

EXERCISE, AND HOW TO BENEFIT BY IT.

By MEDICUS.



ONCE upon a time—it might have been six weeks ago, it might have been six years, or sixteen,—I was spending a few days in autumn, with a friend of mine, in one of the most charming nooks of dear, hospitable old Yorkshire.

This friend of mine, though by no means a wealthy man, as wealthy men go now-a-days, was at all events very well to do. He owned—I might say owns—a good deal of land, keeps hunters, and sits behind a pair of beautiful greys, when he goes for a drive or comes to meet one at the station. His house, his lawns, his garden and grounds are all in good taste, which is saying a deal; and he himself is the soul of generous hospitality and kindly goodwill to all who come in contact with him.

Indoors one cannot help feeling at home, for an air of quiet refinement pervades the whole house. It is saying enough to mention that his wife is a Yorkshire lady, and his three stately and gentle young daughters all a father could wish them to be.

No part of England is more bracing or healthy than that in which my friend resides. This being so, I was somewhat surprised to find, on the first morning of my arrival, that breakfast, which, to people in health, should invariably be a fairly substantial meal, was in this family a mere make-believe. I myself had been up and about by seven o'clock, making friends with every animal about the place; and I was scarcely sorry when nine o'clock came, for, rude though it may sound, I was hungry, healthily hungry.

"Where, O! where," I said to myself, "have these girls been all the morning? Not out in the fresh and balmy air surely. No, that is impossible."

I assure you, readers, if anything could have taken away my appetite, it would have been the languid looks of these poor maidens, and their no less languid replies to their papa's question—

"What will you take, dear?"

From the very way they answered, you could see it was—if not positively a weariness to eat at all—entirely a matter of indifference what they partook of.

"Oh! I'll have an egg—I think."

"Just a tiny bit of bacon, please."

"Nothing, only a little bread-and-butter."

I felt like an ogre. I secretly wished I hadn't been hungry, but I could not feign; and, there being no lack of viands on the table, with a groaning sideboard not far off, I—well, I actually made a hearty breakfast, comforting myself with the thought that I was doing good, example being better than precept.

But I was not surprised at the want of appetite my young friends exhibited, nor at the general air of languor and ennui that pervaded all their actions, when I found out how they lived and what their occupations were. I ought to say that all three were beautiful girls, though theirs was a beauty that wanted tone! And remember this, beauty that wants tone flies away in comparatively early life.

These girls, then, belonging as they did to a family in which work or labour of any kind was not by any means compulsory, devoted their time, when not reading, or playing, or writing, to sewing, knitting, embroidery, and

that modern substitute for the ancient "sampler" called crewel-work. It is cruel work often enough in more senses than one. The visible results of it are very pretty—this I readily admit, but the invisible results are too often lamentable in the extreme; and here are the names of a few of them—contracted chests, headaches, dimness of sight, brain fatigue, languid livers, dyspepsia, stiff backs, and premature "stoop."

My dear young friends in the north are merely examples of a class of people, to be met with everywhere in life, who know nothing of the intrinsic value of healthful exercise in maintaining the body in a state of vigour and the mind in a state of tranquillity.

To thousands of my readers, perhaps, it never occurs that exercise is a necessity of life, and one of the best means we possess of keeping sickness at bay and ensuring long life. Many may never have been told that it was so, or, having been told, it never rightly came home to their understandings, or they only half believed it.

It is to girls such as these that I to-day address myself. If I were writing for a class of young men students I should at once set about proving in a scientific and physiological manner the value of exercise to the human frame. I would explain the actions of the heart, and the functions of the brain and nervous system generally, and even describe minutely and anatomically the mechanism of that great but sadly over-worked gland the liver. But my audience is a gentle one, and I must deal gently with it, in the matter of hard words and scientific language. I promise to do so, but at the same time my audience must deal fairly by me, take what I affirm as truths, and believe that I am really and truly actuated by an earnest desire to do good.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," so runs the old saying, and we might add, "makes Jill a dull girl." This is quite true, but on the other hand it must not be forgotten that all play and no work is equally deleterious; and it is a fact well-known to every scientist that idleness is quite incompatible with a healthful existence. In other words, if you really wish to be in good health, and therefore happy, you must perform a certain amount of work five or six days in every week, and that work must partake of the nature of duty.

