

By the loss of one of the senses, all ideas and conceptions which are conveyed through the same are wanting. We can, for instance, give the blind no idea of the beauty of a picture or landscape, and the deaf no delight in music. This already shows how unnatural it is, and what a want of judgment, to torture the children exclusively with dogmas and exercises of the memory. There is but one way of teaching a child, that is, to take care for the variety, strictness, and clearness of the perceptions. All questions put by the child show the desire to bring his own feeling to the right clearness. Formation of notions and combination naturally follow, and it is certainly better to bring the child to an abstract truth through his own reflection than to make it at length intelligible to the memory through long sermons. It is therefore, that the more frequent sojourn of the tutor with the children in the open air, where he can call attention to surrounding objects, is of such unspeakable value. The bodily organs of the senses can be refined and improved by practice. Gymnastics is here able to do something. The uninterrupted application to indoor study is in a great measure an important reason for short-sightedness; therefore it is easy to see, that through continued employment of the eyes on near objects the power of discerning distant objects is destroyed. And we see with sorrow that the weakness of the eyes prevalent with the learned begins in the years of youth, or even boyhood. The interruption of the application to near objects is already a great benefit to gymnastics, but it also by many exercises practises the eyes. For instance, in calculating the distances for jumping, through many vaulting exercises and particularly in fencing, where the eye not only follows the quickest movements of the foil or sword, and with readiness perceives a momentary exposure, but even reads in the eyes of the opponent the intended thrusts and blows. The ear will be practised in many gymnastic games, for instance, in blind man's buff, where the eyes being covered, the ears are the only guides. The refinement of the taste and the smell, senses which can be more easily dispensed with, can certainly not be much aided by gymnastics, luxury does in this case more than we wish. The development of the sense of touch, lastly, must be left more to domestic education. The mechanical part of music, drawing and so on, are here the best tutors. It may however be mentioned that gymnastics does not deserve the reproach that it destroys the delicacy of the hand movements. As a proof of this may be stated, that Gymnastic Clubs of the Continent always count among their members painters, sculptors, musicians, etc., many of whom are good gymnasts, as well as clever artists.

Be mindful therefore, to preserve to your children a sound body. Bodily weakness and mental depression are otherwise the product which you send into the world, instead of healthy children, both in mind and body, who salute life with joy and happiness. Do you attend to the health of body at the same time, that you are educating the mind, the latter will comprehend more acutely, more powerfully, and quicker, and will attain the greatest power and energy in youth and manhood.

A few words of Cleveland may close the consideration now gymnastics act on the body. He says in his excellent essay on the classical education of boys, "First of all, I would recommend those exercises which strengthen the frame systematically, as gymnastics of every kind. I am aware that these are in use among us, but they are rarely insisted on as a duty, children are left to their inclination, and this is a country where the excessive heat in summer and cold in winter induce the want of energy and inactivity. I wish that an hour a day might be set apart, and rigidly kept for these exercises. The result of such an education is truly astonishing. . . . It is melancholy indeed in our institutions for learning, especially our colleges, to see so many puny looking young men; hollow cheeks, round shoulders, and bending body are characteristics of our students, and premature old age, or consumption, carries off too many of our most gifted men."

It will, perhaps, at first sight appear curious, that gymnastics secondly, would have a *beneficial influence on the mind*. There exists between mind and body a communion. We find everywhere the proof how the body works on the mind, and the mind on the body; the development and the healthy state of the body must consequently facilitate the development of the mind. "It is not a soul, not a body which we shall educate, it is a man of whom we must not make two," says Montaigne. And do we not know how an exercised mind influences involuntarily the muscles of the body, the circulation of the blood, the organs of respiration, in short, the whole physical structure? Do we not find, that vexation and anger affect the liver and upset the stomach, and that shame brings the blood to the face? Sorrow and affliction find vent in tears; the lungs, the windpipe, the diaphragm are affected by sighing, crying, and sobbing; enthusiasm and animation contract the muscles, and quicken the circulation of the blood, whereas on the contrary, terror and fear convulse, and produce involuntary ejaculation.

Gymnastics is, in the first place, a powerful antidote to inattention or absence of mind, which is a clog to all moral and intellectual advancement. Every movement and every exercise requires the full attention of the pupil. He cannot execute a leap, a movement, or turn of the body, a game or contest, without giving it his full attention. He must be perfect master of every movement, estimate distances, calculate the mode and speed in which each limb must be moved, or he cannot succeed. Niemeyer is right when he says, "that the gymnast shows his perfectness when he can with the greatest coolness use every power of the body for some definitely given object, and in making use of every advantage, execute apparent impossibilities through gradually won dexterity. As long as he does not give full attention to what he is doing, he is in danger." What force and vivacity there is in the face of a physically well-trained youth, all his movements,

his whole face expresses so plainly the activity of the mind, and its attention to all that is passing.

