

VARIOUS

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THE GYMNASIUM

Two distinct yet harmonious branches of study claimed the early attention of the youth of ancient Greece. Education was comprised in the two words, Music and Gymnastics. Plato includes it all under these divisions:—"That having reference to the body is gymnastics, but to the cultivation of the mind, music."

Grammar was sometimes distinguished from the other branches classed under the term, Music; and comprehended, besides a knowledge of language, something of poetry, eloquence, and history. Music embraced all the arts and sciences over which the Muses presided.

Grammar, Music, and Gymnastics, then, comprised the whole *curriculum* of study which was prescribed to the Athenian boy. There were not separate and distinct learned professions,

or faculties, to so great an extent as in modern times. The compass of knowledge was far less defined, and the studies and attainments of the individual more miscellaneous. Some of the arts rose to an unparalleled perfection. Architecture and sculpture attained an excellence which no subsequent civilization has reached. But the practical application of the sciences to daily use was almost entirely neglected; and inventions and mechanics languished until the far later uprising of the Saxon mind.

Yet the whole system of education among the Greeks was peculiarly calculated for the development of the powers of the mind and of the body in common. And it is from this point of view that we wish to consider it, and to show the nature and preeminence of gymnastics in their times as compared with our own.

Doubtless Grecian Art owed its superiority, in some degree, to the gymnasium. Living models of manliness, grace, and beauty were daily before the artist's eye. The *stadium* furnished its fleet runners, nimble as the wing-footed Mercury,—fit types for his light and airy conceptions; while the arena of the athletes offered marvellous opportunities for the study of muscle and posture, to show its results in the burly limbs of Hercules or the starting sinews of Laocoön. Many of the most lifelike groups of marble which remain to us from that time are but copies of the living statues who wrestled or threw the quoit in the public gymnasium.

It is worthy of remark, in corroboration of this view, that the department of the fine arts which depended on outline surpassed

that which derived its power from coloring and perspective. The sculptors far excelled the painters. The statue was the natural result of the imitative faculty surveying the nude human figure in every posture of activity or repose. Pictures came later, from more educated senses, and from minds which had first learned outward nature through the medium of the simpler arts.

The ancient gymnasium, apart from its baths and philosophic groves, was far from being, as with us, a mere appendage of the school. Modern instructors advertise, that, in addition to teachers of every tongue and art, "a gymnasium is attached" to their educational institutions. In old times, the gymnasium was the school,—the public games and festivals its "annual exhibitions."

The word *gymnasium* has reference in its derivation to the nude or semi-nude condition of those who exercised there. But in their proper classical interpretation the public gymnasia were, to a great extent, places set apart for physical education and training. Gymnastics, indeed, in the broadest sense of the word, have been cultivated in all ages. The spontaneous exercises and mimic contests of the boys of all countries, the friendly emulation of robust youth in trials of speed and strength, and the discipline and training of the military recruit have in them much of the true gymnastic element. In Attica and Ionia they were first adapted to their noblest ends.

The hardy Spartans, who valued most the qualities of bravery, endurance, and self-denial, used the gymnasia only as schools of training for the more sanguinary contests of war. So, too,

the martial Roman despised those who practised gymnastics with any other object than as fitting them to be better soldiers. Yet to so great a degree were these exercises cultivated, even by the latter nation, that the Roman private of the line did his fifteen or twenty miles' daily march under a weight of camp-equipage and weapons which would have foundered some of the best-drilled modern warriors, and concluded his day's labors by digging the trenches of his camp at night. The ponderous *pilum*, and the heavy, straight sword of the infantry were exchanged in the barrack-yard for drill-weapons of twice their weight; and so perfectly were the detail and regularity of actual service carried out in their daily discipline, that, as an ancient writer has remarked, their sham-fights and reviews differed only in bloodshed from real battles. The soldier of the early Republic was hence taught gymnastics only as a means of increasing his efficiency; the lax praetorian and the corrupt populace of the Empire turned gladly from the gymnasium to the circus and the amphitheatre.

In the same manner were these exercises regarded by the Dorians and the people of some other of the Grecian States. The inhabitants of Attica and of Ionia, on opposite shores of the Aegean, as more cultivated races, viewed them in a more correct physiological light. But it was at Athens that the gymnasium was held in highest repute.

We read that Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, first established particular regulations for its government. Attic legends, however,

gratefully refer the earliest rules of the gymnasium to Theseus, as to one of the mightiest of the mythical heroes,—the emulator of Hercules, slayer of the Minotaur, and conqueror of the Amazons. Hermes was the presiding deity, which may appear strange to us, as he was as noted for an unworthy cunning as for his dexterity. Generous emulation and magnanimity were regarded as the noblest qualities called forth in gymnastic exercises; and Mercury seems a fitter tutelary divinity of the wary boxer and of the race-course than of the whole gymnasium.

Probably no Greek town of any importance was destitute of one of these schools of exercise. Athens boasted three public gymnasia,—the Cynosarges, the Lyceum, and the Academy. These were the daily resort of young and old alike, though certain penal laws forbade them from exercising together at the same hour.

The school-boy frequented them as part of his daily task; the young man of leisure, as an agreeable lounging-place; the scholar, to listen to the master in philosophy; the sedentary, for their customary *constitutional* on the foot-course; and the invalid and the aged, to court the return of health, or to retain somewhat of the vigor of their earlier years. The Athenians wisely held that there could be no health of the mind, unless the body were cared for,—and viewed exercise also as a powerful remedial agent in disease. Such a variety of useful purposes were thus subserved by the gymnasia, that it will be proper to look briefly at their internal arrangements. We shall follow the description which has

been left us by Vitruvius.

