

Baker Street Elementary

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



Baker Street Elementary

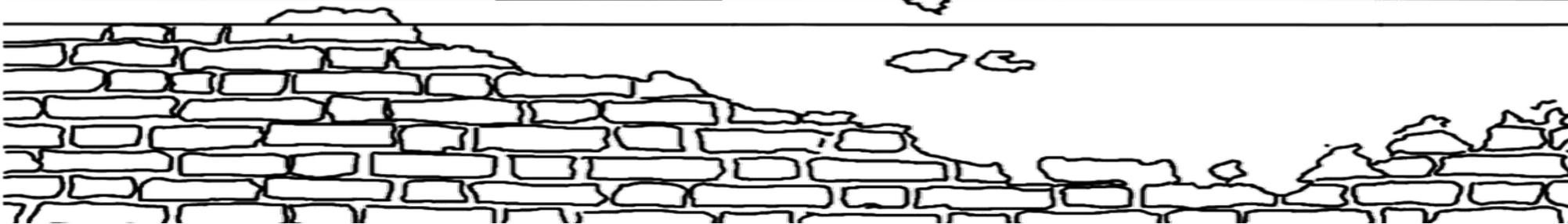
The Life and Times in Victorian London
AB010 -- Victorian Dresses and What Was on it
Beneath -- February, 2022



Welcome to topic # AB010... Today we will be looking at dresses and undergarments during the Victorian period. Thanks so much to AboutBritain.com for use of their summary text for this lesson...



Victorian dress was traditionally very elegant and lavishly trimmed with all manner of lace frills, braid, fringes and full gathers.



Full skirts were supported on a rigid frame called a crinoline and later bustles at the rear were the height of Victorian fashion for well-to-do ladies.



However, prudishness still governed the covering of a lady's arms and legs right down to the ankle.

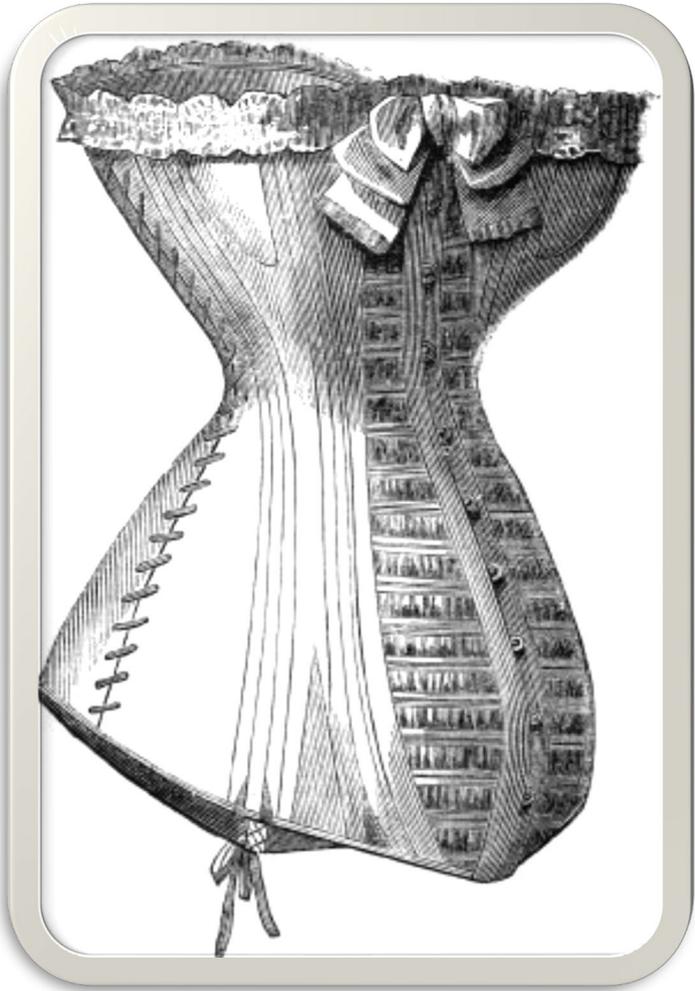


Beneath the full skirts, which themselves may have had at least three yards of fabric, were numerous petticoats and layers of undergarments.



*By contrast, bodices
were worn tightly
fitted.*





Laced corsets, like straightjackets, were used to give women a narrow waist and shapely body...





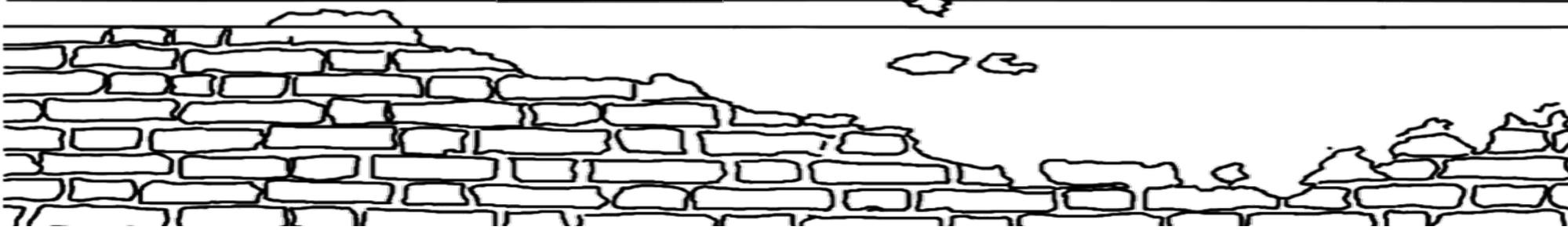
*...contoured further by
the addition of
whalebones and steel
inserted into the bodice.*



No wonder Victorian ladies were prone to fainting, either from the heat of so many layers, or from the inability to breathe!



