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BY MRS. C. L. BALFOUR.

GOSSIP ABOUT GYMNASISTICS.

It is only of late years that the advantages of physical education have begun to be understood. In this respect the Greeks and Romans were far in advance of us; for we find that their systems of education were arranged in such a manner as to carry out, at one and the same time, the improvement of the mental, and the development of the physical powers.

Gymnastics is a Greek word, and literally signifies "stripped of the encumbrance of clothes." In the age of Homer the art was chiefly confined to wrestling and boxing. It was reserved for Athens, at a later period of Grecian history, to reduce gymnastics to a science; and they were regularly taught in the Academy, the Lyceum, and in the Cynosarges Gymnasias built outside the city. Here the Grecian youth were instructed in leaping, racing, throwing the javelin, pugilism, and other species of combat. It was in such schools that the men were trained who, on the plains of Marathon, rolled back the wave of Asiatic despotism that threatened to overwhelm the liberty and civilization of Europe. Demosthenes, who, in his youth, was of an exceedingly delicate constitution, owed the vigour he possessed in manhood to the practice of gymnastic exercises; and the famous Agesilaus, who, because he was a puny and sickly infant, was flung from the Mount Taygetus, was indebted to the same art for that strength of body and mind which placed him among the foremost generals of antiquity.

At Rome, the elder Tarquin erected the first circus where the Roman youth engaged in gymnastic exercises. It was from constant practice in physical training that the Roman soldier was enabled to endure so much fatigue. He would march twenty miles in five hours, carrying, besides his armour, his baggage, weighing no less than sixty pounds. The Romans practiced swimming every day in the year, winter and summer; and in order to designate an ignorant and worthless man, they were wont to say, "*Nec literas didicit, nec natare*" (He has neither learned to read nor to swim). Horace, too, in his eighth ode, refers to this feature in the physical education of the Romans:

"Cur timet flavum Tiberim tangero?"

Which may be rendered, "Why dreads he to touch the yellow Tiber?" Shakespeare, with his wonderful knowledge of ancient manners, and with marvellous art, portrays the Roman fondness for swimming in the words he puts into the mouth of Cassius, when tempting Brutus:

"For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Cæsar said to me, 'Darest thou, Cassius, now,
Leap in, with me, into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point?'"

In the middle ages gymnastics consisted in tournaments, horsemanship, fencing, and breaking a lance; but the invention of gunpowder

destroyed, for ever, the romance of the actual and mimic warfare of those times. It cannot be denied, however, that physical strength, when combined with mental vigour, even in the nineteenth century, carries with it almost as much respect as it monopolized in the days of Achilles and Ajax.

What has been termed, in impious slang, "Muscular Christianity," would seem to have for its object the development of the physical powers for the sake of themselves alone. But physical education, properly so-called, has, or ought to have, a very different aim. It ought to be pursued on the principle that, existing as there does, a mysterious sympathetic connection between body and mind, whatever tends to benefit one will contribute to the advantage of the other. Without entering upon the reasons for this physiological fact, we may be allowed to say, that, as a general rule, the student of history will find that the men who have handed down their names to posterity are those who, to great mental, added great physical power. Take, for instance, as representatives of this class, Alexander of Macedon, Julius Cæsar, Charlemagne, William of Normandy, Robert Bruce, William the Silent, founder of the Dutch Republic, Hugh O'Neill, Prince of Ulster, Oliver Cromwell, Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, George Washington, Napoleon, Wellington, Palmerston. The only instance we can at present remember of a man of weakly body and vigorous intellect is William the Third.