The ancient gymnasium was generally situated in the suburbs, and was often as large as a *stadium* (six hundred and twenty-five feet) square. Its principal entrance faced the east. A quadrangular inclosure comprehended two principal courts, divided by a party-wall. The eastern court was called the *peristylum*, from the rows of columns which surrounded it; the western also was bordered by porticos, but for it we have no distinct name. The peristyle must have been from one to two hundred feet square. It was sometimes termed the *palaestra*, though this name was afterwards restricted to the training-school of the athletes proper, who made gymnastics the business of their lives. It was also styled the *sphaeristerium*, or ball-ground, to which the nearest approach in modern times is the tennis-court. The chief western inclosure was planted with plane-trees in regular order, with walls between them and seats of the so-called *signine* work, and was about one half larger than the peristyle. The space between the columns of the latter and the outer walls allowed sufficient room for rows of chambers, halls, and corridors, whose uses we will next designate.

The first room on the right, as one entered the east gate, was the *loutron*, or room for washing, distinct from the regular baths. Next, in the northeast corner, was the *conisterium*, where sand was kept for sprinkling the wrestlers after they had been anointed for the struggle. West of this lay the *coryceum*, a hall for exercising with a sack of sand suspended from the roof. It

seems plausible to suppose that this exercise corresponded with that more recently practised by Mr. Thomas Hyer, previously to his fight with Yankee Sullivan. A bag of sand, equal in weight to his adversary, was daily pommelled by the champion of America until he could make it swing and recoil satisfactorily.

Adjoining this room were two small apartments called the *ephebeum* and the *elaeothesium* respectively. The former was devoted to preparatory exercise, probably by way of warming up for severer efforts; the latter was used for anointing, and was connected with the baths, which followed next in order. These were the *frigidarium*, the *caldarium*, the *sudatorium*, and the *tepidarium*, for the cold, the hot, the sweating or vapor, and the warm baths. They did not possess the magnitude and ornament of the Roman *thermae*. They were used in connection with and after exercising, and were enough for all practical purposes. Bathing was not then the business of hours every day, as it was later in the Roman Empire, when the luxurious subjects of Caracalla indulged several times in the twenty-four hours in such a variety of ablutions as would have satisfied a Sandwich-Islander.

We have now arrived at a point nearly opposite our entrance at the east, and, continuing round the southwest, south, and southeast sides of the peristyle, find a large number of consecutive chambers devoted mainly to the philosophers, as lecture-rooms and auditories for their classes and followers. On the north side of the peristyle is a double portico containing the *exedrae*, or seats of the sophists, where each most cunning

rhetorician delivered his opinions *ex cathedrâ*, and lay in wait for any passer whom he could insnare into an argument. The groves of the great western court were probably used by the loungeur, the contemplative, and the studious, if we may judge by numerous seats and benches, at convenient intervals. On the south side of these was again a double portico; and on the north, outside the pillars, the *xystus*, or covered porch, where the athletes exercised in winter and in bad weather. The arena was twelve feet wide, and sunk a foot and a half below a marginal path of ten feet, where spectators could walk. On the north and south sides of the whole building were wings, of less width, extending nearly its entire length. That on the north contained the *stadium*, or foot-race course, which was, however, sometimes disconnected from the gymnasium. The south wing was of like dimensions, and adorned with plane-trees and walks, forming a more private retreat.

It will be readily conceived that this vast area was not devoted exclusively to physical exercises. Logic, rhetoric, and metaphysics claimed their place in this common focus of the city's life, and were the delight of the subtile Greeks. The Socratic reasoning and the syllogisms of Aristotle met here on common ground. The Stoics, with their stern fatalism, derived their name from the *stoa*e, or porticos; the Peripatetics imparted their ambulatory instructions under the plane-trees of the Lyceum—and Plato reasoned in the Academy, which he held with his school, and into which no ungeometrical mind was to enter. And though some dog of a Cynic might despise the union

of the ornamental with the useful, and claim austerity as the rule of life, yet to the great body of the social Greek people the gymnasium offered all those attractions which *boulevards*, *cafés*, and *jardins-chantants* do now to the Gallic nation. There is more than one point of resemblance between the two countries; but while the Athenian had the same mercurial qualities, which fitted him for outdoor life, he had even a less comfortable domestic establishment to retain him at home than the modern Parisian.

We must turn, however, rather to the physical view of the gymnasium. All the sports of the gymnasia were either games, or special exercises for the contests of the public festivals. And here a distinction must be made between amateur and professional gymnasts. The former were styled *agonistae*, and exercised in the public gymnasium; the latter *athletae*, and were trained fighters, whose school was the *palaestra*. At first frequenting the same, they afterwards became divided between two institutions. Some of the harsher sports of the prize-fighters were not thought genteel for well-nurtured youths to indulge in. Among the simpler games were the ball, played in various ways, and the top, which was as popular with juveniles then as now. The sport called *skaperta* can be seen in any gymnasium of to-day, and consisted in two boys drawing each other up and down by the ends of a rope passing over a pulley. Familiar still is also a game of dexterity played with five stones thrown from the upper part of the hand and caught in the palm. Various other gentle exercises might be mentioned.

The training for the public games was comprised in the *pentathlon*, or five exercises,—which were running, leaping, throwing the *discus*, wrestling, boxing. The first four were practised also by amateurs, and by most persons who frequented the gymnasium for health.