*Victorian dresses were
finished with several
layers of under sleeves
beneath...*



*...the wide dress sleeves
of the 1850s and
trimmed with fine lace
or other detail.*



An additional collar would finish the dress. Everything would have been handmade for the wearer by a tailoress or dressmaker.





To complete the outfit when venturing outdoors, Victorian dresses were topped with pelerines...



*...which were short capes
or sleeveless jackets,
often made of fur.*





They were finished with long pointed ends at the front. In summer, ladies would carry a fan or parasol and hats and gloves were always worn.

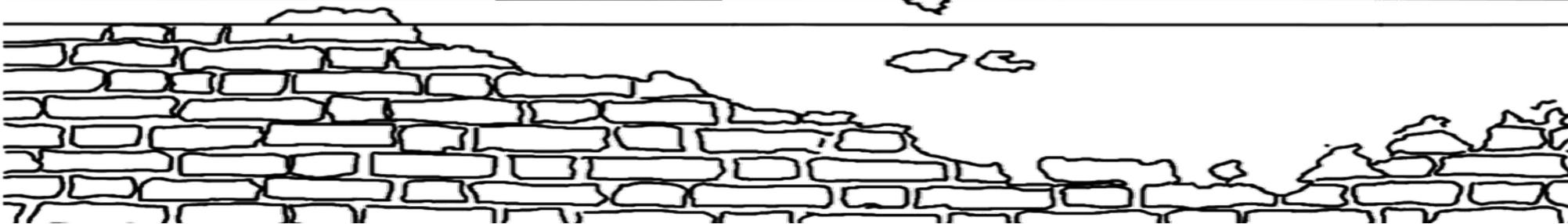




In winter, fur muffs kept hands warm and pretty silk summer bonnets were replaced with felt hats.



Hats were generally trimmed with yards of ribbon and artificial flowers were used for decoration.



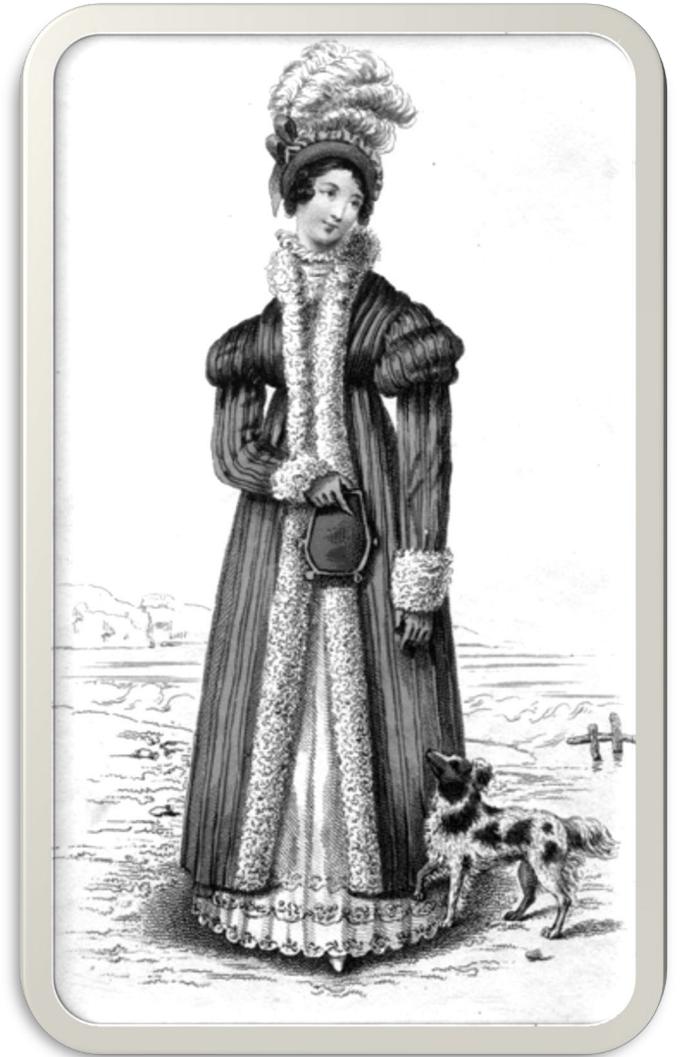
*A Victorian lady would
always carry a purse or
reticule.*



They were usually made of beads stitched onto knitted fabric in pretty designs. The top would either be a drawstring or a metal clasp.



