

### Physical Culture.

Physical culture is a subject too much overlooked in the training of our youth. To keep the mind unimpaired, care must be taken of the body. In our endeavours to develop the one due attention must be paid to the other. In developing the physical health of man, he improves, in a very important degree, the strength and vigour of his mind. The more perfect a man makes his animal nature, the better for him. The animal nature is the servant of the mind; well treated, it serves obediently and honestly; badly treated it rebels, and may in turn assert the mastery over the mind. Well matured, it will bear mental work. Unattended to, the mind will soon feel the neglect.—To build up the man, the physical and the intellectual must be developed and worked together.

The idea that the development of the body is something to be condemned, as something inimical to the development of the mind is essentially wrong. A perverted and a perverting animal nature is a fearful thing, but vigorous and healthful, it is like every thing which God makes—very good.

We would recommend this subject of physical culture to the most serious consideration of the friends of education, and to all specially intrusted with the education of youth.

A man's strength resides in his arterial current—in his muscles, and bones, and tendons, and ligaments—his brawn and sinew. His degree of strength depends upon the vigour, size, and substance of these.—Now one of the great agents for promoting health, strength, enjoyment, and a buoyant mind, is bodily exercise. There can be no such thing as perfect health and strength without bodily exertion,—it is contrary to the very scheme of man's existence,—it is not in the nature of things;—nay, the philosophy of life and health, the light of science, the testimony of all ages, and the irresistible force of irrefutable argument prove it to be impossible.

Physical education,—by which we mean bodily exercise and recreation,—is as needful as mental training. Such exercise tends very much to stimulate the mind to still higher activity. It develops the frame, it contributes to health, it frees the body from many impurities, and thus better fits it for the loftier efforts of intellect. A law of nature affects children in this particular, and is a striking illustration of what we, grown up children, should do. The necessity of play is laid upon them; and those restless little fellows who are always sliding, or running, or wrestling, or playing at some game, are doing exactly what they ought to do. Those little brothers of yours, who, it may be, drive you half insane by their noise, who will not sit down quietly, and who, if they are persuaded to sit down, wriggle and twist their bodies into new positions every moment,—these unquiet children are discharging a grand duty of their nature. The fact,—and the fact should be constantly born in mind,—that man has a two fold nature—mind and body, and that in order to preserve the first, he must take care of the second, deserves more consideration than it is receiving.

All forms of mental exertion have a wearing, exhausting effect upon the body, producing hunger, or a requirement for food. Pure intellectual labour, vigorous exercise of the will, active imagination, sustained attention, protracted thought, close reasoning, the nobler enthusiasms, the afflatus of the poet, the ambition of the patriot, the abstraction of the scholar,—the passions and impulses, hope, joy, anger, love, suspended expectancy, sorrow, anxiety, and 'corroding cares', all tend to produce physical exhaustion.—Now to meet this constant wear and tear of the physical system, there must be a counter agency. The mind must have occasional timely ease, and the body recreation and invigorating exercise.—"Exercise is the awakener of dozing languid nature, the solace of the limbs, the healer of diseases, the chaser of many vices, the medicine of listlessness, and the destroyer of not a few evils."—The whole history of the centenarian echoes to this fact, and thus teaches its lesson.

What gave strength to the great Demosthenes, so feeble and sickly in his youth? Was it not the gymnastic art? And was it not the same art, which made of a puny infant, which had been thrown without maternal pity from the mount Taygetus, the illustrious general admired in all ages under the name of Agesilaus? It was to the practice of gymnastics, or physical training, and to the daily renewal of military exercises that the Roman soldier owed those great physical qualities which rendered him so long victorious in the wars of the state. He could march twenty miles in five hours, with a weight of more than sixty pounds. In the field, he could carry, besides his arms, his baggage, and his tent, provisions for fifteen days.—But to the manly exercises of the circus, succeeded the gory games of the gladiator; and later still, the

dancing and the mimicry of the actor; then Rome, which had subdued the world, fell by luxury and effeminacy.

