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PHYSICAL TRAINING AS A THERAPEUTIC AGENT.*

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PERMIT me to express my appreciation of the compliment implied in being asked to present a paper to this association of experts, teachers, and leaders in every department of physical education. It falls to my lot, naturally, to consider this subject in the light of its fitness to aid us in developing the defective or imperfect organization, in our effort to regain, in whole or in part, muscular power and efficiency lost through disease, in correcting abnormal functions of the body, in breaking up habits which tend to lessen the efficiency of action, in correcting deformity in any part, the existence of which is detrimental to beauty and symmetry, or which interferes with mechanical efficiency, and in assisting to improve and regulate will power so that it may be economically and wisely directed and applied. I shall deal more especially with those phases of the work seen in my own practice.

The law which declares action within physiological limits as a chief factor to aid development is well established and receives confirmation on every hand. The babe throws his arms about and springs up while standing upon his mother's lap and tosses his body to and fro in a seemingly purposeless manner; but, the while, is obeying Mother Nature's behests, and is practising, not only that size and power of muscle may increase, but that he may learn the art of intelligently balancing himself and of directing

*Read at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education, at Springfield, Mass., Dec., 1906.