

ment and utility, or what higher, nobler aim could there possibly be than this? But, do we rest on our oars for a moment and take a calmer, broader view of the race, do we but withdraw ourselves from the main stream, the rush and current, of life, and linger awhile in the grateful shade of the quiet banks, other questions, other answers, than these come to our minds. Though we do not now any more than in the heat of the race call in question the end and aim in view, though our faith in the glorious future which awaits us is still unshaken, yet we are compelled to ask ourselves a few vital, all-important questions which thrust themselves upon our reflection as we watch the contest before us. Is national progression and advancement, prosperity and utility, the real goal toward which we are aiming; and, if so, are we setting-out in the right way? Is our equipment such as befits those who have a long and nerve-testing race before them? Are we, in short, *prepared* for the great end we have in view?

No one, I venture to think, will deny the importance of such questions as these. The unfortunate part of it is, they are too rarely asked or put; the heat and rush of the race drive them from our minds; and it is only when we pause for a moment and watch the movements of those around us that they occur to us at all. Then we begin to see with a start what unpreparedness, what unfitness, what little judgment or reflection, the races show. Though the race is a long and trying one, and one that calls moreover for the fullest development and culture of every faculty, and the final goal toward which we so fondly imagine ourselves to be aiming is still in the far distance; yet very few indeed seem to have made any adequate preparation for it. A very small proportion of those before us seem fitted in any way for the contest, or possess

the equipment by which alone they can succeed and achieve the end in view, and without which it were but folly to make the attempt. And then, what is more melancholy still, we note again how indifferent all seem to this fact, how carelessly they are rushing on with never so much as the shadow of a doubt upon their minds as to whether they are in the right way or not: and, saddest of all, we perceive that those who set themselves up for leaders and directors are in most instances little better than blind leaders of the blind; and with their short-sighted directions and policy are but hastening the inevitable consequences such unpreparedness and unfitness must bring about.

We all know how assiduously our racing and boating men prepare themselves beforehand by careful training and practice for any coming contest they have to engage in, and should we not treat with contempt, or pity for his folly, the man who would attempt to compete with such without having first put himself under the requisite training and preparations? I think so, and justly too, for his failure would be a foregone conclusion. Practice and training always tell in the long run. And if a man needs careful and full training for such mimic contests as these, does he not need it a thousand-fold more for the grand race and contest of life, both as well for his own happiness and success as for the happiness and success of others? And it is just this necessary preparation and fitness, I repeat, which are so conspicuously wanting to the contestants before us; and the longer we consider the matter the more painfully does this fact come home to us. There is such a thing, I am fain to believe, as outstripping the times; and I greatly fear that is what we are doing, instead of being satisfied with keeping up with them.

In the vegetable world it is a well-