

The Young Man and His Problem

SYMMETRICAL MANHOOD

Physical, Mental, Spiritual

When King David was dying, he called his son to his bedside and said to him: "Be strong, and shew thyself a man". No better legacy could be left to any young man.

The emblem of the Young Men's Christian Association is a triangle. This signifies that to be a symmetrical man requires a trinity of qualities. On top of the triangle is the word, "Spirit"; on the other two sides, "Mind" and "Body". These are the three parts of a young man which the association seeks to develop—a strong body, a full orbed mind, and a spiritual nature.

Physical

Every man is a capitalist, and started by God with a fair equipment of working capital. A representative of Bradstreet's approached a man for his rating. "Who are you?" he asked. "I am a man of independent means," came the reply, "I have two good eyes, two good arms, two good legs, and a clear brain." He was a capitalist. Many a man has made good with less equipment. A superb physical equipment is worth a fortune to any man who knows how to make proper use of it. To be the possessor of a body that responds to every suggestion of the mind; to be able to press on when others are falling out in the race; to be able to stand up in spite of business competition and ever multiplying details;—these are the possibilities offered by a splendid physical equipment. No man has a right to be a failure. It does look as if, after you have furnished a man with a bucket and a cow, that he ought to be able to go out and get the milk. Still, some men will turn the bucket over, sit on it, and then wonder why things do not come their way. What we've got to do is pick the bucket up and get busy. Muscle is worth its weight in gold, and nerves of iron are never to be ignored; but after all brain is more than brawn, and grit is more than gristle. Alexander H. Stephens weighed 85 pounds when at the height of his congressional career. They rolled him about in a wheeled carriage; wheeled him into the halls of Congress, and wheeled him out again. He was all brain and scarcely any body at all; but he wouldn't surrender to his physical weakness. He mastered it. Roosevelt at 20 was slender and sickly; at 49 he sat in the Presidential chair of the United States in perfect command of himself. Dr. DuVal, an ex-Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, addressing the Presbyterian Athletic Association of the City of Winnipeg, said: "No education is complete without the education of the body". It is our duty to cultivate our physical strength and help to fortify the noble temple in which the Creator has housed our mind and spirit. It matters not how valuable the possessions that are stored in a house, if the house is insecure and the roof leaky. It is no credit to a man to be so careless about the house in which the priceless treasures of mind and spirit are placed, that the building becomes worn out before its time. If you and I are going to do efficient work in this busiest age of the world's history; if we are going to hold our own in the fierce competition of this most remarkable of all commercial periods; we will need sturdy muscles, stout lungs, healthy livers, and good digestion. A man handicaps himself seriously in the race of life who pays no regard to the rules of health. On the other hand, a man with a healthy body has better chances of success, because health inspires him with hope and ambition.

Mental

The development of the body, however, is not all that makes up a man. A prize-fighter has a well-developed body; but the influence of Jess Willard and Jack Johnson does not count for much outside of the prize-ring. There is a mind to be cultivated, and a soul to be saved. The man who devotes himself entirely to physical culture will be apt to neglect the other two parts of his nature. When the hour-glass is sending the sand down, it can not send it in the other direction. If all a man's energy is running to brawn, there will be nothing left to run to brain. The men who have compelled the world's attention, have not been physical giants, but men of mental and moral muscle. Napoleon, Wellington, Grant, and Lord Roberts, were not great in body. If the ideal of a symmetrical man consisted only in physical qualities, we should be lower in the scale than certain animals. The ox surpasses the man in muscular strength; the antelope in speed; the hound in keenness of scent; the eagle in eyesight; the rabbit in acuteness of hearing; the honey-bee in delicacy of taste; the spider in fineness of nervous energy. So we can't measure a man by his body. We have advanced beyond the age in which the world counted as its greatest heroes men like Ajax, Hercules, or Miltiades. The world today is not ruled by muscle, but by mind and heart. A young man's value to the world and to himself depends very largely on the cultivation of his intellect. Just as in the development of the body we have to regard suitable food and proper clothing, so in the development of the mind we have to consider the kind of food. Henry Ward Beecher affirmed that a proper use of his spare moments, had given him a fair grasp of the grand characters and great events of history. But it is not

