



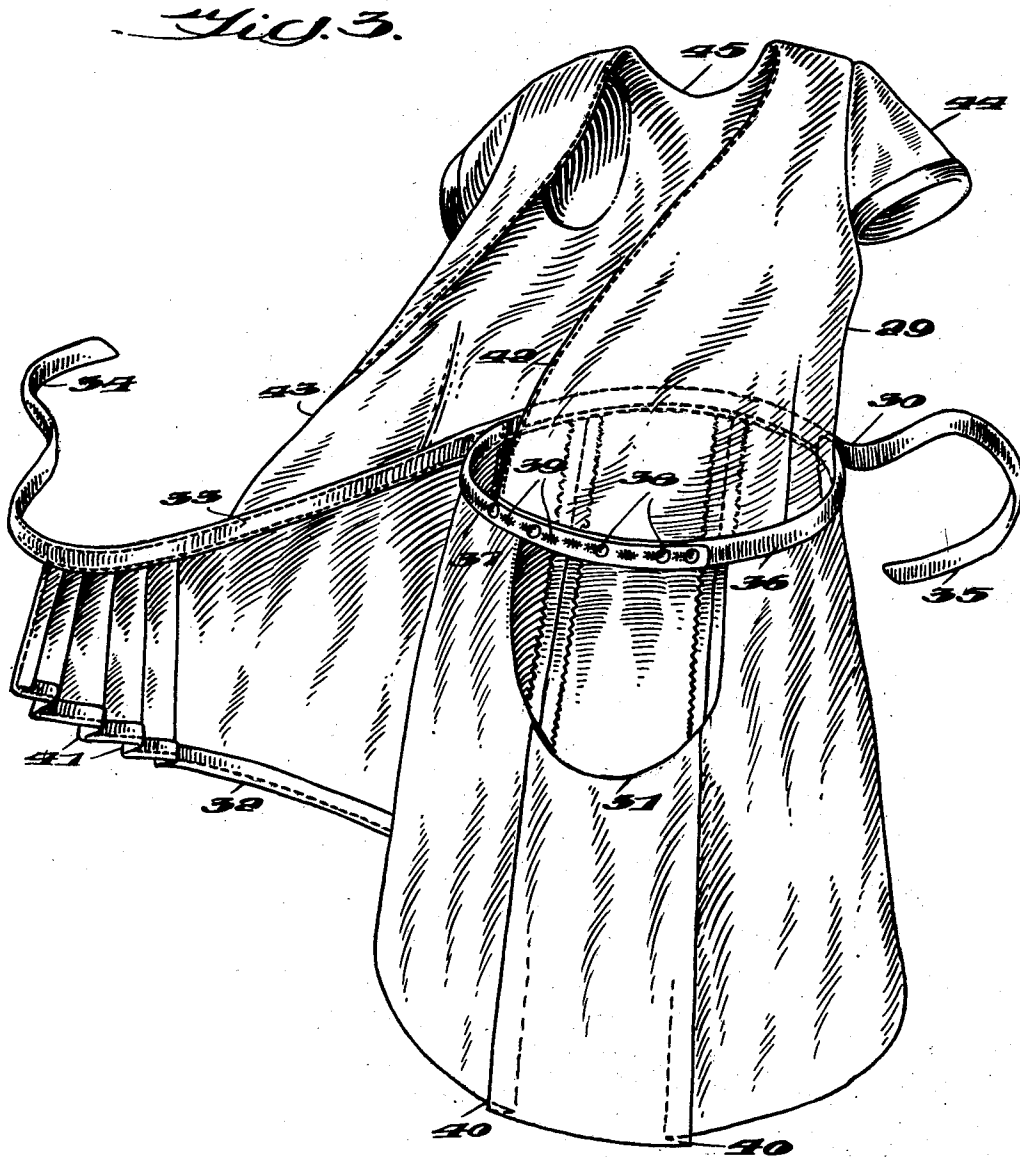
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MATERNITY GARMENT

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## MATERNITY GARMENT

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My invention relates to maternity garments and particularly to dresses and skirts for wear during a period of pregnancy.

An object of the invention is to provide a maternity garment readily adjustable to the changing figure during the period of pregnancy and so constructed and arranged as best to disguise the condition.

