Commencement Thesis,
upon
Physical Culture for Americans
by
Marian E. Swingle,
Manhattan,
Kansas.
Outline of thesis

Physical Culture for Americans

I. Introduction:
The attention paid to Physical Culture is becoming wider spread.

II. Established examples of benefits derived from systematic physical training.
   a) Ancient Greeks
   b) Romans
   c) Germans
   d) English

III. Physical conditions of people in the United States.
   a) Our fore-fathers
   b) Present Generation
      1. Men
         i) Professional
         ii) Farmer
      2. Women
         i) Housekeeper
         ii) Society ladies
         iii) Those in professional work
      3. Children
         i) City
         ii) Slums
         iii) Middle class
         iv) Highest class
IV. Cause of present condition of majority of cases.
   a) Indoor habits of many.
   b) Influence ofLatest sewing machinery.
   c) Sports and recreative character of.

V. Means of helping this state of affairs.
   Public Schools.
   Newspapers.
   Higher schools.

VI. Conclusion.
   We can hope for no ideal mental development without an accompanying physical development.

List of Books referred to during study of subject:

- Greatest need of College girls - Atlantic Mo. Vol 69.
- Physical Education in Public Schools - Pop. Sci. Mo. Vol 16.
- " at Wellesley College Award Rev. Vol 6.
- " Tommy, Memory - Pop. of Educational concern - Vol 1.
- " Culture for Boys - Sci. Amer. Vol 60.
- Physical Education - Education Vol 8.
Physical Culture for Americans.

As man advances, his mind growing stronger, the limit of his mental powers wider, he recognizes that there will come a time when comparatively little can be done unless his body is developed proportionally as is his mind. The nature is such that mind and body are inseparable and as in the order of nature, body comes first in importance so it should be first in importance of correct development.

And each day each year it is becoming more evident that the success with which the body is correctly developed determines in a very considerable degree the success to be obtained in mental and moral development.

America's day of great agitation over this subject is yet coming. Today we find the field much broader than once it was and in the schools of many of her higher institutions of learning are to be found the playgrounds and gymnasia as evidences of the deeper interest in the subject, but America is behind many European nations in this field of teaching.

America is a new country, and we can hardly expect to find as well developed a system as England and Germany possess.
Civil war military praepts had largely taken
the place of physical training and when the war
closed martial drill away in such education and
no progress was made for several years.

But first let us see if training turned
considerably towards man's physical needs can
help to make his life more perfect.

In looking at the history of man
we find that originally he was the forefathers
of a strong healthy body and that the nations most
prominent were those whose sons had the strong-
est and best physical development.

Hence the mighty nation of each time
gives us the first example of a people using
systematic training for the body.

In Homer's Iliad he found a
glorious description of athletic feats and these
are the first of which any record is known.

At the siege of Troy Achilles ex-
pressed his feelings of triumph at his slaying
Dector by preparing a feast and introducing
races for which elaborate prizes were offered
and exciting times ensued.

From this time on it seemed
that the celebration of games were to introduce
dignity and virtue at all important ceremonies.
The Olympic games were the most famous of regularly recurring games which were established not later than the Trojan war is supposed to have taken place.

First these games were to fill four days every five years but finally were extended to fill five days.

A wreath of laurel leaves crowned the victor's brow but greater enthusiasm could not have been wished for.

Designed wounding and other brutal methods were not unknown and were not severely condemned, but always, he who killed the opponent forfeited the prize.

The influence of these National games upon the Greek character was incalculable. They gave great impetus to interest in physical training and this with the realization of the need of systematic preparation for the contests, led to the establishment of the gymnasion.

The ideal they aimed at was the perfection of the intellect, the moral nature and the body; the last being as important as were the other two.

They were in utter ignorance of the
true physical organism or even of the nature of muscle, but their ideal of physical perfection is shown to have been very high by the statues of human form they have left us.
The gymnasia were kept in private gardens and were simply open spaces for exercis-ing at first, later, buildings especially constructed were used, these were very simply reg-ulated at the start but later when becoming state affairs they were minutely regulated by law and the time was when every city of impor-tance had at least one gymnasiun.
The Greeks believed that the train-ing of the body should begin when the child was very young, and the Spartans realizing the influence of the mother upon her children paid close attention that they also should receive physical training.
Where games arose, reached their clime, and decayed into oblivion, but they are yet good proof to us what can be done towards developing the body.
The Ancient Romans through somewhat religious feelings instituted games and festivities, processes as a declaration of their grate fulness for military achievements.
The professional element entered, however, and the study, for the sake only, degraded
the purpose of the system and true Romans felt it beneath their dignity to join the field
their own vulgar and brutal neighbors did.

The Roman youths did not lack muscular development, however, for they obtained
exercise in the military field.

Later they understood the Greek methods
and instituted many Greek customs thus materially changing their ideas of physical education. Contests
for gymnastics passed away and even private
gymnasia were built in connection with many
homes. A public gymnasiaum after the Greek
plan was erected by Emperor Nero.

It was in the public thermæ or baths
that the science class of Romans passed much
time.

The character of the public games as sources
of amusement was not changed and the religious
features died away.

Every important public event became
the occasion of great celebrations and it went so far that every extraordinary event, even funerals,
became a time for the whole people to witness the
giving
of shows and the celebration of games.

The chase of hare and fowls did not
longer satisfy the people when once they had
tasted the bulgar, brutal fascination of the gladi-
torial fights which were led up to by the Etruscan
belief that human blood should be spilt on newly
made graves, contests between condemned criminals
being the first of such scenes.

The spirit was exaggerated however
and as the professional exhibitions became too num-
rous, the interest in great physical strength died out.
Thus we see that the two most

formful nations of ancient time, both mentally and
physically owed much of their success to their
means of education, the great attention they paid
to physical culture and when interest in this
failed they as a nation of note passed into remembrance

only.