It is very often the case that people who have made fortunes in business or in their professional pursuits, retire into private life, in the hopes of enjoying rest and happiness, and, doing so, in reality court an early death.

The prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," is a beautiful one, and I can conceive of no being much more to be pitied than he or she who, possessing wealth, has to spend this life vainly hunting for pleasure and happiness. How true are the words of the immortal Scottish bard!

"Pleasures are like poppies shed,
You seize the flower the bloom is fled;
Or like the Borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like a snowfall in the river,
One moment white, then gone for ever."

But, while work is in reality a blessing, a blessing of so great value that even the rich must seek for it in some shape or form, if they wish to be well and continue so, work and exercise, as I shall endeavour presently to show you, must not be confounded together.

No writer is likely to over-rate the good of exercise; indeed, the benefits that accrue from it, when taken judiciously, are incalculable.

Many a girl, not feeling over well, being easily tired, suffering often from back-ache, head-ache, want of appetite, especially in the morning, general weariness and want of heart, with perhaps fits of melancholy, goes and seeks

assistance from medicine, and takes tonics in some form, and very likely in vain, the real tonic needed being plenty of wholesome exercise in the open air. If she only took that, what a change it would make to her life and existence!

The human body is like a machine of beautiful construction and workmanship; if kept going, it keeps bright and clear, but left alone it soon grows dull and useless.

Without exercise the wheels of life get positively clogged. This is figurative language; I will put it more plainly then. Apart from the fact that when the muscles of the body are not regularly exercised they get weak and flabby, and simply useless, being only like so much dead weight about the body—apart from this, I say, exercise enables us to throw off from our systems poisons that are generated therein, and which, if retained, thicken the blood, blunt the feelings, render the brain dull and apathetic, and weaken our whole framework. Without exercise the skin is inactive, the bile from the liver is improperly eliminated, or retained in the blood; and our lives, therefore, cannot be otherwise than miserable.

"By habitual neglect of sufficient exercise," wisely remarks a recent writer, "the system may and does accommodate itself to such neglect; so that not only may the desire for exercise cease to be a fair measure of its need, but positive exhaustion may attend a much less amount of exercise than is necessary to long continuance in sound health. However strong and well, therefore, a person may feel, notwithstanding his neglect of exercise, he ought to remember that he is playing a most dangerous game, and that sooner or later his sin will find him out—either in the form of dyspepsia, liver or other disease, which so surely creeps upon the offender against the laws of health."

I have said above that work is not exercise, and as a rule it is not. I mean to say that the movements of the body and of the muscles thereof, which one has to make every day in the performance of her bounden duties, is not exercise in the true sense of the word. If it were so, many girls, notably those who toil in factories or behind shop counters, ought to be as healthy and happy as the summer day is long. But are they so? Let them themselves make answer; I need not. Simple work and duty is often tedious and wearisome—it tires the body and saddens the mind, and is anything but conducive to health if carried on too long.

But true exercise means a change from this very work that one engages in, an entire change for the time being, a change which shall be as pleasant for the mind as for the body, and as great a relief for the one as for the other. "Well," says some poor girl to me; "I'm sure I get enough exercise, and it is in the open air too, because I walk more than a mile every morning and evening to my work."

I am sorry to have to undeceive you; if you were to walk the same distance to see a dear friend or in company with that friend, and without having to sit down to work at the end of it, then it would be exercise, because the mind would be free from all anxiety. Nor is the walk home from your place of business exercise, because in all probability you are both fatigued and hungry. Indeed, the only good that these to and fro walks can possibly do you, is centred in the fact that you breathe fresh air when taking them.

You will see, then, that I want you to understand that exercise, to be of any service to a person, must be pleasurable—the mind and body must go hand in hand. Suppose, for instance, that you are just in the middle of a glorious game of lawn tennis, and a person comes on the ground and whispers to you some disturbing or distressing intelligence.

Before you heard it you were enjoying yourself, you were actually gaining health and strength every minute. Do you think you are likely to gain any, after you have heard the news, while you continue the game almost mechanically, with the smiles freezing on your lips, your very heart cold, and your mind a mile away?