food simply, nor eating, that makes strength; it is digestion. It is not the bolting down of mental meat that will make us thinkers, but meditation upon what we have read. It's mighty hard work to think, but it pays big wages. Character has to be thought out as well as fought out. Tell me the thoughts that slide in at the side door of your mind and I'll tell you the sort of fellow you are. It is the mind that plans; that impels plans into possibilities; possibilities into purposes; purposes into performances. Says George Mathewson: "The man who has fought a successful moral battle in his imagination is already more than half victorious, for it is in imagination that sin looks brightest and virtue seems most hard to win." Some one else has said: "Thought is the nitric acid which turns the glycerine of the ideal into the dynamite of the real." We must then guard most sacredly the door of our minds and keep it closed against the entrance of evil thoughts. To do this we will need to exercise our wills. The power to say, "No", and stick to it; and the power to say, "Yes", and stick to it, is one of the very best things we can cultivate. But we don't stick; that's the trouble. We begin enough good things, usually when we're going to bed, but we're back at the old stand before breakfast. A hound started out to trail a stag. He crossed the trail of a fox and became side-tracked. A rabbit jumped up before him and he forgot all about the fox; it was the rabbit for him. When the hunter finally got up to the hound, he was barking at a hole in the ground; he had treed a field mouse. Many a man has started out on a royal career, and compromised on a rat. The men who have counted for anything in the world have been men who have exercised their wills. When Napoleon's counsellors told him that he could not carry his army across the Alps to Russia, he drew himself up in dignity and said, "There will be no Alps". The first speech made by Disraeli before the British House of Lords was such a wretched failure that when he resumed his seat, he was greeted with hisses and groans. He rose, ground his teeth, and said, "You'll hear me some day". We all know how well he kept his promise. The party leaders at Rome thought that they would get rid of the ambitious young Caesar, so they gave him a commission that necessitated a prolonged absence from Rome and a difficult expedition into the heart of an uncivilized and unexplored region of country. They said: "Rome never again will see young Caesar". But the young man conquered Gaul, and, returning after a campaign of ten years, seized the sceptre of imperial power in Rome. Opposition, disappointment, difficulties, never can keep a man of will-power down.

Spiritual

Let us now come to the final quality that goes into the make-up of symmetrical manhood; and that is the spiritual nature. Physical strength is good, but it is only the cellar foundation of the house. No one would be content to live in the cellar, no matter how well stocked it might be with provisions and other comforts. He would at least want another story to the building, and we have spoken of the intellectual development. But to stop with that would be like dwelling in an art gallery or library, and never having any higher rooms where we might come into fellowship with the Creator. To change the figure, to neglect the spiritual nature, as some have done, equipping the physical and mental natures with everything needful, is like building a splendid ship and leaving off the rudder. The spiritual nature in a man is the rudder which controls his thoughts and purposes. In fact, it is the legitimate master of the whole machinery of body and mind. The Duke of Wellington used to say that moral is to physical strength as three to one. Sometimes a ship at sea is found flying the signal, "Not under control". That is a very terrible signal. So long as the machinery and rudder and rigging are sound and the ship is under complete control, she may weather the strongest gale; but now she lies helpless, at the mercy of wind and wave. No rescuing ship ever dares come very near to her, for "Not under control," means that she is a menace to others as well as herself. So in life we find far too often, a man whose conduct indicates that the forces of his life are not under control. The splendid athlete who can win a boar race, or in the arena knock out his opponent, may be only a baby in his moral manhood. A man with muscles strong enough to fell a horse, may be weak enough to yield to some subtle temptation. Samson broke the lion's jaw, but he could not break the force of his lower nature when it came upon him with its invitation to sin. A man may have the mental strength of Gambetta, and not have moral strength enough to break the fetters which finally lead him down to death. No wonder the Bible says, "He that ruleth his spirit (that is he that ruleth himself) is greater than he that taketh a city". The finest specimen of an athlete is the man who can try conclusions with his lower nature, and put his foot on its neck. He needs something more than brilliancy of intellect to do this. You remember when Jesus walked in Galilee, a poor invalid touched the hem of his garment and was cured. It was not the garment that healed her; it was the Christ in the garment. When the Roman soldiers got hold of that seamless robe, they couldn't work any miracles with it. The garment was nothing without the Christ in it. And so there are men in the world today who bear all the