A more specific object of my invention is to provide a construction for a dress or skirt for wear during a period of pregnancy which, as worn, creates the impression that the figure of the wearer is normal and not characterized by any substantial abdominal distension.

The novel features which I believe to be characteristic of my invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. My invention itself, however, both as to its organization and method of operation, together with further objects and advantages thereof, may best be understood by reference to the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which Fig. 1 shows a maternity garment in the form of a skirt embodying my invention, with a flap portion of the skirt in open position; Fig. 2 shows the skirt of Fig. 1 with the flap portion in closed position as the skirt appears in use; and Fig. 3 shows a dress embodying my invention.

Referring now to Fig. 1, the skirt comprises a back skirt portion made up of three panels 1, 2, and 3, panel 1 adjoining the lateral edge at the right hand side of panel 2 and being attached thereto by a sewed seam 4, and panel 3 similarly adjoining the left hand lateral edge of panel 2 and being attached thereto by sewed seam 5. The right and left as herein used refer to these sides of the wearer, rather than to positions as seen in the drawings. The back skirt portion is attached by stitches to an intermediate portion 6 of a belt 7 and is supported by and depends from the belt when the skirt is being worn.

The front portion of the skirt may also comprise three panels seamed together along appropriate lateral edges of the respective panels. The central panel 8 is so stitched to the right side panel 9 and to the left side panel 10, and is so creased, as to form vertical pleats 11 and 12 tending to give a slimming appearance to the figure of the wearer. Seams 13 and 14, shown in dotted lines, which, respectively, join panel 8 to panels 9 and 10, are arranged to coincide with the inner folds of the pleats 11 and 12.

A right side skirt seam 15 joins panels 1 and 9, and a left side skirt seam 16 joins panels 3 and

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10 along appropriate adjacent lateral edges of the front and back skirt portions.

Belt member 17 extends along and supports the front skirt portion, to which it is attached by suitable stitches. This belt member is arranged to be adjustable in length, and for this purpose it preferably comprises two parts 18 and 19 carrying a plurality of respective cooperating fastener members such as buttons 20 and button holes 21. These fastener members are arranged along the parts 18 and 19 to permit adjustment in length between the opposite ends of the belt member 17. These opposite ends are attached to the inner side of belt 7 at, or immediately above, the respective side skirt seams 15 and 16.

The cut out portion 22 of the front skirt portion is preferably of approximately the shape of a U, and serves to prevent the lower hem line, at the bottom of panel 8, for example, from being pulled up into an unsightly and awkward position by the distended abdomen of pregnancy. The lower front portion of the skirt is thus permitted to fall in a normal manner near the thighs and knees of the wearer, and the lower hem line is maintained substantially even and horizontal. Furthermore, the pleats 11 and 12 are not opened out by the distended abdomen because the pleats terminate at the edge of the cut out portion 22. It will be understood, accordingly, that the cut out portion extends completely across the center panel 8 and into the panels 9 and 10. The binding or hem which is formed around the cut out portion 22 by means of stitches, not shown in the drawing, maintains the pleats closed at the top, at 23 and 24, and since this is below the abdomen, there is normally nothing below this point which tends to open out the pleats.

The skirt of Fig. 1 further comprises a flap 25 generally tapered or triangular in shape and with an upper edge at substantially a right angle to the longer end or side edge. This longer side edge is stitched to panels 1 or 9, or to both, at the right side skirt seam 15, and along the top edge, to the belt 7 starting at the side seam and continuing along toward the free end portion 26 of the belt. Pleats 27 are creased into the flap 25 to extend approximately vertically when the skirt is worn, and the top ends of these pleats are held in proper shape by stitching the flap to the belt after the pleats are formed. The diagonal lower edge and the shorter end edge are suitably bound or hemmed as shown.

Free ends 26 and 28 of belt 7 extend, respectively, beyond the end of flap 25 and outwardly from the left side seam 16 to permit flap 25 to be

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draped across the front of the skirt, as best seen in Fig. 2, and to be held in place across the front by tying these ends together on the left hip of the wearer.