Again, I say exercise to be beneficial must be enjoyable, and the more enjoyable it is the more good it will do you. Even laughing does one good, for only healthy people can laugh; weakly people do not, or, if they do, it is half-heartedly and hysterically.

Joy is a wonderful tonic, wholesome laughter is splendid exercise. I myself am a hard-working man, and although I take plenty of wholesome exercise in the open air, there are times when the weary brain needs repose and a tonic. And what tonic do you think I take? Do I search for it among the bottles and jars that stand on the shelves of my dispensary? Indeed I do not. I go straight up to town, and make my way to Charing Cross Hospital. Do I find my tonic there? Not quite, but at some place where I can be cheerful without depression.

Movements of the muscles of the body, then, do not constitute exercise in the correct sense of the word. Hence the use of the dumbbells, although good in its way, is not all that is wanted to bring a girl into healthy "fettle," as your brothers would call it.

The next *sine qua non* about exercise is this, it ought to be taken in the open air, and the more fresh and pure that air is the better. People talk a great deal about the advantages that accrue from a short sea voyage. I freely admit the advantages, but most of them come from the bracing purity of the air one breathes when afloat on the blue water.

Exercise must also be taken with *regularity*, for remember it is a tonic, and a tonic is one of those things that only do good by slow degrees; but, if taken one day and omitted the next, no benefit can come from it at all. Again, as we have seen that exercise ought to be pleasurable, so on the other hand ought it to be *moderate*; else your pleasure resolves itself into pain. It ought never to be carried to the verge of fatigue, although, remember, I do not object to your feeling what I may term delightfully tired—tired with that kind of tiredness that makes subsequent sleep a delicious certainty. But, if exercise makes you so tired that sleep is banished, it is being carried beyond bounds, and you must take care not to do so again. When taking exercise therefore do not hurry it. If you have, for example, determined to take a course of walking exercise, you must be moderate with it at first; and, when you find yourself getting a little tired, rest for five minutes, then go on again. It is the most foolish thing in the world to boast about one's strength, and to try to accomplish walking feats for the simple sake of having to say you have done so and so. Over-exertion is most injurious.

The dress you wear when taking exercise should not be heavy, and it should not be tight in any way. That is all I shall say about it at present, though, with the kind permission of Our Editor, I may return to the charge some other day, and treat my readers to some wholesome remarks on the subject of dress. I'm not at all sure, though, that it will be considered a treat.

Care should be taken not to catch cold after exercise. If perspiring, even if the day be warm, you should always have some light woollen or silken covering, or wrap, to throw around you, when the pleasant exertion is over. If perspiring much, a change of under-clothing is actually a necessity, and this should be had as soon as possible.

Always take rest after exercise, and it ought

to be in the recumbent position. This is most essential.

Now, about the best *time* for exercise. Medical men will tell you that about two hours' exercise in the open air should be taken every day. But this does not mean you are to take it all at once. Before breakfast is a good time for a gentle walk, yet the delicate should swallow a mouthful or two of milk or eat a tiny biscuit before going out. A glass of cold water does good too, before one's walk; and it is a good plan to walk, say a quarter or half-a-mile, to a well, drink a glass of water there, and then return. To those who take this advice, breakfast will be anything but a make-believe.

Never take exercise on a full meal. From two to three hours after is the best time, and if you take your principal exercise before dinner, be sure to allow time for at least half an hour of rest before you sit down; else you are but opening the door for indigestion to walk in and play havoc with your health.

Exercise, to be beneficial, must, as I have already said, be regular; but perhaps you are afraid of the weather. I pray you be not so; wrap up lightly but well, and defy it. Defy the wind, defy the rain, ay, and sleet and snow itself; for one does not catch cold when actually taking exercise, I do assure you. Finally, let your exercise be varied, one day this kind, and the other that, but always pleasant, always pleasurable, and taken at the same hours day after day. You may find it irksome at first, but it will soon become a habit, and your guerdon will be—Health.

NEW MUSIC.

PIANOFORTE MUSIC.

METZLER AND CO.