The race, run upon the foot-race course, was between fixed boundaries, about a *stadium* apart. The distances run were from one to twenty *stadia*, or from one-eighth of a mile to two and a half miles, and sometimes more. This exercise was much followed. Horses were sometimes introduced, but then the hippodrome was the course. They ran without riders, as at the Roman carnival, or with chariots. Horse-racing was most popular in the Roman circus, whose ruins still show its massiveness and great size.

Leaping was performed also within fixed limits,—generally with metallic weights in the hands, but sometimes attached to the head or shoulders.

The quoit, or *discus*, was made of stone or metal, of a circular form, and thrown by means of a thong passing through the centre. It was three inches thick and ten or twelve in diameter. He who threw farthest, won. It is a modern game also, and is imitated in the Old-Country custom of pitching the bar.

Wrestling has been a favorite contest in all times. Milo of Crotona was the prince of wrestlers. He who threw his adversary three times conquered. The wrestlers were naked, anointed, and covered with sand, that they might take firm hold. Striking was

not allowed. Elegance was studied in the attack, as well as force. There was a distinction between upright and prostrate wrestling. In the former the one thrown was allowed to get up; in the latter the struggle was continued on the ground. The vanquished held up his finger when he acknowledged himself beaten.

Boxing was a severer sport, and not much followed except by gentlemen of the "profession." It was practised with the clenched fists, either naked or armed with the deadly *cestus*. The "science" of the game was to parry the blows of the antagonist, as it is in the "noble and manly" art of self-defence now. The exercise was violent and dangerous, and the combatants often lost their lives, as they do at the present day. The *cestus*, like our "brass-knuckle," was a thong of hide, loaded with lead, and bound over the hand. At first used to add weight to the blow, it was afterwards continued up the fore-arm, and formed also a weapon of defence. Mr. Morrissey, or any other "shoulder-hitter," would hardly need more than a few rounds to settle his opponent, if his sinewy arm were garnished with the *cestus*.

We read that the late contest for the "American belt," though short, was unusually fierce, and afforded intense delight to the spectators,—in proportion, probably, to its ferocity. By all means let the "profession" take the *cestus* from the hands of the highwayman and adopt it themselves. It would be one step nearer the glorious days of the gladiators, and would render their combats more bloody and more exciting. Or, better still, let us revive the ancient mode of sparring called the *klimax*, where

both parties "faced the music" *without warding* blows at all. We scarcely think the ancients were up to "countering," as it is understood now; but they fully appreciated the facetious practice of falling backwards to avoid a blow, and letting the adversary waste his strength on the air. The deceased Mr. Sullivan would hardly recognize his favorite dodge under its classic name of *hyptiasmos*, or be aware that it was in use by his very respectable predecessor, Sostratus of Sicyon, who was noted for such tricks.

The *pankration*, again, was a mode of battle which the modern prize-ring is yet too magnanimous to adopt, and which excelled in brutality the so-called "getting one's nob in chancery,"—the most stirring episode of our pugilistic encounters. The Greek custom alluded to was so named because it called all the powers of the fighter into action. It was a union of boxing and wrestling. It began by trying to get one's antagonist into the unfavorable position of facing the sun. Then the sport commenced with either wrestling or sparring. As soon as one party was thrown or knocked down, the other kept him so until he had pommelled him into submission; and when he arose, at last, to receive the plaudits of the assembly, it was often from the corpse of his adversary.

Beginning as the most promising pupils of the gymnasium, and becoming victors in the public games, certain gymnasts gradually grew into a distinct class of prize-runners, wrestlers, and fighters, called Athletes. They then devoted their lives to attaining excellence in these exercises, and withdrew to the

palaestra, or training-school. Those who quitted the profession became instructors in the public gymnasium. To attain great bodily strength, they submitted to many rigid rules. By frequent anointing, rubbing, and bathing, they rendered their bodies very supple. The trainer, or teacher in the *palaestra*, was termed *xystarch*. He was himself the Nestor of the "ring." The food of the athlete was mainly beef and pork. The latter, we believe, is excluded from the diet-list of the modern prize-fighter. Of their particular rules of living and "getting into condition" we know but little. Before being allowed to contend, they were subjected to a strict examination by the judges. In so high estimation were the victors held, that they were rewarded with a public proclamation of their names, the laudations of the poet, statues, banquets, and other privileges. The immediate material gain was not the winning of the stakes, but a simple crown or garland of laurel, olive, pine, or parsley, according to the festival at which they fought. Pindar has embalmed the names of many victors in his Olympic, Pythian, and other odes.

But let us leave the athletes for something more inviting. The *lampadephoria*, or torch-race, must have been a singular spectacle. There were five celebrations of this game at Athens, of which the most noted was at the Panathenaea, where horsemen often contended. The text describing it has been a puzzle to commentators;—the most rational and accepted interpretation seems to be, that it was a contest between opposite parties, and not between individuals. Lighted lamps, protected by a shield,

were passed from runner to runner along the lines of players, to a certain goal. They who succeeded in carrying their lights from boundary to boundary unextinguished were declared the victors. This game will at once recall the *moccoletti*, which close the carnival at Rome.

Dancing to the sound of the *cithara*, flute, and pipe, was a favorite amusement with all classes. The grizzly veterans and the younger soldiers all joined in martial dances. The dance and the game of ball were often connected. The Romaic dance, peculiar to the modern Greeks, is an inheritance from their ancestors. Dancing by youths and maidens formed part of the entertainment of guests. Tumblers threw somersets and leaped amid sharp knives, somewhat after the manner of the Chinese jugglers. Music was also usually associated with either poetry or dancing.