Again, gymnastics is the finest school for *courage*. Courage has many sources. Habit, and the repeated occurrence of a danger produces it, another sort owes its existence to animation, enthusiasm, and intoxication. These, however, cannot be the object of education, the one from its being restricted to certain actions, the other from its bursting like a bubble, and doing more harm than good. Real courage faces danger with coolness, consciousness, and in knowledge of its strength, either from a sense of duty, or because the danger cannot be evaded. Gymnastics produces this courage by strengthening the muscles, through its certain decision and quickness of the movements. It is one of the greatest pleasures of the gymnast, to feel himself in difficulties, which he is able to overcome by consciousness of his strength and agility. It seldom requires a foreign impulse to urge him on; on the contrary, it is one of the most difficult and important tasks of the teacher, to keep his pupils within bounds. Gymnastics is another and rich source of courage, as it teaches the endurance of hardship, pain, and fatigue; every exertion seems to bring fresh strength. How very deficient on this point is our education, how difficult it is for the teacher to overcome the fear, and misdirected love of the parents. The child has a desire to make gymnastic exercises of his own, such as running, jumping; but these might be dangerous. "Walk very slowly, or you may fall and kill yourself, and then we shall have no little Fred left," are the admonishing words of the anxious mother. The little prisoner sees the other children running about, jumping and playing, he wants to join them, but he is told they are unruly and naughty children, they will mislead the little son, knock him down, and teach him bad manners. The desire for freedom becomes stronger and stronger, he becomes untractable, the mother can hardly bear it any longer: when at length a haven of rest is opened—the school; and in a short time the wild, untractable boy has become docile and quiet, and not seldom surly, indolent, and dreamy; and thus his life passes without the enjoyment of the most beautiful years, those of childhood, in mirth and innocence, the remembrance of which remains and enlivens the eye of the youth and man.

Gutsmuth strikingly describes such an education with the following words: "At home, anxious injunctions repeated a thousand times, and in the school great circumspection, great attention, avoidance of danger, even where none is to be found. Everywhere a rigid and strict depression of natural courage from childhood upwards. Taming! taming! is the watch-word!"

Farther, gymnastics is a means of promoting courage by expanding the chest and giving vigor to the lungs. Too much study makes the student weakly and deadens the vital powers, and it is with difficulty that the mind retains vigor, when the body has lost it. Study exhausts the animal spirits, and is an antidote to courage. We find with weakening courage a visible expansion of the chest, while on the contrary, if it is contracted, it is unable to participate in the same degree of emotion.

The desire for bodily exercise is so strong in healthy boys that any effort to suppress it only tends to heighten the same; it is, consequently, only reasonable that we should provide for its regular development. The correct estimate of their strength is to be obtained by boys through repeated exercise under proper direction. Experience has shown me that none are more foolhardy than novices in gymnastics; whereas the elder pupils will never over-estimate their strength.

Again, gymnastics is conducive to *hilarity and buoyancy of spirits*. What is more pleasing in youth, than that cheerfulfulness which is the warrant of so many good qualities? The straight jacket of schools often deadens these expressions of bodily and mental health; but gymnastics, from its healthy influence on the body, and with its quick and dexterous movements, accelerates the same. As Tristram Shandy says, "So much more exercise, so much the more health and happiness; but idleness and inactivity, certain death." Sometimes the mere sight of the cheerful exercises of the gymnastic ground cheers up and diverts the spectator to such a degree, that he feels all the vivacity of youth, and he will not seldom throw off his coat, join in with the rest, and work away as if his life depended on it.

That gymnastics *prepares the mind for scientific study*, may easily be conceived from what has gone before. What can be a more efficient preparation for the reception of knowledge than a healthy condition of the body and mind? The healthy state in which the body is kept avoids the retrograde movements often produced by illness. Hippocrates says, "The strength of the mind increases with that of the body. When the body is diseased, the thoughts are distracted."

Sterne says, "Oh, blissful health, thou art worth more than all the money and treasures in the world: through thee the mind expands and puts in motion all its powers to receive instruction and love virtue; he who possesses you has little more to wish for; but he who is unfortunate enough to lack you, lacks all with you."

The most striking side of gymnastic education is the development and exercise of *activity*. It is true, that the characterless also have good intentions to improvement and to good actions, but they disappear like *ignes fatui*, after having flickered for a short time.

The social and simple nature of gymnastics, and the *simplicity of dress required*, do much to destroy that conceit and self-esteem which the imaginary advantages of money, birth, and standing, are apt to give.

Gymnastics is, in many respects, a fruitful source of *friendship*, in the form of a self-denying, open disposition,—for the mere friendship of words is not worth much. The physically healthy man thinks less of self; in him the feeling of public utility and self-abnegation is most developed, one finds, consequently, in the working, strong, lower classes, a lively par-