

discover what is for you the wonderfulest, beautifullest ; that is your true element and province, and be able to abide by that. True desire, the monition of nature, is much to be attended to. But here also you are to discriminate carefully between true desire and false. The medical men tell us we should eat what we truly have an appetite for ; but what we only falsely have an appetite for we should resolutely avoid. It is very true. And flimsy, " desultory " readers, who fly from foolish book to foolish book, and get good of none, and mischief of all—are not these as foolish, unhealthy eaters, who mistake their superficial, false desire after spiceries and confectioneries for the real appetite, of which even they are not destitute, though it lies far deeper, far quieter, after solid nutritive food ? With these illustrations, I will recommend Johnson's advice to you.

Another thing, and only one other I will say. All books are properly the record of the history of past men. What thoughts past men had in them ; what actions past men did ; the summary of all books whatsoever lies there. It is on this ground that the class of books specifically named *History* can be safely recommended as the basis of all study of books ; the preliminary to all right and full understanding of anything we can expect to find in books. Past history, and especially the past history of one's own native country—everybody may be advised to begin with that. Let him study that faithfully, innumerable enquiries, with due indications, will branch out from it ; he has a broad beaten highway from which all the country is more or less visible—there travelling, let him choose where he will dwell.

Neither let mistakes nor wrong directions, into which every man, in his studies and elsewhere, falls, discourage you. There is precious instruction to be got by finding that we are wrong. Let a man try faithfully, manfully to be right ; he will grow daily more and more right. It is at bottom the condition on which all men have to cultivate themselves. Our very walking is an incessant falling ; a falling and a catching of ourselves before we come actually to the pavement. It is emblematic of all things a man does.

In conclusion, I will remind you that it is not by books alone, or by books chiefly, that a man becomes in all points a man. Study to do faithfully whatsoever thing in your actual situation, there and now, you find either expressly or tacitly laid to your charge—that is your post ; stand in it like a true soldier ; silently devour the many chagrins of it, as all human situations have many ; and be your aim not to quit it without doing all that it, at least, required of you. A man perfects himself by work much more than by reading. They are a growing kind of men that can wisely combine the two things ; wisely, valiantly, can do what is laid to their hand in their present sphere, and prepare themselves withal for doing other wider things, if such lie before them. With many good wishes and encouragements.

I remain, yours sincerely,

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Physical and Mental Overculture.

A noted British novelist, now on a visit to this country, in one of his most popular narratives, exemplifies the case of an athlete who, by a severe course of training has brought himself to a high state of physical perfection, in order to compete in the lists of a foot race. When the time arrives for the test of his powers of endurance, the runner begins his task ; but ere he can reach the goal, his overtaxed system gives way, and he falls stricken with paralysis, a hopeless bodily wreck. Instances of a

similar kind in real life are but too common. The death of the celebrated oarsman, Renforth, while at the thwart of the celebrated public recollection, and the decease of Heenan, the once famous pugilist, is a more recent exemplification of the retributive action of Nature when the laws by which the confines of the possibilities of human muscular effort are transgressed.

A man's body may be compared to a finely adjusted and accurately balanced steam-engine, and his vital energy and mental power to a constant motive force acting upon a uniform area of piston. It needs no demonstration to prove that an engine has a certain fixed capability ; it can develop so many horse power, and then reaches its limit. If we make more ponderous wheels or stronger rods and shafting, equal to the performance of much more arduous work, and then expect that the same power, merely by operating such heavier machinery, will produce increased results in overcoming greater burdens, common sense tells us that we look for an impossibility. And yet this is precisely what we seek to accomplish by causing exaggerated muscular development. We destroy the equilibrium of the machine ; and as a result, the action of the power by which it is set in motion is either weakened or arrested. The physical seats of vital energy in the human frame are in the so-called vital organs ; as in the overtaxed steam-engine the molecules of vapour dash and expend their force against the piston unproductive of any motion, so in the body ; one part (the heart) unable to drive the increased flow of blood required for the augmented needs of other members, becomes overwrought and eventually diseased ; the lungs equally unable to maintain the process of burning up the effete matter poured into them by the veins, degenerate and waste away ; and the brain, failing to establish the connection between motor nerves and will, shatters by paralysis the delicate mechanism. All, in fine, are causes which as surely arrest the motion of the human machine as does the load beyond its powers that of the apparatus of iron and steel.

The case of Heenan illustrates these truths perhaps as forcibly as any that can be cited. The man was a model of physical perfection, not ponderous in build nor gigantic in frame, but to all appearances one in whom the parts of the body, while cultivated to their full extent, remained in statuesque symmetry. And yet despite the capacious breast and broad shoulders—points in themselves supposed to indicate almost unlimited strength of lungs—these last-mentioned members, in the constant strain upon the system, proved unequal to their task and fell a prey to the wasting and insidious disease which resulted in death.

While, with such evidence as this before us, the tenets of the ultra advocates of " muscular Christianity " may well be questioned with reference to the benefits derivable from the attainment of a so-called high physical condition, on the other hand it is true that no less dangerous results are to be apprehended from the converse practice, the development of the mind at the expense of the body.

Again referring to the steam-engine for a simile, let us consider the consequence, supposing that working parts and load remained constant, of our crowding into the cylinders an enormous steam pressure. Manifestly there would be either a much more rapid wearing out of the machine, caused by the overwhelming power, or more probably the complete breakdown. Thus it is with the individual who by excessive study and brain-work, overweighs the balance in the contrary direction, and, by neglecting to maintain the equilibrium of mind and body, succumbs to the impoverishment of his physical system. Illustrations in point are to be found among the students of every institute of learning. Young men, ambitious to gain scholastic honors and spurred on by