To enumerate the various exercises practised for giving compass and elasticity to the body, is not necessary.—The foot-ball, the skipping rope, the hoop, the battledoor and shuttlecock, and various other games of this kind, which are now deemed only juvenile games, have the double advantage of not only developing the muscles of the different members of the body, but also the chest and the lungs.

England alone has retained the ancient pugilistic exercise of the Greeks and Romans, under the name of the art of boxing; and although we cannot but admire the physical effects it produces among professional boxers, yet the cruelty, immorality, and neglect of mental culture which are usually its accompaniments, render it an unfit exercise for modern times. Nevertheless, the boxer, from his peculiar training and exercise, possesses large limbs, hard projecting and highly elastic muscles; a small abdomen; a full well developed chest, respiration large and deep; skin close, smooth, and transparent; and a uniform complexion, perfectly corresponding to the under lying muscles. In like manner, and from equally adapted training, jockeys and divers acquire the developments necessary for their peculiar occupations.

But there are other exercises, more innocent and exhilarating, most favourable to physical development, and which we strongly recommend.—Nature invites us to her green and open fields, and there unfolds her brightly illumined page for us to read and learn. On this subject the following remarks deserve attention.

"The fact is, that the physical education of youth is almost entirely neglected; whereas that ought to take precedence of mental culture. Instead of confining a child, as is too often the case, to his primer and his spelling-book, let an intelligent tutor accompany him into the fields and encourage him to ask questions about every thing that comes in his way." For instance: direct his attention to plants and flowers, show him how profusely they are scattered over the globe, like the stars in the firmament, inviting us to their contemplation. Show him what a diversified drama they form, a continually shifting scene, which never cloy, and always delights the intelligent observer. Discourse to him how not a tree, nor a plant, nor a leaf, nor a blossom, nor a fruit, but is a volume of instruction, a source of rich gratification, and full of the wonders of the Creator. From the vegetable lead him on to the animal kingdom. Feast and train his mind on its endless wonders and varieties; and while thus regaling his mind, and storing it with pleasurable and a thousand suggestive ideas,—the impression is deepened on his mind, that the commonest things by which we are surrounded are rich in instruction, and therefore deserve minute and careful attention as the work of him whose works are innumerable and incomprehensible; "which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." In this way let every object in creation that attracts the child's attention be interestingly explained to him. Let this method be pursued, and he will get more general and mind expanding and invigorating information in a twelve-month than other boys will in a dozen years—not thus trained in the school of nature.—And does not common sense indicate that the outset of a child's educational career should thus be commenced? To deny such life giving exercises as these, or those of the play-ground, with its many games and sports, is to retard the progress of the mind, and give it a character, too dry, sombrous and circumscribed.

The true idea of education is, the bringing out and properly training all the powers and faculties of the child, both of body and of mind. Much precious time is literally wasted in cramming the memory with words and phrases, which tend not a little to bar the admission of thought, and render application irksome. No man can live well whose mind is not replenished with pure thought and corresponding feeling. "A great spirit and a busy heart," will ever move towards some mightier end which is worthy of life, and which will crown and glorify it forever.

What is the world, but a vast school-house, in which man is to receive his ten thousand lessons of true wisdom and varied knowledge? Books are but the feeble echo of nature's great teacher; and while books perish, creation lives in all its freshness and glory. And is there not in trees and flowers, in mountains and rivers, in suns and stars, an inner, ever enduring life, with which the spirit of man may and will commune, and hold deeper fellowship, when all the apparatus of schools shall have perished?

Every thing in nature is full of instruction. Every leaf that flutters in the breeze is a page written by the finger of the Creator, and revealing the secrets of his wisdom. The study of nature is a thousand times more important than the study of books, and to youthful constitutions, and the expanding mind, more invigorating