

P R E F A C E .

In a few vacation days in August, 1877, an article was written which appeared in *Harper's Magazine* for May, 1878, entitled 'Free Muscular Development.' The *Boston Journal of Chemistry* urged the Messrs. Harper to reprint it in their 'Half-hour Series.' The latter thereupon expressed a wish that the subject therein considered might be gone into more extensively; and as their scrap-books showed that the article had been widely and favourably received by the press, there seemed fair reason to hope that a little broader and fuller view of the same topic might share that favour.

In a country where general and uniform development of the body is even yet almost unknown, where the want of that development is keenly felt in every branch of active life, and where the interest in athletic contests, much as it is talked about, is still limited to a very small portion of the community, there is wide room for any sensible system of simple yet vigorous daily exercise, which, while quite free from the risks such contests entail, shall still be within the reach of all.

The aim here has been, not to write a profound treatise on gymnastics, and point out how to eventually reach great performance in this art, but rather, in a way so plain and untechnical that even any intelligent boy or girl can readily understand it, to give the reader a nudge to take better care of his body, and so of his health, and then to point out one way to do it. That there are a hundred other ways is cheerfully conceded. If anything said here should stir up some to vigorously take hold of, and faithfully follow up, either the plan here indicated or any one of these others, it cannot fail to bring them marked benefit, and so to gratify

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