

# THE CANADA LANCET.

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Criticism and News.**

*Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice.*  
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AGENTS.—DAWSON BROS., Montreal; J. & A. McMILLAN, St. John, N.B.; GEO. STREET & Co., 30 Cornhill, London, Eng.; M. H. MAHER, 23 Rue Richer, Paris.

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## EXERCISE.

We apprehend that insufficient attention is generally paid to the great value of judicious exercise as a remedy, by the large majority of physicians. Many individuals whose occupations do not involve manual labor, exist in a semi-pathological state, as their permanent natural condition. Their health standard is low, bordering on the confines of disease, with poor physical development; proper harmony between the functions of the various organs does not obtain, all because of the continued violation of natural laws, especially that of necessary physical exertion. These unfortunate people are continually breaking down. Existing on the verge of disease, they are subject to the least deleterious influence at all times, and less amenable to remedies when attacked by disease. Their systems are ever in a condition to receive any passing contagious germ, and to propagate and indefinitely multiply these germs, to the great injury of the community.

To this numerous class, out-door exercise and the gymnasium are invaluable. Want of healthy exertion, pure air, and wholesome surroundings are the chief causes of their abnormal condition, and only these can restore, or cause approximation to the normal health standard. Pure air and wholesome surroundings cannot always be obtained, but requisite exercise is at the command of all. For those who are unable to exert themselves, massage supplies the want; for all others, walking,

riding, out-door games, the gymnasium, and if necessary, manual labor, will prove more effectual in restoring the proper development and balance, than anything at our command.

We have only to compare the standard of health enjoyed by our laboring classes under favorable conditions, with that experienced by those whose occupations do not involve physical exertion, to recognize the value of properly directed and judicious exercise, in maintaining not only a high standard of health, but in restoring the invalid and convalescent to that standard. How important then, that all should be advised by their physicians to keep up a properly directed system of physical exertion, that they should be instructed to rely more confidently on this as a remedy than on stimulants, tonics, or any so-called reconstructive pharmaceutical preparations. We do not wish to imply that the latter are not useful, or that exercise is the sole remedy, but we do claim that it is of great value and importance in suitable cases, and that it does not usually obtain that recognition and appreciation which its merit demands. We fear we are all too much inclined to prescribe artificial remedies, and neglect the natural.

In considering the effects of physical exertion, let us not forget that, not only the muscles are acted upon, but every organ and function of the body is affected, and in a manner conducive to their natural growth and health. It is unnecessary to enumerate the well-known and thoroughly established results on the circulatory system, the lungs, nerves, skin, brain, viscera, etc., of exercise both in health and disease, as we are not aware of any question or doubts on these points. Exercise, then, adapted to the condition of the patient, intelligently directed, must exert a potent influence in restoring to their natural physiological conditions the depressed organs, and bringing each and all nearer to the normal health standard.

That so many poorly developed and unhealthy people exist among us, is an evidence that too little attention has been devoted to this means of improving the development and health of the community. We should seek to overcome the evil results of our artificial life, which obtains chiefly in cities and towns, by enforcing all possible natural conditions. We are, to some extent at least, the guardians of the health of the community, and should more effectually direct the attention of the