

and even Julius Cæsar, were spoken of disparagingly, owing to their appearing in public, either ungirt or loosely girded. When the Egyptian, Greek, or Roman women wore more than one girdle, one only of these, as a rule, appeared outside the tunic, the other, or others, being worn either next the skin or over some under garment. One must add, however, that exceptions to this are common enough.

After the decadence of the Roman Empire, girdles continued to be worn. In Weiss' *Kostümkunde*, for the period from the fourth to the fourteenth century, they are referred to as forming part of the costume of all European nations.

The information which we have been able to collect as to the employment of girdles during the Middle Ages is less full in detail than that which is so easily obtained in the case of the Greeks and Romans. We may say, however, that the recumbent effigies on the tombs of knights and ladies point very clearly to the conclusion that girdles were worn by the nobility of both sexes. These girdles were often elaborately worked and embroidered; indeed, ornamental girdles of one kind or another have been employed from the earliest recorded times.

This brings us to consider the difficult question of the relation between girding and its employment for what may be termed æsthetic purposes. We have referred to the tightness of the girdles worn by some civilized races of antiquity. The comparative narrowness of these girdles, however, limited the degree of tightness to which they could be drawn without causing pain as well as disfigurement. Towards the fourteenth century, however, girdles appear to have increased in breadth. Strutt, who is a very trustworthy authority on costumes, says (*English Dresses*): "Towards the conclusion of the fourteenth century, women were pleased with the appearance of a long-waist, and in order to produce that effect, they invented a strange disguise, called a corse or corset." "The word corset appears at least as early as the thirteenth century," and in sumptuary laws made early in the reign of Edward IV., wrought corsets, and corsets worked with gold, are restricted to certain classes of the female nobility. They appear, however, to have been worn by both sexes, and were usually quilted, having slips of whalebone between the quilting. Their breadth, together with the mode of fastening them by lacing, permitted of their being drawn very tight, and thus produced the slim waists referred to by various writers of the period. "A French moralist (!), who wrote during the reign of Henry VI., says: 'By detestable vanity, ladies of rank now cause their robes to be made so tight in the waist that they can scarcely respire in them, and so often suffer great pain by it, in order to make their bodies small.'" "In the time of Queen Elizabeth," says Strutt, "the bodice was used