The Gloucestershire March. By Hugh Clendon. Dedicated to Colonel Bontein and the Officers of the 3rd Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment.—The war in Egypt has inspired more than one of our musicians to write a military march, and Hugh Clendon has caught the spirit of the conquering soldier returning with lively steps to the welcome awaiting him. The music is bright and military, and is arranged also as a duet for the pianoforte—as a septet for full orchestra, military band, and brass band.

ASHDOWN.

A Spring Flower (by C. E. Pathe), called a "Tone Picture." Also, by the same composer, "*In Shady Vale*," an Idyl; "*Sweet Dreams*," a Reverie; are all pleasing, and have considerable merit as pianoforte pieces.

Neues Blumenlied. By Gustav Lange.—An elegant little drawing-room piece; will be much appreciated when carefully and smoothly performed.

The same may be said of *Ein Tag in der Schweiz* ("A Day in Switzerland"), also by the same composer.

Dreams of Youth. A sketch. By A. Loeschhorn.—A pretty and graceful composition, well worthy the notice of some of our young friends.

The Chase. Hunting Song. By Oliver Cramer.—A bold and spirited piece, requiring great firmness and precision in the rendering of it. The style is rather novel.

ROBERT COCKS AND CO.

Toujours Fret. Marche militaire. By Michael Watson.—A quaint and spirited piece; not difficult.

HITCHINGS AND ROMER.

Nacht Reise Lied. Reverie for piano. By A. Macirone.

Summer Serenade. By C. A. Macirone. Both these pieces have considerable merit, and will doubtless be appreciated when effectively performed.

PATEY AND WILLIS.

Three Rondos. No. 2. G. Merkel. A barcarolle.—Easy and effective. The flowing melody, in 6-8 time, admirably suggests the motion of the boat.

Sonatina. No. 1. G. Merkel. By the same composer we have a sonatina in F. Our young friends will do well to study this elegant *morceau*, especially those who have overcome the difficulties of the sonatinas by Clementi. The themes are graceful, and are developed at greater length than is usual in sonatinas. This one *under our notice* contains a wholesome amount of scale passages, which will well repay the student's attention. We would suggest that on page 2, line 3, bar 3, the last note in the bass should be G, not F.

Marche Fantasque. Simplified edition. By Herbert F. Sharp.—A short and mystic introduction of about ten bars, followed by a bright and spirited march. The triplet passages by their quaintness greatly enhance the effect of the suave melody of the trio which follows in due course. The march is then repeated, and closes with a short coda.

Three Dances. No. 2. Herbert F. Sharp.—A lively and pretty little piece, easily learnt, and of moderate difficulty.

Excerpts from the Pianoforte Works of the Great Masters. Edited by Walter Macfarren.

No. 9. Allegro from second suite. Handel. Mr. Macfarren's able and careful fingering of this piece renders it an excellent study for players generally. Our young friends will see for themselves that there are two or three printer's errors in the fingering; also, that on page 3, last line, first bar, a treble clef is omitted.

VOCAL MUSIC.

PATEY AND WILLIS.

Rest. Words by Rev. T. E. Brown. Music by Handel.—This beautiful largo by the great master has hitherto been known and heard as a purely instrumental composition. It is adapted, with good taste and feeling, to the human voice, and set to appropriate words by the Rev. T. E. Brown. Published in two keys: E flat and F.

In a Boat at Sea. Words by Hugh Conway. Music by J. F. Barnett.—A charmingly-written song, full of tenderness. Suitable for a soprano voice. It will be noticed that on page 4, first line, the last note should be G, instead of F.

A Thousand Years. Words by R. L. de Pearsall. Arranged by W. T. Trimmell.—One of a series of songs for public schools. Price 2d. If the remaining numbers of this series are as attractive as the one now under notice, which is a well-known Norse melody, they will form a very useful addition to the repertory of schools and singing classes.

Charity. Cantata for female voices. The music by Franz Abt.—This cantata consists of seven numbers and extends over thirty-one pages. Although its title would naturally lead us to expect some part writing, the whole work consists of choruses in unison and solos, with the exception of some forty bars, written in weak, three-part harmony. It is a matter of surprise to us that so great a master as Franz Abt should have produced so feeble a composition. We can only recognise his usual charming vein of melody in No. 3, a solo for mezzo-soprano, entitled "Leader of Nymphs," which really leaves nothing to be desired for purity of idea and beauty of development.