outward semblances of power, but who are wholly without power. Their manners are elegant; their dress is faultless; their speech is smooth and eloquent; but they lack power. Then there are plain men who have few of these outer adornments, but when they speak we listen; when they warn, we tremble; when they praise, we feel a new life flowing through our veins. The secret is spiritual character. You remember what men said about the noble Greek who governed his city by unwritten laws: "Phocian's character is greater than the constitution." The power of character in Lamartine was such that in the bloodiest days in Paris he never bolted his doors, and once, when he rose to speak, the person who introduced him said, "Sixty years of a pure life are about to address you." Emerson says there was a certain power in Lincoln, Washington, and Burke, not to be explained by their printed words. John Milton said, "A good man is the ripe fruit this earth holds up to God".

Conclusion

The man, therefore, who takes care of his body, and cultivates his mind, but leaves his spiritual nature abandoned, is not a symmetrical man. If the Roman youth were elevated in spirit by standing one day in each week in a room devoted to the statuary of great heroes and making vows to their imaginary presence, how much more are we ennobled when we come into the presence of the infinite and eternal Creator, who is able to impart to us the elevating and transforming influence of His Holy Spirit.

"For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain;
If, knowing God, they lift not hands in prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round world is everywhere
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

TEUTONIC MORALITY

There seems to be no German consciousness of guilt. Excesses are "regrettable" but unavoidable. They are mere incidents in the progress of Kultur. It is foolish, say the German apologists, to be disturbed about them. So long as there are obstacles in the Hohenzollern path, they must be combated, and with any means whatsoever that come to hand. If the rest of the world does not understand the necessity, so much the worse for the rest of the world. Germany is absolutely sure of her "new morality" and will not be gainsaid. With such moral delinquency argument is impossible. It brushes humane consideration aside without compunction. It talks in a language that is not ours. We employ terms and ideas which it regards as obsolete. But, thank God, they are not obsolete. The Ten Commandments still stand, and justice and humanity have not yet lost their meaning for civilized men.—Providence (R.I.) Journal.

BRITISH FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Very few people realize that the total national debt of Great Britain when the present war began was less by an immense amount than it was a hundred years ago. The national debt of the United Kingdom in July last was, in round figures, £700,000,000. In 1814 it was £900,000,000. The annual burden per head in July, 1914, was about eight shillings. In 1814 the burden of carrying the national debt amounted to a little more than forty-one shillings annually per head. Keeping these facts in mind, it is not difficult to arrive at an instructive conclusion. The population of the United Kingdom in 1814 was 17,000,000, while in 1914 it was about 46,000,000. On this basis alone, the United Kingdom could now stand a debt of almost \$14,000,000,000 before being as heavily laden as it was a hundred years ago in the height of the struggle against Napoleon. But this comparison is, of course, defective, from several points of view. Let us make another calculation, based on the annual charge per head a hundred years ago. On this basis, the British national debt could be increased to \$17,500,000,000, a stupendous total, before the people of the United Kingdom would be bearing a burden per head as large as that of 1814. But, again, the shilling of a hundred years ago had more than three times the purchasing power of the shilling of to-day. But if we make it only twice, we must increase our \$17,500,000,000 to \$35,000,000,000. And in these calculations we have not taken into account the share borne in the Empire, outside Great Britain itself, in carrying on the war. Every available resource of the whole Empire, as also of France and the other Allies, pledged to the carrying of the war to its conclusion in the overpowering of Germany. Lloyd George was speaking from a sound knowledge of history when he said at the beginning of the war that the longest purse would win in this conflict, as it did in the conflict with Napoleon, valor on land and sea in defence of freedom being backed up by financial resources of unprecedented magnitude in history.