

Systematic constriction of the waist, as practiced to-day, could only arise in a society ignorant of the anatomy and physiology of the human body. The female body has hitherto been largely treated as if composed of some homogeneous material. There has been no regard to organs within and to the effects upon them of pressure and alteration of position, nor thought of the muscles which are not allowed free play. Investigation reveals very serious results. Women dressed according to prevailing modes, with closely fitting corsets or waists and tight skirt-bands, find it impossible to draw a full, deep breath without interference from their clothes. Ordinary breathing is cramped. Full expansion at the waist-line not being permitted they are forced to breathe more with the upper part of the lungs than nature intended, while downward pressure is greater than normal, causing displacement of the organs below the diaphragm and thus leading to diseased conditions of them. In addition, the cramped action of the lungs prevents their full development and thus restricts the supply of oxygen. For sixteen hours out of twenty-four the average woman is breathing in this unnatural manner, the ill effects of which are only augmented by the increased breathing movements of active exercise. Can anyone hope for continued health and vigor under such circumstances? Moreover, the muscles of back and abdomen are so closely bound that they become weak and flaccid from want of exercise and we have a bad carriage of the