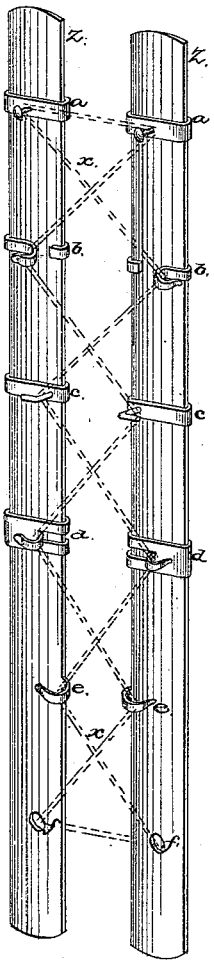
M. D. BIRGE & G. C. SKIDMORE.

Corset.

No. 208,456. Patented Oct. 1, 1878.

Fig. 1. Fig. 2. Fig. 3. Fig. 4.



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IMPROVEMENT IN CORSETS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **208,456**, dated October 1, 1878; application filed February 16, 1878.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, MANNING D. BIRGE and GEO. C. SKIDMORE, of the city of Chicago, State of Illinois, have invented a new and useful improvement in the manner and principle of lacing corsets in front, in connection with improved corset-steels and their lacings, of which the following is a specification:

In the manufacture of corsets heretofore the two halves or two parts of a corset have been so made as to clasp closely together in the front by means of the metal fastening bordering up and down the front edge of each half, being clasped together by means of one of the fastening-steels, with small openings in it, overlapping the other steel, which has small projections on its surface, which hook into the openings or slots of the former and outer steel, thereby holding the corset in one place and one position, and forbidding the expansion of the corset in any manner in the front; and the only relief to be had in that way is to loosen the common string lacing at the back of the corset, which seldom affords the relief wanted, and in the part or parts desired by the wearer, for the reason that the loosening of the lacing-cord in the back at any part loosens the fitting of the whole corset from top to bottom, and in consequence certain parts of the corset must remain too tight or distastefully loose by this usual mode of fastening. Furthermore, the old and still present mode of fastening corsets to the body, by lacing the corset together in the back, is generally acknowledged as most inconvenient for the wearer to do, and frequently calls for the assistance of a second person.

Our invention consists in the construction of the front parts of a corset in such a manner that the front of the corset may be brought together by lacings, or by other modes of fastings hereinafter described, and in such a manner as to admit of the entire front of a corset being drawn up and looped close together in its two parts, at the same time allowing the wearer to slacken or loosen the corset, in whole or in part, about the front, by fixed lacings, eyelet-tapes, or a chain.

Our improvement will afford the benefit of allowing a corset to be made entire of one part or piece, for our principle allows the lacing or looping by tape or chain to be done in the front of the corset, entirely to the satisfaction of the wearer, and with a great deal of convenience.

If it be at all desirable in any cases, the corset may be made of two parts, and so constructed as to lace at the back, in the usual way, the two parts fixed and permanently together, as the circumstances might require; for this lacing of the back firmly together, in effect, would be the same in the fit of the corset as if of one piece when used in our improved manner of bringing together and fasting the fronts.

To better illustrate our invention we refer to the accompanying drawings.

Figure 1 represents a pair of corset-fastenings or "corset-steels," as they are usually termed. Their material should be of spring-steel, or of any other substance suitable for the purpose. They are made of such lengths as usually correspond with the lengths of the material in the corset-front or of the corset-cloth. Attached to or fastened to these corset-steels, and set on the outer face of them, are small flanged head pins or hooks, or turned loops of different patterns, for the purpose of fastening to them the crossing lace-string, (or an eyelet-tape or chain,) which brings the steels together at any desired nearness. These steels, of course, are attached to the corset, one to each front edge of the corset material, either by the steels being run into a hem on or near the edge of the corset-cloth, and the cloth punched or cut out in the places where the hooks, loops, or eyelets of the steel are, to admit of lacing over them; or the steels may be attached to the corset-cloth by being riveted on, or by any of the common processes now used for attaching the steels to the cloth.