Incitements to the various gymnastic exercises which have been mentioned could be found only in public emulation, for which abundant opportunity was offered in the national games or festivals. These were a part of the religious customs of the Greeks, and were originally established in honor of the gods. It was their effect to bring into nearer contact people from the several parts of Greece, and to stimulate and publicly reward talent, as well as bodily vigor. They afforded orators, poets, and historians the best opportunities of rehearsing their productions. Herodotus is said to have read his History, and Isocrates to have recited his Panegyric at the Olympic games. The four sacred

games were the Olympic, Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean; and to these should be added the Panathenaea, or festival of Minerva. The five exercises before mentioned, together with music, in its classic sense, formed the programme. In the lesser Panathenaea occurred, first, the torch-race; next, the gymnastic exercises; thirdly, a musical contention, instituted by Pericles; and lastly, a competition of the poets in four plays. Numerous other observances, of a religious nature, were varied with the different festivals. It may be doubted whether subsequent times have seen any gatherings of equal magnitude for similar objects.

So rigid was the discipline of the ancient gymnasium, and so important was it considered that confidence should be undoubting there, that thefts, exceeding ten *drachmae* in amount, committed within its precincts, were punished with death.

The *Gymnasiarch*, or presiding magistrate, clothed in a purple cloak, with white shoes, possessed almost unlimited authority. He had the superintendence of the building, and could remove the teachers and under-officers at his pleasure. The exercises practised were ordained by law, subject to regulations and animated by the commendation of the masters. Instructions were given by the *gymnastae* and the *paedotribae*, two classes of officers. The former gave practical lessons, and were expected to know the physiological effect of the different exercises, and to adapt them to the constitution and needs of the youth. The latter possessed a knowledge of all the games, and taught them in all their variety. Nor were the morals of the young less cared for by

the *sophonistae*, a set of officials appointed for that purpose.

The plan and scope of Grecian education were more adapted to the common purposes of the community, and less to the individual aim of the pupil. Beside the public teachings of philosophers and sophists, common schools were established at Athens by Solon. Government provided for their management, and strict discipline was enforced. Here the boy was instructed in music and grammar. Until the age of sixteen, he pursued these two branches in connection with gymnastics. Some authorities assert, that, even at this period of his life, as much time was devoted to the latter as to the other two together. At sixteen, he left the school, and, until he was eighteen years of age, frequented the gymnasium alone; probably devoting most of his time to physical training, though enjoying opportunities of listening to the masters in philosophy. The period of adolescence past, and his growing frame expanded and well knit by exercise, he either continued to follow athletic sports, or began a military or other career. If a young man of leisure, he probably needed all the virtue imparted by his moral teachers to restrain him from dice, quail-fights, and fine horses, and all his physical vigor to resist the dissipations of Athens or Corinth, and the potations of the *symposia*.

So far the male rising generation was well cared for. What became of the girls?

In accordance with the freer manners, but not less virtuous habits of Lacedemon, maidens were there admitted as spectators

and sharers of the gymnastic sports. Though clad only in the Spartan *chiton*, they took vigorous part in dancing and probably wrestling. The Athenian maid could not air even her modest garments in public with the consent of popular opinion. The girls were educated and the women stayed at home. The *gynaekion*, or female apartment, was nearly as secluded as the *seraglio*. The females were under direct, though not slavish submission to the men. Modesty forbade their appearance in the gymnasium. Domestic occupations, the rearing of children, spinning, light work, and household cares filled up their time. We are told that an Athenian mother once ventured in male attire to mingle among the spectators of the Olympic games. Her cry of joy at the triumph of her son betrayed her. Because she was the mother of many victors, she was spared from infamy; and her services to the state, in rearing men, alone saved her from the consequences of an act which maternal solicitude could not have excused.

Too much license in the intermingling of the sexes formed part of the arguments of many distinguished Romans against the gymnasium. Habits of idle lounging and waste of time, together with even graver vices, were imputed to its influence. Some said it favored *polysarkia*, or obesity, and unfitted for military or other active life. The Romans were too utilitarian to see its higher aims. Though there was some justice, it must be confessed, in these accusations, yet they applied with more force to the *palaestra* than to the gymnasium,—to the trained fighters, who devoted their lives to exercise, than to the mass of the Greeks, who

cultivated it for nobler purposes.

The ancients valued gymnastics highly as curative agents in disease. Some of the *gymnasia* were dedicated to Apollo, god of physicians. The officers of these establishments passed for doctors, and were so called, on account of the skill which long experience had given them. The directors regulated the diet of the youth, the *gymnastae* prescribed for their diseases, and the inferiors dressed wounds and fractures. Not only was the general idea entertained that bodily exercise is good for the health, but different kinds of exertion were selected as adapted to particular maladies. Upright wrestling was thought most beneficial to the upper portion of the body, and the cure of dropsy was believed to be peculiarly promoted by gymnastic sports. Hippocrates had some faith in the "motor cure." In some cases he advises common wrestling; in others, wrestling with the hands only. The practice with the *corycus*, or hanging-bag of sand, and a regular motion of the upper limbs, resembling the manual exercise of the soldier, were also esteemed by him. Galen inveighs against the more violent exercises, but recommends moderate ones as part of the physician's art. Asclepiades, in the time of Pompey the Great, called exercises the common aids of physic, and got great glory—and money, it is to be hoped—by various mechanical contrivances for the sick.

