

"In Switzerland, almost all the Schools, both primary and secondary, are provided with a *manège*, or gymnasium, having all the machinery necessary to a complete course of gymnastic exercises—a ladder, climbing ropes and poles, a cross-pole, parallel bars, leaping poles, a vaulting horse, and a large balancing pole. The apparatus is sometimes erected in the open air, sometimes under a covered roof; and many of the schools have both a covered and an uncovered gymnasium. The covered gymnasiums have no floors, but a ground of loose sand, which can be raked up to render it soft. The uncovered gymnasiums are always placed in a field or grass-plot for the same reason.

Such is the interest which the Swiss students take in gymnastics that they form themselves into *Turnvereins*, or Gymnastic Associations, and each Association sends about some of its members from school to school in its own district, to organize the gymnasiums and give the benefit of their instruction and example to the scholars. Each of these associations holds annually a *Turnfest*, or Gymnastic Festival, at which all the members attend; and a great number of exercises are gone through upon every part of the apparatus in the *manège*, which they held for the purpose. This, however, is only preparatory to a great triennial festival, which is held at the principal Swiss towns in succession, as the government used to be. At this festival all the associations meet, and the members compete with one another for wreaths, prizes, and other distinctions, just as in the old Grecian games before they had been perverted from their original purpose and degraded into mere exhibitions of particular feats. People assemble from all parts of the country to witness the performances; the fine national songs of Switzerland and Germany, sung in chorus by the friendly antagonists, excite and sustain the general enthusiasm; the standards of the associations and the gay clothes of the spectators give a radiant aspect to the scene: everything contributes to the joyousness and merriment of the occasion. At the close of the festival, which generally lasts three days, the wreaths are placed upon the brows of the victors in the presence of the assembled spectators, and the prizes distributed by the hands of fair ladies, who thus grace with their presence the ceremony of the award, and impart a higher value to the marks of distinction.

All this is very well, it will be said, and feasible enough, in a country where the education of every member of the community is carefully provided for at the public expense, and where, so far from being a national debt, the governments of the several Cantons have generally a considerable surplus revenue at their disposal for public works. But we reply, that the expense of fitting up even a complete gymnastic ground need not be anything very considerable, if once the site is obtained; and that the play-ground of an elementary school may be furnished with the common apparatus at a cost almost insignificant. The most expensive piece of apparatus, after all, is the circular swing, which has already been erected in the play-grounds of so many schools. It is certainly right to provide first for this most exhilarating of gymnastic exercises. If the schoolmaster were competent to give a course of gymnastic exercises he would have no difficulty, we imagine, in inducing the managers to supply the necessary apparatus. Besides, if the expense be the chief obstacle, it would be advisable to ascertain whether the Lords of the Committee of Council of Education might not be moved to make grants for this purpose. We are of opinion that their Lordships would deem the object of sufficient importance to justify a considerable expenditure of the public money; for the present Government have already evinced their sense of the importance of gymnastics to the people, by the erection of the public gymnasium at Primrose Hill.

But, as our readers are aware, there is a large class of gymnastic exercises which do not require any apparatus at all; and these are, in fact, more essential than the others, to which they are preliminary and introductory. They are such, namely, as are designed to develop the activity of the limbs rather than to call forth the physical strength. These should not be neglected in any school for children. They are very carefully taught in many of our boarding schools; and we cannot see that they are less useful to the children of the poor than to those of the middle classes. This is one of the few particulars in which the middle schools are not behind the best elementary schools, and it is owing to the fact, that the former are able to pay for the services of a drill-sergeant, and the latter are not. But there is no reason whatever why every schoolmaster should not be his own drill-sergeant: in fact, were it possible to

procure the services of a drill-sergeant in an elementary school, it would still be preferable that the master should superintend this and every other part of the discipline himself; for he should be all in all to his own school.

In order to enable schoolmasters to give their pupils a regular training in gymnastics, we intend to insert in the Journal, from month to month, a graduated course of gymnastic exercises. Our subscribers will be able to commence the course at once in their schools, as the preliminary exercises do not require any apparatus; and we trust, that, as the course progresses, managers may be induced to provide the requisite apparatus where this has not already been done.

It is hardly necessary to remind our readers of the more common and obvious advantages which result from gymnastic exercises.

The principal, of course, is the beneficial influence which they exert upon the health. This is a sufficient reason to induce every body to attach great importance to them; but it is a consideration which derives still greater weight in relation to the school and schoolmaster. The regular practice of these exercises will do much towards enabling both to discharge their duties with success; and, in those schools where any thing like high pressure is put on, will act as a most useful safety valve. Besides, light hearts are the natural concomitants of good health, and certainly nowhere are they more desirable than in an elementary school, where there are already annoyances enough, in all likelihood, without those which result from the jarring of bad tempers. How much more pleasantly, both to teacher and taught, does the work of the school proceed where these are absent, and a cheerful tone prevails.

We would beg leave, however, in a special manner, to call attention to one advantage which is not so generally understood. It is thus referred to by M. de Fallenberg:—

"The gymnastic exercises, in all their forms, are a powerful aid to the practice of design, in cultivating the taste for the beauty of form or motion. Their effect in this respect is very obvious; and the occasional festivals which are accompanied by gymnastic games, present examples of a high degree of cultivation in this respect. It is a spectacle which charms the eye, and exhibits the intimate connection of easy and graceful motion with the improvement of physical force, and the capacity to escape from danger or surmount obstacles."

It has accordingly been remarked, that one reason for the pre-eminence of the ancients in sculpture, was the patronage bestowed upon the public gymnasiums, in which the artist could form his models from every variety of development of which the human form is susceptible. However this may be, there can be no doubt whatever that gymnastics do contribute materially to the aesthetic training of the mind.

The first position, in which the body must be placed, is the following:—

Heels close: toes turned outwards nearly at right angles: body upright: shoulders thrown back: stomach kept in: head easy: arms hanging straight by the sides: hands closed with the thumbs inside.

The habit of readily realizing this position having been gained, the first gymnastic action is to be attempted.



(a) Fig. 1. (b)

Action 1. Bring the arms quickly up in front, as high as the shoulders, (nails turned upwards) (a fig. 1,) then swing them forcibly backwards, at the same time turning the nails backwards (b fig. 1), keeping the body perfectly upright. This action being mastered, and having been practised for five minutes, the next action is to be attempted.

Action 2. Stand erect as in the position first described. Put the hands on the hips, the thumbs placed behind, the fingers in front, and the feet close, and then rise as high as possible on the toes. Fig. 3 will illustrate this action to a certain extent. This action should be practised five minutes.

The third action may now be attempted.



(a) Fig. 2. (b)

Action 3. The elbows are to be drawn back, so that the fists may be close to the sides (a fig. 2); then throw the arms straightforward (b) and then back as before.—The gymnast must become perfect in this before proceeding any further: a perfection in this action being intimately connected with, indeed an essential to, the satisfactory performance of many other actions.