

Many a large fat man who has not breath enough for a race of a hundred yards, who would be profusely sweated by five minutes of steady labour and utterly exhausted by ten, can put out a good deal of strength in a series of short efforts. Weak people acting under the influence of strong mental excitement sometimes perform surprising feats. They climb heights, they leap gulfs, they overcome physical obstacles with which much stronger men in cool blood could not contend. But such spasmodic performances are foreign to the purpose of the trainer. He is a sort of human-engine driver, an important part of whose business it is to see that the machine which he tends is not subjected to violent jerks and strains which tend to rack its joints and weaken its working powers, but to a series of regularly graduated impulses which strengthen it and add to its capabilities until it becomes fit to work uninjured for a long time and at a high rate of speed. If he could but regulate mental tension as the engineer regulates the pressure of steam upon a boiler, he would think that his art was nearly perfect. But as a good engineer would dislike to drive with a boiler that had neither steam guage nor safety valve, so a good trainer dislikes to work with an uneven mental pressure. His standards of time, weight and distance are methodically arranged and he wishes his man to work up to them mechanically, for he knows that irregular action always wastes force. Precision and regularity of action are the qualities in which the style of the professional athlete chiefly excels that of the amateur, and to exhibit them in perfection under the agitating circumstances of a public contest requires an impassiveness of temperament almost amounting to stolidity.

Under the influence of the training process, bodily health attains its highest degree of vigour. Sleep is sound and refreshing, the appetite is keen without voracity, and all the functions of the animal economy are performed regularly and thoroughly. The soft flabby tissues become hard and firm, the eyes bright and clear, the skin tough, supple and ruddy. Cutaneous eruptions disappear, and surgical injuries are recovered from with surprising quickness. Stiffened joints become pliable and a peculiar light and corky feeling accompanies every motion as if the limbs and body had lost their weight. The perceptions of both sense and intellect seem to become clearer and more distinct. There is something in the physiognomy of a man in fine condition that the practised eye cannot mistake. The skin is browned and weather-beaten, the eyes bright and alert looking, and the features sharply-cut as if they formed a mask of skin and bone, showing none of that graceful curving of outline, filling up of cavities and rounding off of corners that constitute the popular ideal of facial beauty. The rest of the physique when stripped is seen to correspond in character. The superficial muscles, which in the untrained man are invisible, now appear hardened and raising the skin with their sharply-defined edges; the subcutaneous veins and tendons which formerly were hardly sensible to the finger, are now apparent to the eye; the skin itself tough, pliable and ruddy, covers all with a beautifully fitting envelope, nowhere tense, nowhere baggy, nowhere wrinkled, but everywhere elastic and