From 1865 Victorian dresses were influenced by French fashion. For afternoon visits to lady friends of similar social standing, three piece silk outfits were popular.



*The bodice was slightly
less tight and a cape
across the shoulders would
have been in matching...*





*...silk braid with a
fringe or tassels for
attractive movement.*





These fancier dresses often had a wide ribbon belt to match from which long decorative panels fell down at the back.

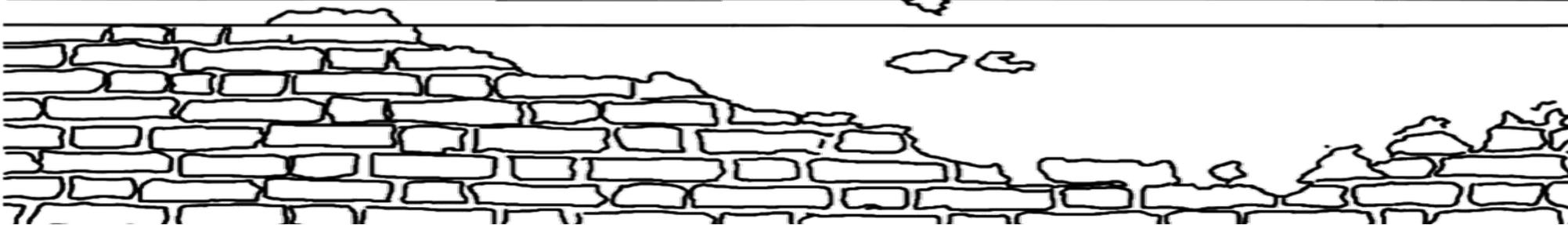




*They were decoratively
trimmed with ruched silk
ribbon, silk braid and
matching tassels or a fringe.*



*Instead of a full hooped skirt,
later designs of Victorian dresses
had most of the gathers...*



...and fullness at the back of the skirt, in what was known as a bustle.



Often these fine afternoon dresses had a small train at the back which must have been most impractical to wear in the dirty streets.



In winter, beneath their full skirts ladies wore full length woolen petticoats. They had a drawstring waistband and a button at the back.



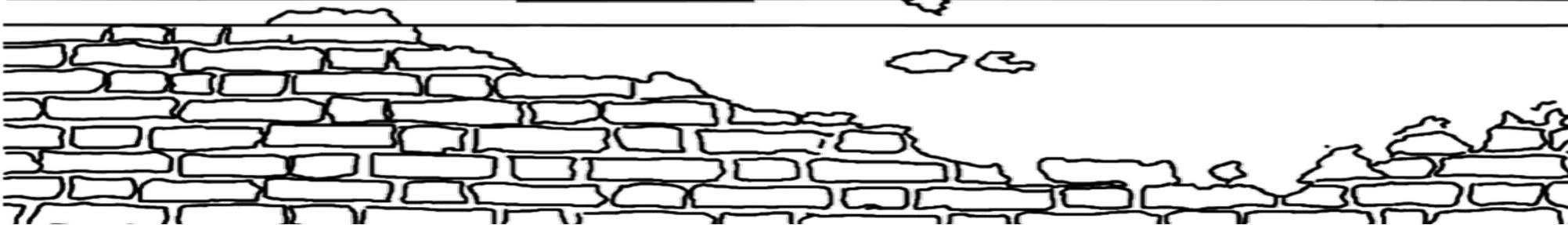


*Around the hem embroidery
would finish the undergarment.
Queen Victoria was known to
have her monogram...*





...embroidered around the hemline along with thistles, roses and shamrocks.

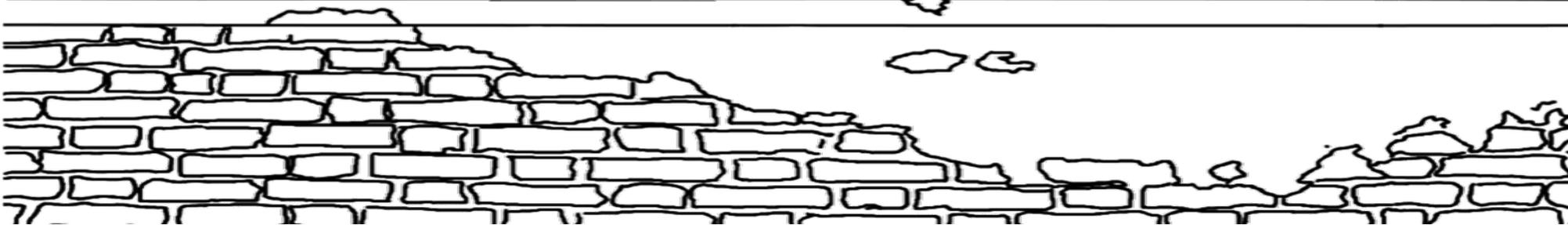


Thick silk stockings would have completed the undergarments of Victorian dresses.



*So we have completed
topic # AB010 in our
series...*

*Yes, but we'll be back
with another topic
soon...*





Original Source Material for this topic:

- 1) <https://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/victorian-dresses.asp>



Baker Street Elementary

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY

LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

RUSTY MASON &

STEVE MASON

