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## ER II.

### THE BOY.

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the fielders have

considerable running and some catching to do, and then to throw the ball in to pitcher, or baseman, or catcher. But that throw is always with the stronger hand, never with the other. Many of the fielders often have not one solitary thing to do but to walk to their stations, remain there while their side is out, and then walk back again, hardly getting work enough, in a cold day, to keep them warm. Running bases is sharp, jerky work, and a wretched substitute for steady, sensible running over a long distance. Nor is the fielder's running much better; and neither would ever teach a boy what he ought to know about distributing his strength in running, and how to get out of it what he readily might, and, more important yet, how to make himself an enduring long-distance runner. For all the work the former brings, ordinary, and even less than ordinary, strength of leg and lung will suffice, but for the latter it needs both good legs and good lungs.

Run most American boys of twelve or fourteen, six or eight miles, or, rather, start them at it—let them all belong to the ball-nine if you will, too—and how many would cover half the distance, even at any pace worth calling a run? The English are, and have long been, ahead of us in this direction. To most readers the above distance seems far too long to let any boy of that age run. But, had he been always used to running—not fast, but steady running—it would not seem so. Tom Brown of Rugby, in the hare-and-hound game, of which he gives us so graphic an account, makes both the hares and hounds cover a distance of nine miles without being much the worse for it, and yet they were simply school-boys, of all ages from twelve to eighteen.

Let him who thinks that the average American boy of the same age would have fared as well, go down to the public bath-house, and look carefully at a hundred or two of them as they tumble about in the water. He will see more big heads and slim necks, more poor legs and skinny arms, and lanky, half-built bodies than he would have ever imagined the whole neighbourhood could produce. Or he need not see them stripped. One of our leading metropolitan journals, in an editorial recently, headed 'Give the Boy a Chance,' said:

'About one in ten of all the boys in the Union are living in New York and the large cities immediately adjacent; and there are even more within the limits of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and the other American cities whose population exceeds a hundred thousand. The wits of these millions of boys are being forced to their extreme capa-

city, whether they are taught in the school, the shop or the street. But what is being done with the bodies? The answer may be obtained by standing at the door of almost any public or private school or academy at the hour of dismissal. The enquirer will see a crowd of undersized, listless, thin-faced children, with scarcely any promise of manhood about them.'

Take a tape-measure and get the girth of chest, upper and forearm, of waist, hips, thighs, and calves of these little fellows, likewise their heights and ages. Now send to England and get the statistics of the boys of the same age who are good at hare-and-hounds, at foot-ball, and see the difference. In every solitary measurement, save height, there is little doubt which would show the better figures. Even in height, it is more than probable that the article just quoted would find abundant foundation for calling our boys 'undersized.'

Next cross to Germany, and go to the schools where boys and their masters together, in vacation days, sometimes walk two or even three hundred miles, in that land where the far-famed German Turners, by long training, show a strength and agility combined which are astonishing, and try the tape-measure there. Is there any question what the result would be? When the sweeping work the Germans made of it in their late war with France is called to mind, does it not look as if there was good ground for the assumption so freely made, that it was the superior physique of the Germans which did the business.

Where work is chosen that only sturdy limbs can do, and that work is gradually approached, and persistently stuck to, by and-by the sturdy limbs come. But when all that these limbs are called on to do are light, spasmodic work, and there is none of the spur which youthful emulation and pride in superior strength bring, what wonder is it if the result is a weakly article?

Another and natural consequence many parents must have noticed. Often, in a city neighbourhood, there is not one strong, efficient, boy to lead on the rest, and show them the development which they might have and should have. Boys, like men, are fond of doing whatever they can well, and of letting others see them do it, and, like their elders, they gladly follow a capable and self-reliant leader. But if no one of their number is equal to tasks which call for first-class strength and staying powers, when no one will lead the rest up to the higher physical plane, they never will get there.

It is not a good sign, or one that bodes well for our future, to see the play-grounds of our