To return to the subject of gymnastics. The appliances of modern gymnasia are excellent of their kind; but we may, perhaps, be permitted to express the opinion that the simplest, most natural and most inexpensive way of strengthening the body, diverting the mind, and preserving the health is walking. In this way, Washington Irving invigorated a naturally delicate constitution, and died at a ripe old age. Professor Wilson was, in his younger days, one of the most celebrated pedestrians North of the Tweed. The poet Wordsworth was fond of long solitary rambles. Charles Dickens, it is said, performs his twelve miles a day with ease. In this continent, the American and Canadian hunters and trappers perform feats of pedestrianism which would be almost incredible to a European;—and we can well believe what we were once told by an old Californian, that a practiced walker can tire out a mule. *Propos* of feats of marching, the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks has long been regarded as one of the most celebrated events in ancient warfare. The whole distance travelled in both the advance and the retreat, comprised 215 days' march; of 1155 parasangs or 34,650 stadia; about 3,465 geographical miles. The time employed was a year and three months. In later times the Duke of Wellington, when in India, marched his men on one occasion, seventy-two miles in one day. The women of Canada and the United States do not, as a general rule, practice walking to such an extent as their sisters in the British Islands. But the efficacy of pedestrianism, as a means of preserving health, is beginning to be better appreciated on this side of the Atlantic; and in Canada the fair sex have of late years become enamoured of snow-shoeing. Let every one, however, suit his own taste, and prefer the gymnasium if he think fit, or horsemanship, or any other kind of out-door exercise, so long as any of these agencies tend to preserve one of the greatest earthly blessings conferred upon man,—a sound mind within a sound body.

On a future occasion we may take an opportunity to make some observations on the mental and physical advantages of skating; and to show how in the struggle for the liberties of the Dutch Republic, the wild "Sea Beggars," ad-

vancing to the combat on skates, discomfited the best troops who upheld the reputation of the Spanish Infantry.

THE PROFESSIONS AND PRACTICES OF INSECTS.

VARIETY and diversity of form, shape and colour are everywhere visible; no two things in this world are precisely similar. This pleasing want of sameness,—this charming variety is especially seen in animated nature, and in no part of it more so than among the wonderful and oftentimes beautiful creatures, the insects.

Like the human race, the insects are divided into various ranks and grades,—into various castes, differing as widely from each other as do the sacred Brahmin and the poor degraded Pariah, or the free and enlightened Anglo-Saxon, and the ignorant, enslaved African. There are "all sorts and conditions of insects;" there are Emperors clothed in purple, and there are lazy beggars on the dunghill; there are Admirals of the Blue, who carry their colours high up aloft, and lowly Bombardiers in sombre black, who discharge their mimic artillery from the ground. Here we see the industrious labourer, busy at his work preparing for generations yet unborn, and there the lazy lounging beggar, enjoying the *dolce far niente*, after the fashion of Neapolitan lazzaroni. Here upon the leafy boughs, or before the gates of their subterraneous dwelling-houses, myriads of musicians are playing their fiddles, and in consort with the shrill piping of the bull-frog and the harsh screech of the owl, are producing that harmony which "soothes the savage ear," but sets the teeth of a civilized mortal on edge, and there the skilful architect is building his wonderful dwelling; while far overhead, in the deep blue sky, flutters a high nobility, clad in gold, silver and purple, whose food is the nectar of flowers, and whose very shrouds are of silk. These lovely creatures vary as much in size as they do in rank; they number among their hosts giant Goliaths and Lilliputian gnats,—monstrous butterflies and microscopic beetles. Nor is it alone in externals that they differ among themselves, but they vary as greatly in their minds. We have the learned Bee, who constructs her cells after the most approved geometrical plan; and the stupid moth, who flutters about the light of a candle, until exhausted it falls into the flame, and dies like many a higher being, a victim to its own folly.

It is my intention, in this paper, to make a few remarks on the various professions and occupations in which the different members of insect society engage.

First, of the *haut-ton*, the Upper Ten, the aristocracy of this world: these are undoubtedly the Butterflies and Moths, or (as those who edit the "Who's who," and "the Peerage," of the insect kingdom, properly call them,) the members of the order of the Lepidoptera. The members of this order, (which is more widely scattered over the globe, than is the English order of the Bath, or the French Legion of Honour,) are certainly entitled to be considered *Gentry*. Blackstone, in his admirable Commentaries on the Laws of England, says, that a gentleman is one who can live without manual labour;—and among these creatures, these fairy beings of whom it is stated that, "Heaven's own wardrobe has arrayed their frames,"—we find no workmen toiling day after day, putting by their gains against a rainy season, and preparing provisions for the children that may come after them. They are not beggars and spongers, nor are they poor wandering musicians, "but all of them are aristocratic idlers, who, clothed in the