Fig. 2 shows the skirt of Fig. 1 as it appears in use. The flap 25 is in position to cover the abdominal opening or cut out portion 22, indicated in dotted lines. The free ends 26 and 28 of the belt 7 are tied in a bow knot on the left hip, and the belt 7 covers and hides from view buttons 20 and button holes 21. The front portion of the skirt, including panels 8, 9, and 10, hangs normally close to the legs of the wearer, while the flap 25 may be displaced forwardly by the abdomen at the opening 22. The lower hem of the flap 25, if the abdomen is distended, will fall a short distance in front of the central front skirt panel 8. The flap is loose fitting, however, and gives the appearance of hanging out from the skirt only because of its loose fitting nature, disguising the real cause of its outwardly extending position. The effectiveness of this disguise is increased by the vertical pleats 27 of the flap and by the diagonal direction of the lower hem of the flap in passing from the right to the left side of the body.

The skirt shown in Figs. 1 and 2 is readily put on and taken off over the feet of the wearer with buttons 20 removed from the button holes 21 and, of course, with belt ends 26 and 28 untied. When the skirt is in place, in putting it on, the buttons 20 are buttoned into the button holes 21 selected for suitable fit as determined by the varying waist measurement, and finally the belt ends 26 and 28 are tied together in a bow knot at the desired position to make the belt 7 just snug about the waist. The ease with which the skirt may be taken off and put on, particularly in that it need not be put on over the head, and the simplicity of adjustment provided by the construction and arrangement of front belt member 17, and the arrangement of belt 7 including the tying end portions 26 and 28, are important features of the invention as embodied in the skirt garment. It is also to be noticed that the construction of the skirt is simple and requires only well understood dressmaking procedures and ordinarily available materials.

Fig. 3 shows an embodiment of the invention in the form of a complete dress, wherein the dress comprises a skirt portion similar to that heretofore described and a top or waist portion 29. The skirt portion of the dress comprises panels sewed together, one to the next, in the manner described in connection with Figs. 1 and 2, and the rear panels are sewed to the intermediate portion of a belt 30 in substantially the same manner. The dress also has an opening or cut out portion 31 positioned in the abdominal area and a flap 32 sewed to portion 33 of the belt 30 to cover the opening when end portions 34 and 35 of the belt are knotted on the left hip.

The front panels of the skirt portion depend from a belt member comprising two portions 36 and 37 arranged for adjustable and detachable fastening together above the opening 31, buttons 38 and button holes 39 being shown as suitable for this purpose. Pleats 40 in the front skirt portion and pleats 41 in the flap 32 are provided for the purposes heretofore considered in connection with Figs. 1 and 2.

The waist portion of the dress comprises two overlapping members 42 and 43 arranged to cross in the front of the dress. The lower edge of the underlying left hand member 42 is attached

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along portion 36 of the front belt member, while the overlying right hand member 43, at its lower edge, is attached along portion 33 of belt 30, to which the depending flap 32 is also attached. The lower edge of the back of the waist is preferably sewed to the belt 30 as shown in Fig. 3, and the waist may be provided with sleeves 44 and a neck or collar portion 45 in any desired manner.

The dress is readily put on, with buttons 38 unfastened, either by stepping through the skirt portion or by slipping the skirt over the head and shoulders, the former being preferred because of the danger of injury in raising the arms during pregnancy.

With the arms through the sleeves, the dress is ready for the engagement of the buttons 38 in the selected button holes 39 to hold belt member portions 36 and 37 at the desired tightness across the front of the body. It will be understood that the respective remote ends of the belt member portions 36 and 37 are attached to the inner side of belt 30 at or near the upper ends of the skirt side seams, which join the front and back skirt portion together.

As seen in Fig. 3, fastening of the buttons 38 disposes the underlying front waist member 42 across the upper body from left to right. Thereafter, the overlying waist member is brought across from right to left, together with flap 32, as the free end portion 34 of belt 30 is moved into position for tying to the free end portion 35 of the belt.

The dress construction may be modified by attaching the lower edge of waist portion 43 along the portion 37 of the front belt member instead of to the portion 33 of the belt 30, in the same manner that waist portion 42 is shown attached to portion 36 of the belt member, but this modified construction is usually not so desirable as that shown in Fig. 3. In either case, however, portion 33 overlies and shields buttons 38 and button holes 39 from view, and opening 31 is covered by flap 32.

