

APPENDIX: ATHLETIC MEN WANTED—AN ARTICLE FOR THE OLD AND YOUNG, FOR DOCTORS, TEACHERS, &C.

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT MEDICINE—A CANDID CONFESSION—ANTECEDENTS OF HEALTH AND DISEASE—THEORY AND LAWS OF TRAINING—FINE ANIMAL PERFECTION THE TRUE REQUISITES OF A RACE—TABLE OF HUMAN DISEASES, AND WHAT IS NEEDED TO REMEDY THEM—THE LAW OF PHYSIQUE SHOULD BE MADE A POPULAR THEME.

OUR readers have doubtless perused the series of articles given during a number of weeks past by *Mose Velsor*, of Brooklyn, entitled “MANLY HEALTH AND TRAINING,” the conclusion of which appears in to-day’s issue. The subject is one of the very greatest importance—for what is of more importance than sound health, a vigorous race of men, a stalwart and competent nation?

It is almost incredible what an extent of folly and ignorance there is on the science, if we may call it so, of health and disease. People who are quite incapable of moral or mental superstition are guilty, in countless droves, of what is quite as bad, viz., what may be termed physical superstition—the very weakest and worst fanaticism on the subject of illness, medicine, doctors, and all that appertains thereto. The doctor supplies the place of the priest, and the Latin prescription that of the formula and creed. The exercise of their own common sense, and of a spirit of inquiry and freedom in men’s minds, give place to a blind and baseless credulity in “medicine and the doctor.” As if the said doctor were not, four times out of five, nearly altogether in the dark as to the most weighty points of his patient’s case! Or, as if there were ever any two cases (or hardly ever any two) exactly alike, in combinations, temperaments, antecedents, and so on.

But occasionally the honest truth is let out; for the really great physician (and there are some in New York, and other places, too) will not only often acknowledge himself at fault what course to take, but will caution the world against the evils of his own profession. Witness the following extract from a lately published work, “The Rationale of Medicine,” by Dr. Jacob Bigelow:

“I sincerely believe that the unbiassed opinion of most medical men of sound judgement and long experience is made up, that the amount of death and disaster in this world would be less,

if all disease were left to itself, than it now is under the multiform, reckless and contradictory modes of practice, good and bad, with which practitioners of adverse denominations carry on their differences at the expense of their patients.[”]

Dr. B. might have added that of what is called “medicine,” and applied to disease nineteen-twentieths of it is in all cases absolutely pernicious and poisonous—and is equivalent to casting out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

This may seem strong language but it is the result of a deliberate thought and judgement. “Mose Velsor,” in the course of his articles, well indicates that the conditions called health and disease are not trivial effects, produced by temporary causes, but the results of long trains of processes and influences. When a man is really ill, for instance, although he is apt to lay it to some little cause, of recent date, the undoubted truth is that what really makes him ill, the foundation on which the whole evil stands, has long been preparing, layer by layer, for weeks and months, perhaps for years. The manly frame, thoroughly prepared and bred from boyhood to manhood, and then kept in decent condition, would be innocuous to disease; but then it would indeed require all those antecedents—of which how many cases could we find, through New York city, or any city, or country either? Yet all this is vital, and that theory of doctoring and medicating is nonsense which does not involve it and make “health, strength and beauty,” familiar themes of daily habit and household knowledge, instead of keeping them for the apothecarie’s shop and the doctor’s confessional.

According to “Mose Velsor,” (whom we are following,) the whole subject of manly health reduces itself, for general consideration, to a few simple statements, broad and continental enough to give room for the multitudes of difference of special cases, and include them. He starts from the theory and practice of the trainer for the prize-ring, the foot-race, and for all those feats of strength of agility, in ancient or modern times, so dear to the popular heart—and which have given to public exposition the finest specimens of masculine physique and beauty. The ancient athletes and gladiators, the Greek warriors, the Roman legions, and so on down to the modern English fighting-man, the pugilist, and the runner or walker, all come under the same type, or what is equivalent to it, in training. The laws which govern this training, the writer of the series finished in our issue of to-day, look for general application to all who are ambitious of a perfect and sound manly physique. We do not propose to go over the ground again in these paragraphs. For that, recurrence must be had to the articles themselves.

We confess we are about ready to place ourselves among those who

think that *fine animal perfection*, not in a low but generous sense, is the first and greatest blessing to an individual, a city, or a nation—and that it must be publicly acknowledged as the first requisite. As we go forth through the streets of any great modern city, or view any assemblage of people in the country, how lamentably few are the specimens of perfectly sound and beautiful bodies!—how continual the sight of shambling, malformed, consumptive, rheumatic, dropsical, scrofulous, inflamed, blotched, syphilitic, sick, blood-corrupted, vitality-destroyed men!

Of the human beings born into the world (so feeble and depleted is the parentage-power), one-third die forthwith—that is, before they are fifteen months old. Of the remainder, one quarter, by or before they attain their full growth, suffer[,] pine away, and at last die, of some disease of the lungs or throat. Another quarter go the same process with diseases of the stomach or bowels. A large portion have neuralgia—others affections of the liver—others running sores, &c., &c.

What a picture! And does any one pretend to tell us that all this horrible table of unquestioned facts can be met by anything offered, or possible to be done, by doctors and medicines? We know perfectly well that doctors and medicines do not touch the evil—but rather are a part of it, and add to it. We know that the sick world, through a sterner realization of that wonderful play of minute causes and effects, which we term health and disease, must rely at last upon its daily habits and usages, and upon Nature's divine medicines, *air, food, activity, and rest*, for the only real cure. These, under the control of experience and art, (for we believe in art too, which is necessary to put Nature in form, but, in so many cases has come to be only another meaning for a violation of Nature,) would put a different face upon mankind—and grander bodies beneath the face. The sooner people come to realize the huge truths we have intimated in the foregoing paragraph, the sooner will the foolish myth of doctoring and medication be dissipated away—which result, heaven speed!

No! not from any other course than such simple and long-continued processes of sanitary training, outlined in the articles we have been publishing for two or three months past, and from the greater prevalence of the feeling, knowledge and ambition which permeate them, can the human physiology of our cities and country places too, (for there is no preference,) be renovated and made what it ought to be. Among the young men especially ought this knowledge and ambition to be sown broadcast—made the eminent feature of their lives. In houses, in the domestic circle, in schools, among parents, among those who contemplate marriage, ought all these facts to be well understood. There is

no *accident* in disease—it is the shameful consequence of gluttony, immorality, morbid brain-action, and a long list of precedents. Or, in nineteen cases out of twenty is there any valid excuse for these feeble and puny-framed young men we now see everywhere.

Gymnasiums for the bodily health, should be as common as the morbid schools for producing a monstrous mentality now are—or rather, should take the place of about nine-tenth of the latter kind of schools. The whole subject of physique should be well discussed, taught, promulgated—should be presented to the emulation of boys—a strong, perfect, sound-conditioned body, placed at the highest summit of human good. What “Mose Velsor” calls the pink-and-white wax-doll theory of beauty, should be scouted, and rude health and strength, with its very uncouthness, brought forward as more beautiful—which, of course, it really is.

We believe it is the intention of “Mose Velsor” to put these articles in shape for publication, in handy and cheap book-form. Just now there is among all classes of American young men, great interest in this subject of MANLY TRAINING, and we think a publisher would make a good and profitable investment by bringing it out.