We now look at more modern nations
and see how they compare with our own land.

The Samara, noted for their
superior strength both of mind and body afford
we perhaps, the best example of a nation to compare
with our own.

The early Samara were of a war-like
nature, they obtained little by honest labor for
They could by shedding human blood pain a third hand from the results of their dead brother's labor. Military activity greatly developed their bodies.

After the invasion of the Gallo-Roman territory many of their customs underwent change. The chiefs followed left him to take up the till- ing of land, but even then they were expected to render military service whenever called upon to do so.

Chivalry brought considerable of physical training with its education of the Knight and the exciting features of the tournaments and as Chivalry declined the study of physical development declined also. But their strong healthy nature ever characterized them as a people.

Today we find them a sturdy, strong for excelling the Americans as far as health is concerned. Especially do we find a noted difference between the human ladies and the American, the former being of a very rugged nature.

The immediate cause are easily to be found for the physical superiority of the Germans. It is found that two thirds of the schools of Russia have gymnasia of their own and nearly all have provisions for exercising.

In Saxony, gymnastic societies developed...
especially between 1843 and 1848 and 1872 the report is that 616 cities and towns had 75% gymnastic societies with 27,288 members over fourteen years of age and the entire German Empire had 449,046 members in 4,647 societies.

2nd. Besides this is the military training each able-bodied male is obliged to receive when in the army.

3rd. The ladies, especially of the upper classes do a great amount of outdoor labor.

All this gives them a help to help them to better carry out their mental work and is perhaps one of the reasons why they, as a people have such intellectual power.

Looking at our neighbors the English we find there that physically they are ahead of us and though perhaps their system of physical training is no better than ours the fact that they take a great amount of outdoor exercise may explain to a great extent their more rugged nature.

But now let us look at our own country. When our forefathers came to our land they lived at a time and in such surrounding that they were obliged to wrestle with stern nature with scarcely any tools and what they did have
were very crude, man walked to and from his place of worship, business or visiting. His fields were tilled mostly by hand, his grain was planted by hand, harvested and even threshed by hand and he with his wife whose household furniture was of the most crude style, who was obliged to weave her own cloth for clothes and who helped him in the field work had plenty of exercises that kept them free from palsy ailments and made them physically superior to us.

Today look at our professional man, usually of delicate health, whom it would kill inside of a week to be obliged to work as did his forefather; he would be completely fatigued should he attempt a walk of five miles. Yet his great-grandfather would have thought nothing of the same.

But man is better off physically today than he was but a few years ago for he now uses the bicycle extensively.

Our families are not able to show a perfectly developed body — far from it. His muscles are not developed for the reason that they are not properly exercised. He rides his cultivator, his planter, his harvester, his plowing, is done by machinery, his water hauled by wind power, and at every kick and call some labor-saving machine
will do the work originally assigned him, and his body is left encumbered at the expense of an overworked brain and mind.

More wise, however, is to do what their grandmothers did and why? Not because there is nothing to do but because they can. Look at the present generation of girls. Are they, on an average, so strong as were their mothers before them? I think we are safe in saying No.

Professional working women show a notable lack of perfectly developed womanhood and when we look at the children today, what do we find? In the lower classes, whether in the poorly ventilated slum homes of the crowded city or in the country where God's air is pure and free, do we seldom find a child we can safely expect to develop into a perfect man.

In the middle class as a whole the child is not his best physically, and especially the farmer's child.

In the circles of aristocracy, perhaps is found the best physical perfection, but here, we find ample room for improvement.

I think the reasons for this great deficiency in the proper development of our people is to be found in their habits of living. Labor saving machinery
is a blessing in its correct use but we must not let
the mind be the only part of our organism that
make we must exercise our body, every day if we
and another.

Wedded life also is doing a great injury
to many. Men, women and children should go out
into sunlight and gain health strength and vigor.
And then another great mistake the major-
ity of our people make is to select the wrong
kind of amusement, entertain ment and recreation.
They choose to ride by carriage, car or horse to
the concert, opera or theater and thus gain only
intellectual amusement while if they were occasion-
ally indulged in some recreation that gave work to
nervous parts of the body while it gave rest to
other parts just so much more might be gained.

Thus we see that the physical training
of Americans should begin deep rooted. From
the little child on up to old age there is need
of proper physical development by systematic
methods and to bring about this change every
means available should be brought to bear upon
it. Our newspapers, those might thought trans-
formers, should take up the subject and not
desist until positively sure that every man
woman and child in America is alive to the responsibility for the aid of physical culture.

In our public schools, the child should be taught from his first year onward the proper means of developing his body as well as his mind. Give him suitable physical exercise and do not leave it to his choice, for he is no more capable to judge than he is in regard to his studies.

When he is sent to College instead of planning four and five hours of mental work which is to come under the supervision of instructors and not less than eight or ten and sometimes more outside, he should have at least one hour and two if possible, if physical work is just as carefully chosen plan as the mental work.

Broaden the large about the school home, bring the tennis court, golf grounds, ball ground, rowing matches onward in the higher institution to encourage a pleasure in the exercise and then and not until then can we hope for a type of Americans we should not now be seeking from Europe.

Cicero says, “ Luck never advances. It
needs as fast on one side and gains on the other.” In every thing that is given
something is taken."

He thinks what we have gained over
the savage, mentally, we have lost physically and
perhaps this is true and if we do not improve
will we not finally become worse than the N°°°°°°
without body no mind can exist.

When let us develop both of our
natures side by side and though our advance-
ment in the mental field should be slower it
would be sure.

Let America receive a Physical culture
that is broad and deep and far-reaching in its
endeavors that the New World may not lose her
high place in civilization.