The ancients probably esteemed gymnastics too much, as the moderns do too little, for medical or sanative purposes. The Greeks, with a very limited knowledge of physiology and

pathology, would be more apt to treat symptoms than to trace the causes of disease; and no doubt they sometimes prescribed exercises which were injudicious or positively injurious. We still trust too much, perhaps, to medication, and do not keep in view the great helps which Nature spreads around us. Truth lies between the two extremes; and we are beginning to recognize the fact, which experience daily teaches us, that light, air, and motion are more potent than drugs,—and that iron will not redden the cheeks, nor bark restring the nerves, so safely and so surely as moderate daily exercise out of doors.

In the flourishing days of Attica, the gymnasium was in its perfection. It degenerated with the license of later times. It was absorbed and sunk in the fashions and vices of imperial Rome. Though Nero built a public gymnasium, and Roman gentlemen attached private ones to their country-seats, it gradually fell into disuse, or existed only for ignoble purposes. The gladiator succeeded naturally to the athlete, the circus to the stadium, and the sanguinary scenes of the amphitheatre brutalized the pure tastes of earlier years. Then came the barbarians, and the rough, graceless strength of Goths and Vandals supplanted the supple vigor of the gymnast. The rude, migratory life of the Dark Ages needed not the gymnasium as a means of physical culture, and was too changeable and evanescent to establish permanent institutions. Chivalry afforded some exception. The profession of knighthood and the calling of the men-at-arms gave ample scope to warlike exercises, reduced to something like a science

in armor, horses, and modes of combat. The tournament recalled somewhat the generous emulation of the gymnasium; but bodily exercise for physiological ends was lost sight of in the midst of advancing civilization, until its culture was resumed in Sweden, in the latter half of the last century.

The reviver of gymnastics was PETER HENRY LING. Born of humble parentage, and contending in his earlier years with the extremest poverty, he completed a theological education, became a tutor, volunteered in the Danish navy, travelled in France and England, and began his career of gymnast as a fencing-master in Stockholm. He died a professor, a knight, and a member of the Swedish Academy, and was posthumously honored as a benefactor of his country.

While fencing, he was struck with the wholesome effects which may be produced on the body by a rational system of movements, and this suggested the idea which he developed by practice and precept through his entire life. It was, that "an harmonious organic development of the body and of its powers and capabilities by exercises ought to constitute an essential part in the general education of a people." Ling thought not of merely imitating the gymnastics of the ancients, but he aimed at their reformation and improvement. Wishing to put gymnastics in harmony with Nature, he studied anatomy, physiology, and the natural sciences. Of their value in directing rational exercise he says: "Anatomy, that sacred genesis, which shows us the masterpiece of the Creator, and which teaches us how little

and how great man is, ought to form the constant study of the gymnast. But we ought not to consider the organs of the body as the lifeless forms of a mechanical mass, but as the living, active instruments of the soul." And even this is not sufficient; "for the gymnast, the ultimate aim of whose art is the *beau idéal* of humanity, must know what effects applied movements produce upon the corporeal and psychical condition of man; a knowledge which can be obtained only from the most careful and untiring examination."

It has been asserted, that, in pursuance of this plan, Ling invented a separate movement or exercise for every muscle in the body. This is not strictly true, for it is practically impossible. Few muscles act alone, and such as do are developed symmetrically, and are antagonized by those of the opposite side. Most movements are performed by groups of muscles. The cripple, swinging on his crutches, develops the broad sheet of muscular fibres which enfolds the back and loins, and approaches in form the simian tribe, the business of whose life is climbing. The sledge-hammer brings out the *biceps* of the blacksmith, and striking out from the shoulder the *triceps* of the pugilist. The calves of the ballet-dancer are noted for the abrupt line which marks the transition from muscle to tendon; and other instances might be cited. As a general rule, however, numerous muscles act in concert. Trades stamp their impress on special groups; and the power of co-ordination, which is supposed to derive its impulse from the cerebellum, varies in different persons,

and marks them as clumsy or dexterous, sure-footed or the reverse. Ling aimed only at the regulation of associated, or the equal development of antagonistic groups. For, as the Supreme Medical Board of Russia say in their report on his system, made to the Emperor in 1850, "empirical gymnastics develop the muscular strength sometimes to a wonderful degree, and teach the execution of movements combined with an extraordinary effort of the muscles; by these means, instead of fortifying the whole body equally and generally, they often contribute to the development of the most dangerous diseases, since they do not teach the evil which the injudicious use of movements may produce." It was the harmonious and equable increase of all the voluntary and some of the involuntary muscles which the Swedish system sought to attain.

The authority just quoted, in continuation, says:—"Notwithstanding bodily exercises under the name of *Turnen* were generally known and practised in Germany at the beginning of the present century, and many of its enlightened professional writers tried to give to them a proper direction by combining them with anatomy and physiology, Ling must be considered as the founder of the rational system of movements." We have all seen deformed gymnasts, with square shoulders and lank loins, or with some particular group of muscles projecting in ugly prominences from the violated outlines of nature. All this the followers of Ling claim that he avoided or overcame. His gymnastics were introduced years ago, not only

into all the military academies of Sweden, but into all town-schools, colleges, and universities, and even orphan-asylums and country-schools. Three objects are asserted to be obtained by his disciples: development of muscular fibre, increased arterialization, and improved innervation. Increase of function promotes the growth and capability of organic structures, and causes an augmented afflux of arterial blood and nervous influence to the part.