The pins, hooks, or eyelets may be attached to or placed in the steels at any distance apart, for the convenient lacing or looping together of the two parts, and one style only need be attached to each pair of steels.

a a represent a fastening consisting of a small metal plate, with each end tightly turned over the edges of the steel to hold it in place. To the center of this plate is welded,

or riveted on, a short pin, with a flange on the head of it, to prevent the lacing, eyelet-tape, or chain from slipping off.

b b, *c c*, and *d d* represent other styles of fastening for the same purpose, made of metal, and similarly attached to the steels.

e e show a hooked fastening, which may be cut from the same material and piece that the spring itself is made from, and, by a proper process, turned over and hooked, to hold the lacings, eyelet-tape, or chain which brings the two parts of the corset together.

f f represent drilled openings through the corset-steels, through which the lacings, eyelet-tape, or chain may pass in bringing the two parts together.

Any of the fastenings above described, or the openings in the steels, may be attached to the steels, or placed in them at such distances apart as to afford a strong and convenient lacing of the corset together. The fastenings on the steels may also be riveted or welded on.

The dotted line *x x* in the drawing represents the lacing-string (or if it be an eyelet-tape or chain) alternately crossed from one steel to the other, and at each crossing attached to one of the hooks or into an eyelet.

Fig. 2 of the drawing represents an eyelet-tape for the bringing together and fastening of the corset-steels. It can be made of any strong cotton, linen, or silk material, of proper length and suitable width for the purpose, and in it, at proper distances apart, are woven eyelets, or eyelets of metal. This tape could also be made of fine leather or buckskin, with eyelets attached to it.

Fig. 3 represents a chain which can be used for a fastening instead of the eyelet-tape. The chain can be made of a strong wire, with welded links, the wire being fine, which would make it convenient and lasting.

Fig. 4 represents a cord which would also be used for fastening in place of either of the above. Knots are tied or interwoven, or by separate pieces attached, to the cord, in such a way as to give strength and convenience in fastening the corset together.

It will thus be seen that a corset fastened together in front by the new method herein given will afford abundant strength to itself, and will be a great convenience to the wearer, for the following reasons: First, the corset may be made all in one—that is, without other opening than that in front—and still be adjustable by our method of fastening, and this whether the corset be woven or made in a single piece, or made in two parts, for if in two parts, they are firmly and permanently joined together at the back; secondly, by attaching to the front of the corset the pair of steels, with their hooks or eyelets, as described, and by using the eyelet-tape, chain, or cord herein described to bring and lace the corset together, we produce an effect that has long been wanted, but which has not before been applied—*i. e.*, by using one or more tapes, chains, or cords the wearer of the corset can lace or fasten the corset either closely or loosely at any part; for instance, if the wearer wished to close the parts together at the top and in the center of the corset, the openings of the tape, chain, or cord would quickly attach to a hook of the steel, passing across from one steel to the other, and if the wearer did not wish to lace the corset any farther down, then the fastenings were already secured. If it was a desire to allow the lower portion of the corset to expand for bodily convenience, yet keep it partially laced, a few links or eyelets could be skipped at each crossing from one side to the other. The steels in the meantime, being light and elastic, would at once adapt themselves and the fitting of the corset to the position desired. The fastening of the corset could be made, vice versa, close at the bottom, and in the center, and open at the top, or close at top and bottom, and open in the center, the fastenings always remaining where placed, and the corset kept in position accordingly. A straight cord could also be used in the lacing of the corset, its action being the same if the lacing is to be even from top to bottom; and if the corset is to be contracted or expanded, the lacing could be proportionately adjusted by tying the cord in places, or by otherwise fixing it stationary at any place desired.

Having thus described our invention, we claim—

The method herein described of lacing corsets in front by means of the eyelet-tape, chain, or cord, in combination with the corset-clasps provided with hooks, studs, or other suitable fastening devices, all constructed and arranged to operate substantially as set forth.

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