOWING TO BE DIFFERENT FROM THE BUCKLE OF THE PAST.
FOR THE BUCKLE, IT COULD EASILY BE A THIN BUCKLE, A BUCKLE
NOT SO LARGE, WOMEN OF TODAY. SO I WOULD SAY WOMEN WOULD
WANT TO HAVE OR WAS THE BUCKLE OF THE BUCKLE WOMAN THAT
SHOULD BE COMPARED TO THE BUCKLE.

MY RESEARCH LEAVES ME TO BELIEVE THE ANSWER LIES SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN. YES WOMEN, HAVE GROWN LARGER, WE ARE NOW TALLER AND HEAVIER BUILT THROUGH BETTER DIET AND EXERCISE, AND YES WOMEN'S GROWTH WAS STUNTED BY THE COMPRESSION OF THE CORSET ALSO. THIS PARTICULAR WOMAN MUST HAVE BEEN A PARTICULARLY SMALL BUILD EVEN FOR HER TIME. AFTER PUTTING THE SKIRT AND BODICE TOGETHER I JUDGED HER HEIGHT TO BE BETWEEN ABOUT FOUR FOOT TEN INCHES AND FIVE FOOT. SO COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE WOMAN OF TODAY SHE HAD CHILD LIKE PROPORTIONS. WHEN EXAMINING THE OUTFIT I WANTED TO PHOTOGRAPH IT ON SOMEONE SO I ASKED MY FOURTEEN YEAR OLD SISTER WHO IS A SIZE SIX TO EIGHT WITH A WAIST MEASUREMENT OF TWENTY FIVE INCHES TO OBLIGE. SHE OBLIGED, BUT EVEN HER SMALL FIGURE WAS TOO LARGE FOR THE DRESS.

LOOKING AT THE DRESS HOWEVER , IT IS NOT HARD TO GUESS WHY A WOMAN WOULD WANT TO WEAR IT. IT IS EXQUISITE IN ITS DETAIL AND ALTHOUGH IT IS A BLACK MOURNING OUTFIT IT IS NEITHER PLAIN OR SOMBRE. EACH BODICE HAS BEAUTIFUL EMBROIDERY AND LACEWORK, (PIC 45) DELICATE FASTENINGS AND A ROMANTIC AND SENSUAL AIR ABOUT IT.

PIC 45





42
88

CONCLUSION

IT IS APPARENT THROUGH STUDYING THE CORSET ITS VALUE TO THE WEARER AS BOTH AS A PROJECTION OF CORRECT FASHION AND CORRECT SOCIAL IMAGE. WHAT IS INTERESTING ABOUT THE HIGH VICTORIAN ERA IS THE EXTREME BODY SHAPES THEY ADOPTED IN THE NAME OF FASHION. THE MASSIVE CRINOLINE CAGE IN THE SIXTIES, THE TIGHT PRINCESS LINE IN THE SEVENTIES, THE OBTRUSIVE PROJECTION CALLED THE BUSTLE IN THE EIGHTIES AND THE UNNATURAL S-BEND OF THE NINETIES WERE SOME OF THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS STYLES IN THE HISTORY OF FASHION.

ONE MIGHT WONDER WHY SUCH EXTREMITIES OF FASHION EXISTED IN THE WAKE OF THE EFFORTS OF THE FEMINISTS TO REFORM AND EDUCATE SOCIETY ON THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY. WHY DID WOMEN READILY WEAR THESE ELABORATE AND RESTRICTIVE GARMENTS?

FIRSTLY, NOT ALL WOMEN WORE MAINSTREAM FASHION. THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THOSE WHO DEVIATED FROM THE NORM, LIKE THE AESTHETES AND PRE-RAPHAELITES, JUST AS IN MODERN TIMES WE HAVE HAD PUNKS OR HIPPIES. MAINSTREAM FASHION WAS TAKEN IN VARYING DEGREES BY DIFFERENT WOMEN. MANY WOMEN CHOOSE NOT TO WEAR CERTAIN ASPECTS OF FASHION IE. NOT ALL WOMEN TIGHT LACES .

THE FASHIONS OF THE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN PERIODS MAY SEEM FRIVOLOUS , UNHEALTHY AND DEGRADING TO CERTAIN PEOPLE TODAY BUT IF WE LOOK AT EXAMPLES OF MODERN FASHION, THE HIGH HEEL OF THE NINETEEN EIGHTIES WE SEE A SIMILAR PHENOMENA TO TIGHT LACING. THE SAME WORDS COULD BE USED TO DESCRIBE THE ILL EFFECTS OF BOTH PRACTICES, BUT ARE NOT AS READILY USED ON MODERN EXTREMITIES.

UTILITARIANISM IN FASHION IS NOT NECESSARILY A LIBERATING TOOL. CLOTHES THAT EMANATE SEXUAL ATTRACTION ARE A POWER GIVING FORCE IN THEMSELVES AND WOMEN THROUGH THE AGES HAVE ALWAYS REALISED THIS. WE SEE THIS TODAY WITH THE 'WONDER-BRA'. WHILE I AM NOT ADVOCATING BODY DISTORTION, I AM SAYING IT IS NOT A 'BACKWARD' CONCEPT AND IS CARRIED ON TODAY WITH SIMILAR FERVOUR TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

I AM SAYING THESE WOMEN OF THE VICTORIAN ERA NEED TO BE RECOGNIZED NOT AS PASSIVE CREATURES. THEIR EXISTENCE IN MANY WAYS IS NOT WORLDS AWAY FROM OUR OWN, BUT THEY PAVED THE WAY FOR THE START OF QUALITY WHICH SOME WOULD SAY IS STILL IN ITS INFANT YEARS.

THE FASHIONS OF THE ALGERIANS AND MOROCCANS ARE VERY
DIFFERENT. UNUSUALITY AND ORIGINALITY ARE THE MAIN
POINTS AT WHICH THEY DIFFER FROM THE FASHIONS OF THE
WEST. THE ALGERIANS WEAR A SPECIAL TUNIC IN THE
SUMMER. THE TUNIC IS LONG AND LOOSE. IT IS
EASY TO WEAR. BUT THE MOROCCANS WEAR A TUNIC
WHICH IS SHORTER AND TIGHTER.

THE ALGERIANS IN FASHION ARE NOT VERY DIFFERENT
FROM THE MOROCCANS. BUT THE ALGERIANS WEAR A TUNIC
WHICH IS LONGER AND LOOSER. THE MOROCCANS WEAR
A TUNIC WHICH IS SHORTER AND TIGHTER. THE ALGERIANS
WEAR A TUNIC WHICH IS LONGER AND LOOSER. THE
MOROCCANS WEAR A TUNIC WHICH IS SHORTER AND
TIGHTER. THE ALGERIANS WEAR A TUNIC WHICH IS
LONGER AND LOOSER. THE MOROCCANS WEAR A TUNIC
WHICH IS SHORTER AND TIGHTER.

THE ALGERIANS WEAR A TUNIC WHICH IS LONGER
AND LOOSER. THE MOROCCANS WEAR A TUNIC WHICH
IS SHORTER AND TIGHTER. THE ALGERIANS WEAR
A TUNIC WHICH IS LONGER AND LOOSER. THE
MOROCCANS WEAR A TUNIC WHICH IS SHORTER AND
TIGHTER. THE ALGERIANS WEAR A TUNIC WHICH IS
LONGER AND LOOSER. THE MOROCCANS WEAR A TUNIC
WHICH IS SHORTER AND TIGHTER.

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