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Athletic Training

By F. H. HURLEY

WHAT training is, and what it is meant to supply, are matters, I am convinced, about which the average individual knows little.

Professor McLaren, of Oxford—than whom there is no better authority on the subject—has defined it to be "The putting of the body, with extreme and exceptional care, under the influence of all the agents which promote its health and strength, in order to enable it to meet extreme and exceptional demands upon its energies."

How many of those, might I ask, who train themselves, or attempt to train others, realise the full import of these words, or if they do, put it into practice? Not many. At least one would think so, judging by the way they go about it.

"Festina Lente."

Bearing in mind for the moment that "Nature tolerates no sudden changes," and also taking into consideration the above definition, it will be at once seen that the only safe and sure method is to "make haste slowly."

Before discussing the subject further, it may be well to remark, as that venerable proverb puts it, that "What's one man's meat is another man's poison"—the origin of which no doubt can be traced to the fact that no two persons can be found who are exactly alike, and therefore require different treatment. Hence it is that, in all cases, the training should be individual.

To exercise, of course, must we look for the expected improvement in the physical powers, and, to be productive of the best results, it should be rational, moderate—"moderation in excelsis" is in fact the keynote of successful training. Let me therefore impress upon you to never, never over-strain or exhaust the strength by violent exertion, but always to confine the exercise well within the powers, increasing gradually the amount of work as the individual finds he can stand it. In other words, the training should be progressive, which consists in creating a natural and steadily increasing demand, and fitting the supply to the demand. That's the whole secret in a nutshell.

Of course it is assumed that exercise will be supplemented and assisted by a proper diet—good food and plenty of it, with beef and mutton, as meats, for a basis, avoiding shortly, "pastry, pork and pickles," and anything else that is known to be harmful or too bulky and of little benefit to the system. No great restriction, however, need be made, but the idea should always be, to get the foods there is the most strength in.

Avoid "Booze."

Water will be found to be the best drink, and should be freely partaken of between meals, as it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of health, it constituting more than two-thirds of the entire weight and bulk of the body.

Without sleep, exercise and food would avail little. One should see to it, then, that he gets sufficient of it to rest and refresh the system, and his feelings in this, as in other things, will tell him when he has had enough.

The foregoing are the underlying principles that make for success in the art of training, and no one can afford to ignore them. In specific cases, the amount and kind of work would, of course, depend on the event, and these may be dealt with in subsequent articles.

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