

so far the broad belt which has been associated in men with active exertion ; while the rest of this elaborate article presumably replaces the various other girdles which we have referred to as worn by the women of ancient times. If this be the case, we do not see that any distinction is to be drawn between the constriction of the waist produced by the corset, and that which results from the tight belt associated, in the case of men, with active exertion—keeping in mind, however, that in the former the girdle is of greater breadth, and so permits of greater compression, which, in excess, is necessarily harmful. If the corset be so tight as to cause the wearer to become short of breath when walking fast, when playing tennis, or when running upstairs ; or, again, when “stitch” in the side, or any discomfort is experienced : then it may easily be assumed that the wearer is making an unwise sacrifice to fashion. Such excessive compression, or blindly continuous slighter constriction, will, we may safely say, be countenanced by no physiologist. None feel this more strongly than we do. We do not think that what we have said above warrants the conclusion that all women *ought* habitually, or even at periods of active exertion, to wear corsets, any more than that all men, or even that all athletes, ought to wear more or less tight belts.

Let us now consider the men of our own time, with regard to the custom of wearing waist-bands. We need but call to mind the fact that a belt of leather or other material, or a sash, worn tight, is associated usually with active muscular exertion. For example, the broad tight belt habitually worn in the gymnasium, abroad as well as at home, may be cited. Breadth of the belt appears to be an important consideration ; the broader the belt, the greater the constriction that can be obtained without producing discomfort. In this connection we may quote the fact that soldiers engaged in regimental sports are not unfrequently accustomed to substitute for the regulation belt a broader inelastic band, which they either manufacture for themselves or buy. The soldiers of most European armies wear a fairly tight belt ; and it is by no means uncommon for them, in addition, to wear a belt round the top of the trousers, although braces are, by the regulations, required to be worn. This under belt is tightened during forced marches. Similarly, our sailors, as those acquainted with naval matters are aware, are accustomed to tighten their belts before going into action. Rowing men, by the way, form an exception to the general rule, in loosening rather than tightening their belts. The cause of this is, that the abdominal muscles come specially into play in rowing, and that the pressure of a belt leads to cramp in these, presumably through interference with their blood supply at a time when a free circulation through them is specially requisite.

Many long-distance runners also wear an especially tight belt ;