The ambitious reformer of the gymnasium did not pause here; but, pursuing a still bolder course, undertook "to make gymnastics not only a branch of education for healthy persons, but to demonstrate them to be a remedy for disease." The new science was called *Kinesipathy*, or the "motor-cure." The curative movements were first practised in 1813, while Ling remained at Stockholm. A motor-hospital was established in connection with the gymnasium; and to accommodate the invalid and the feeble, new exercises, called "passive movements," were devised. These were executed by an external agent upon the patient,—that agent being usually the hand of the physician. The sick man, too weak for violent, voluntary effort, was stretched and champed, the muscles of his trunk and limbs alternately flexed and extended by another person, until he gradually acquired strength to use active movements. As he gained power, he increased the voluntary resistance which he made to the operator, and thus, at the same time, the amount of his own muscular exertion. It is claimed that volition is thus called forth to

neglected parts, and their innervation and vascularity increased; and that so at length the normal fulness of life and function is restored. This system confines itself mostly to chronic diseases. In the paralysis of the young, in defective volition from hysteria, in impaired local nutrition, in local deformities dependent on muscular contraction, and in lateral curvature of the spine, it unquestionably often produces the best results. Its advocates claim for it much more. On its further benefits we are unable to decide. Like all things else, it is susceptible of abuse.

Russia and Prussia have adopted, to a limited extent, the Ling system of corporeal training and the "motor-cure." In London there exists an institution of this kind, and more recently one has been established by the Doctors Taylor in New York. In a still less degree the Swedish gymnastics are used in some educational institutions here.

Ling died in 1839, in his seventy-third year. Even on his death-bed he spoke till the last hour, and gave instructions in his favorite science. His life is a remarkable instance of purity, energy, and devotion to a single end.

Meanwhile, what have modern nations done to atone for the neglect of the ancient gymnasium? Germany, to some extent, has supplied its place with the *Turnverein*. *Turnkunst*, or the gymnastic art, is cultivated by a limited number of youth. As we see the public exhibitions of the *Turners* in this country, they are as noted for their libations to Bacchus, and their sacrifices to the god of tobacco,—a deity still wanting in the Pantheon,—as for

their culture and superiority in athletic sports. Still they exert a wide, and, for the most part, a good influence. Other continental nations of Europe furnish a large portion of their young men with the gymnastic element in the shape of military discipline and drill. As affording the best examples of martial training, Prussia and France are to be signalized,—the former for the universality, the latter for the kind of its instructions.

All young Prussians are liable to a call to actual service in the army for three years. After this, if they do not continue members of the regular standing army, they remain until a certain age in that portion of the active force which is mustered and drilled every year. Past the age referred to, they fall into the corps of reserve, a sort of National Guard of veterans, summoned to the field only in emergencies. Young men who have the means to purchase an immunity can obtain one for only two years. One year they must serve, parade, drill, march, and mount guard, though they are not required to live in the barracks. Occasional cases of hardship or injustice occur. We know of a poor, but promising pianist whose studies were cut short and his fingers stiffened by the three-years' service. Leaving out of view exceptional facts, the system works well. All the youth of the country acquire health, strength, an upright carriage, and habits of punctuality and cleanliness. The clumsy rustic is soon licked into shape, and leaves his barrack, to return to the fields, a soldier and a more self-reliant man. Prussia, too, secures the services of an army, in time of need, commensurate in numbers with the

adult male population.

The French conscript, if he draws the unlucky number, can buy a substitute. All are not enrolled as recruits; and all those so enrolled are not obliged to serve. The only sons of widows, and some other persons, are always exempt. Once in "the line," however, the young man is engaged for five or seven years, and receives a training in matters gymnastic and military which turns out the best soldiers in Europe.

Little would one imagine, as he passes the groups of dainty and scrupulously neat French officers upon the *boulevards*, looking the laziest persons in the world, that these seeming carpet-knights are out upon the *Champ de Mars* at three o'clock in the morning, and often drill until nine or ten in the forenoon,—or that the little *toulourou*, as he is nicknamed, or private of the *ligne*, in his brick-colored trowsers and clean gaiters, whose voice is the gayest and whose legs are the nimblest in the barrier-ball, has done a day's work of parade and gymnastics which equals the toil of an *ouvrier*. Running, swimming, climbing, and fencing with the bayonet, are often but the preludes of long marches on duty, or equally long walks to reach the parade-ground, or to fetch the daily rations of the "mess." Then, too, during several months of summer, camp-life is led on a grand scale. Vast encampments, which for size, regularity, and order vie with the old Roman *castra*, are formed at convenient spots. And here all the details of actual service are imitated; cavalry and infantry are disciplined in equally arduous labors; nor does

the artillery escape the fatigue of mock-sieges, sham-fights, and reviews.

The *Chasseurs de Vincennes*, or rifle-corps, are the pride of the army. Their training is still more severe. They are all athletic men, taught to march almost upon the run, and to go through evolutions with the rapidity of bush-fighters. There are few more stirring sights than a French regiment upon the march. Advancing in loose order, and with a long, swinging gait, their guns at an angle of forty-five degrees, lightly carried upon the shoulder, they impart an idea of alertness and efficiency which no other soldiers present to the same degree.

Gymnasia are somewhat patronized by the civilians. The art of fencing is a national accomplishment, and few gentlemen complete their education without the instructions of the *maître d'escrime*. The *savate* is a rude exercise in vogue among rowdies, and consists in kicking with the peasant's wooden shoe. The French are a tough, but not a large or powerful race. The same amount of training dispensed among as large a proportion of the youth of this country would show much greater results.

