The Value of Physical Development.

Indulgence in athletics furnishes in its wise development one of our largest hopes for the benefit of civilization and the increased usefulness of every one to those around him. Made in the image of God, the human body is the most beautiful thing the eye of man has ever looked upon, the most dignified thing he has ever beheld. Brains are not created solely in the head, they exist in a subsidiary form throughout the whole physique and the wisely regulated movements of the body strengthen and increase the intellectual proportions. There may be disproportions and aberrations in the individual, but the physical aspects of a race furnishes indubitable evidence of the potential powers of mind. People work like what they are and are what they work like, when the honesty of nature is not masquerading. The Greeks were the intellectual princes of the antique world because they also succeeded in reaching the highest plane of physical perfection; those attributes in a race are co-ordinate, though the correspondence may fail in the individual.

The efforts of nature are towards perfecting the type when different racial elements mingle; in the struggle of perpetuation the better characteristics are preserved, the poorer ones are eliminated. For this reason our American race, the resultant in the future of the confluent streams of several different European races, holds out the largest promise of symmetrical endowment and harmonious development for the coming man.

Our composite type will then represent all that is best in Gaul and Celt, Teuton and Finn, and this as well mentally and morally as physically. Towards this culmination of the race it is the duty of every one to exert a helping influence, to possess personal brains and strength becomes a solemn duty to one's self and posterity; illness and disease are nature's penalties for violations of her laws, they are no part of the Divine plan. The increase of pure athleticism, which has been so marked in this country in recent years, may then be viewed with much gratification. A large and growing body of our youth, and particularly those of the wealthier classes in which the higher education and finer culture is to be found, are now studying and practising the laws and principles of bodily health and development. Nor is this good result confined to young men alone. Such athletics as are suitable to those of the gentler sex find in them an ever increasing number of votaries; the fragile, languid, sickly girl is soon an object of commiseration; it is no longer interesting and attractive to be delicate. From these two contributing causes, the mingling of a mixed race in America and the healthy interest in general athletics on the part of both sexes, we may then hope to make within a few generations our national type hero the finest in the world. Similar causes have made the native English perhaps the highest type of national man. Danes and Saxons, Teutons and Gauls together with Celts mingled their life currents in the great stream that constitutes the English race today.

In our own country, a second process of refinement and sublimation is already taking place, and from it we may expect the crystallization of a higher type of humanity in its racial characteristics than has hitherto appeared upon earth since the Greeks. With this increased fineness of our physical type will surely be associated corresponding values of the mental and moral life; civilization will advance towards a richer, happier, more perfect condition. Athletics cannot, therefore, be too much encouraged or their value be too highly esteemed; especially should it behoove the wealthier classes to use their money and leisure in the effort to develop their representatives from whom the public expects so much.

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