The embodiment of my invention shown in Figs. 1 and 2 is conveniently adapted for use with a blouse or shirtwaist. In order to demonstrate the preferred manner in which a blouse may be worn with the skirt, the lower portion of a blouse 46 is shown in Fig. 1. One or more quick detachable fastening members are provided on the blouse to cooperate with members mounted on the skirt. These members may be of the snap fastener type and may comprise, as shown, two male snap fastener members 47 arranged on the blouse and two female snap fastener members 48 attached, respectively, to the inner sides of parts 18 and 19 of belt member 17 to cooperate with the members 47 when the lower portion of the blouse is disposed under the belt of the skirt. This arrangement, of the skirt and blouse, has several advantages, in that the blouse tends to hold up the skirt and the skirt tends to hold down the blouse, and in that there is little likelihood of an unsightly gap occurring between blouse and skirt. These advantages are of increased importance as the later stages of pregnancy are reached.

While I have shown only certain preferred embodiments of my invention by way of illustration, many modifications will occur to those skilled in the art, and I therefore wish to have it understood that I intend, in the appended claims, to cover all such modifications as fall within the true spirit and scope of my invention.

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What I claim as new and desire to secure by United States Letters Patent is:

1. A maternity garment comprising a skirt having side seams, a back portion, and a front portion, a belt attached at an intermediate portion to said back skirt portion, a belt member attached at its ends to the inner side of said belt adjacent said side seams, said front skirt portion having an upper, central, generally-U-shaped cut out portion and being attached to said belt member on each side of said cut out portion, a plurality of vertical pleats in said front skirt portion, said pleats terminating upwardly at a lower part of said cut out portion and being sewed in shape thereat, means at said cut out portion to adjust the length of said belt member, and a vertically pleated flap member depending from a portion of said belt adjacent said intermediate portion, said flap member being proportioned and arranged to hide said cut out portion when said belt is disposed in normal body-encircling position.

2. A maternity garment comprising a belt, a rear skirt portion attached to and depending from an elongated intermediate portion of said belt, said rear skirt portion having two respective lateral edges and said intermediate portion of said belt being bounded by and extending between a first bound at one of said lateral edges and a second bound at the other said lateral edge, a generally triangular flap member having two edges mutually substantially perpendicular, one of said edges of said flap member being attached along said one lateral edge of said rear skirt portion and the other flap edge being attached along a portion of said belt adjoining said intermediate portion at said first bound, said flap member having an end opposite said one edge of said flap member, said belt extending beyond said end of said flap member to form a terminal first tie portion and extending from and beyond said other bound of said intermediate portion to form a terminal second tie portion for tying adjacent said other edge of said rear skirt portion to said first tie portion, thereby to maintain said flap depending from said belt across the front of the body of the wearer, a belt member attached at its opposite extremities to the inner side of said first belt at said respective bounds of said interme-

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mediate portion, a front skirt portion recessed at the abdominal area, said front skirt portion underlying said flap and being attached to and depending from said belt member and having lateral edges attached respectively to said respective lateral edges of said rear skirt portion, and means carried by said belt member at said recess to adjust the length of said belt member.

3. A maternity garment comprising front and back skirt portions, a belt, said back portion being attached to and depending from said belt, said belt extending beyond said back portion at each side thereof, a belt member distinct from said belt comprising two opposed ends, adjusting means intermediate said ends to adjust the length of said belt member, said ends being attached respectively to the inner side of said belt adjacent the respective sides of said back skirt portion, the upper edge of said front skirt portion being interrupted only by a central abdominal recess in said front skirt position, the uninterrupted sections of said upper edge on opposite sides of said recess being attached to and depending from respective portions of said belt member on respective opposite sides of said adjusting means, and a flap having a side edge, a top edge and a bottom edge, said side edge and said front and back skirt portions being attached each to the other at a skirt side seam along the right hand side of the garment as worn, said top edge being attached along the right hand extension of said belt and terminating short of the end of said belt, whereby said belt has end portions extending, respectively, beyond said flap and from the left hand side of said back skirt portion, said end portions being adapted for joining on the left hip of the wearer to dispose said flap over and across said recess and in covering relation over said adjusting means.

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