The British soldier has long been considered by his own nation as a model of manliness. He owes his long limbs and round chest to his ancestors and his mode of life before enlisting. While on the home-service, he does not yet exercise enough to harden him or to ward off disease. Recent returns show a higher comparative rate of mortality in the British army from consumption than among other Englishmen. His close barracks, unvarying diet, and

listless life explain it all. His countrymen and countrywomen, however, who have the time and means, largely cultivate athletic sports. The English lady is noted for her long walks in the open air, and for the preservation of her youthful bloom,—the English gentleman for his red face, broad shoulders, and happy digestion.

How do we compare with them in vigor and attention to gymnastics and health-giving exercises? Better than we did ten years ago, but still not very favorably.

The Western Border-States are noted for the production of a large and hardy race. New Hampshire and Vermont contribute a good share of the tall and well-developed men who yearly recruit the population of our Eastern cities. Let a generation pass, however, and we find the offspring of such sires with equally capacious frames, but far less muscular power. The skeleton is laid of a man mighty in strength, but the filling-in is wanting. Broad-jointed bones swing listlessly in their sockets, the head projects, and the shoulders bend, under the influence of a sedentary life. The laboring and mechanical classes bring certain groups of muscles to perfection in development and dexterity, but present few instances of an harmonious organization. Commercial and professional men do not accomplish even a limited muscular development. For the other sex, Nature seems to have provided a certain immunity from the necessity of active exercise for the rounding and completion of their bodies. The lack of fresh air, however, soon tells with them a fatal story of fading complexions and departing bloom. That ethereal beauty

which peculiarly marks the American woman is also the earliest to decay. As they are the prettiest, so are they the soonest *passées* of any Northern nation. Could they but realize that exercise in the open air is Nature's great and only cosmetic, the reproach of early old age would cease. Nothing will give that peach-bloom to the cheek and that peculiar sweetness to the eye which a long walk through the fields, of a clear October day, bestows unbought.

One evil breeds another. The brain fed only with thin blood gives rise to morbid thoughts. Activity, sharpness, and quickness of perception are but poor compensations for the want of the milder and more generous attributes of the mind. Dyspepsia spawns a moody literature. Broad, manly views and hopeful thoughts of life exist less here, we think, than in England. The cities are supplied year by year with people from the country; yet the latter, the source of all this supply, does not produce so healthy mothers as the city; and were it not for the increasing study of physiology and its vital truths, we fear that we should awaken too late to a knowledge of our physical degeneration.

Now what means are in use among us to furnish the needed stimulant of exercise? It is paradoxical to say that the average of people take more exercise in the city than in the country; yet we believe it to be true. That exercise is only of one form, to be sure, namely, walking. The common calls of business, and the mere daily locomotion from point to point of an extended city, necessitate a large amount of this simplest exercise. Other sources of health, as sunlight and the vivifying influence of trees

and grass upon the air, exist more in the real country. Yet as many girls attain a vigorous development in town as out of it; for in our smaller New England villages indoor cares and labors confine the females excessively and prevent their using much exercise in the open air.

Our militia system, including the exercises of volunteer companies, supplies but to a very limited extent the want of real gymnastics. The common militia meet too infrequently and drill too little to gain much sanative benefit. The old-fashioned "training-day" was always a day of drunkenness and subsequent sickness. The "going into camp" now adopted is even worse; for here youths taken from the sheltered counting-room and furnace-heated house are exposed to the inclemencies of the weather not long enough to harden them, but long enough to lay the foundation of disease. Volunteer companies parade and are reviewed oftener, and drill more constantly; but the good effects of the manual exercise are rendered nugatory by its being conducted in confined armories and a bad atmosphere.

The frequency of conflagrations and the emulation of rival volunteer corps render the fire-companies an active school of exercise. But the benefits of this are neutralized by the violence and irregularity of their exertions. Quitting the workshop half-clad, and running long distances, the fireman arrives panting at the fire, to breathe in, with lungs congested by the unusual effort, the rarefied and smoky atmosphere of the burning buildings. We should naturally suppose this a fertile source of pulmonary

complaints. Besides, were it the most healthy of exercises, it is followed only by the mechanic and the laborer, who use their muscles enough without it.

The "prize-ring" and the professed athlete still exist among us. Unfortunately, their habits brutalize the mind. A limited knowledge of sparring, and a full vocabulary of the slang of the pugilist, are fashionable among many youths. Few young men, however, can cultivate the one, or frequent the society of the other, without the risk of becoming rowdies or bullies, if nothing worse.

The revival of the Old-Country games of cricket and baseball affords some of the best examples of a growing desire for athletic sports. They have many things to recommend them, and, as we conceive, no objectionable features.

The suicidal war waged against trees and birds alike by the early settlers has left but little inducement to follow in this country the field-sports so fashionable in England. Riding on horseback, however, is now more popular than it has been since our carriage-roads were first laid out. This exercise is peculiarly beneficial to the feeble in body. Accelerated inspiration of pure air and a gentle succussion of all the internal organs are blended with that consciousness of power and that self-dependence which the good horseman always feels in the saddle. Hardly less do we value the intimate acquaintance into which it brings us with the noble animal who bears us, establishing a sympathy which no amount of driving can awaken to its full extent.

Our rivers, lakes, and bays spread around us a vast and inviting field for the cultivation of summer or winter sports. Boating and sailing are adapted, from their gentleness of motion, even to the most delicate organizations. Rowing is equally suited to the young and strong. Boat-clubs are quite popular in our colleges, and we hope they will ere long become so in our academies and minor schools. Few exercises bring more muscles into play than the steady stroke of the oar. Few are more exhilarating and pleasant to those who have tried them. Give us the strong pull through an open bay before all boating on placid lakes or rivers. The long, well-timed stroke becomes a mere mechanical effort, leaving the mind at liberty to enjoy the sense of freedom, the tonic salt-breeze, and the enlivening scenes of the sea.

When the boats are beached, and the wharf-logs grow, with successive layers congealed from every tide, into huge spindles of ice, the same element offers its glassy surface to the skater. That skating has actually become fashionable among the gentler sex we regard as the strongest indication of an awakening national taste for exercise. But there is need of caution. Most persons skate with too heavy clothes. The quick movements of the limbs in the changing evolutions of this pastime—though the practised skater is unconscious of much muscular effort—quicken the circulation enough to increase palpably the animal heat and produce a very sensible perspiration. In this exposed condition, the quiet walk home is taken without additional covering, and is the origin of many colds.

Returning to "first principles," we find one useful exercise more or less within reach of all, without preparation or expense. We mean walking. The flexors and extensors of the legs, the broad muscles of the back and abdomen, and the slender and intricate bundles of fibres which support and steady the spine, are all gently exercised in locomotion. The respiration and circulation are moderately increased, and the blood aërated with fresh air. And all this can be had by simply stepping out of doors and setting in motion the muscular machinery, which moves so automatically that we soon become unconscious of its exertions. This, like all other exercise, should be taken at seasonable hours. We enter our protest against long walks before breakfast. To any but the robust they are positively injurious. The early riser and walker, unless long habituated and naturally vigorous, returns from his exercise draggled, faint, and exhausted, to begin the digestive labors of the day, and take his food with hunger rather than appetite. Abstinence has blunted the nicer perceptions of taste, and the jaded organs lose the power not only of discriminating flavors, but of knowing when to cry, "Enough!" "Brushing away the morning dew," like "love in a cottage," is very pretty in a book, but needs a solid basis in the stomach or in the larder.

Running is a very healthy and an equally neglected exercise. Few vocations call upon us to fully expand the chest once a month. Running improves the wind, it is said. We give the name of long-winded to those who have a reserve of breathing capacity

which they do not use in ordinary exertions, but which lies ready to carry them through extraordinary efforts without distress or exhaustion. Such persons breathe quietly and deeply. Running forms part of the training of the prize-fighter. It should be begun and ended at a moderate pace, as a knowing jockey drives a fast horse; otherwise, panting, and even dangerous congestion, may arise from the too sudden afflux of blood to the lungs.

Nothing so pleasantly combines mental occupation with bodily labor as a pursuit of some one of the natural sciences, particularly zoölogy or botany. If our means allow a microscope to be added to our natural resources, the field of exercise and pleasure is boundlessly enlarged. To the labor of collecting specimens is joined the exhilaration of discovery; and he who has once opened the outer gate of the sanctuary of Nature finds in the study of her *arcana* a pastime which will be a joy forever.

Our larger towns and cities still support gymnasia of greater or less size and perfectness. But the modern gymnasium has two great deficiencies: the lack of open air, and of the emulation arising from publicity. The first is a very grave objection. Not a tithe of the benefits of exercise can be obtained within-doors. The sallow mechanic and the ruddy farmer are the two points of comparison. The one may work as hard and be as strong as the other, and yet we cannot call him as healthy. Nothing short of Nature's own sweet air will supply the highest physical needs of the human frame. As our gymnasia are usually private, and only moderately frequented, the gymnast is not stimulated

to those exertions which society and competition would arouse. *Ennui* often mars his enjoyment. We have seen men methodically pursuing, day after day, the same exercises, with all the listless drudgery of a hack-horse. Geniality and generous emulation are among the great benefits of the true gymnasium.

"But how shall I find time to follow out even one of these exercises?" objects the victim of American social life. It is true, he cannot. We live so fast that we have no time to live. Nevertheless, gymnastics have one advantage adapted to our hurried habits. They afford the most exercise in the shortest time. In no other way, so easily accessible, can as much powerful motion be used in so brief a space.

The tired clerk or merchant comes home late, with feverish brain and weary legs. His chest and arms have had no exercise proportional to the rest of his system. What shall he do to restore the balance? If he can, let him erect in some upper room, away from furnace-heat, instead of a billiard-table, a private shrine to Apollo or Mercury. He will need but little apparatus. A set of weights and pulleys, a pair of parallel bars, two suspended rings, and a leaping-pole are all the necessary permanent fixtures. Other articles, as the dumb-bells, the Indian club, boxing-gloves, foils, or single-sticks, take up no room, and can be added as his growing taste for their use demands. We would single out the parallel bars and the weights as the most generally useful. The former develop particularly the chest, stretch the pectoral muscles, and lengthen the collar-bones. The latter increase the

volume and power of the extensors of the shoulder, arm, and forearm, and are to be sedulously practised, because we have fewer common and daily movements of these muscles than of their antagonists, the flexors, and they are consequently weaker in most persons. The windows should be widely opened, and the room warmed by the sun alone.

Though, after the first few trials, the whole body will ache, and the astonished muscles tremble with soreness, a week's perseverance will overcome these earlier drawbacks. The gymnast will be surprised at the new feeling of vigor in the back and shoulders, and to find the upright, military posture as natural as it was before difficult to maintain. Temper and digestion undergo a parallel improvement, and it will require much to make him forego the luxury of exercise which he at first thought so painful.

Many persons become discouraged by beginning too violently. Alarmed at the fatigue and suffering at first induced, they shrink from further efforts. Gymnastics are, to be sure, an injudicious mode of exercise for some. Children get a good many sprains, and sometimes permanent deformity, from their use. The growing period requires care to avoid injuring the articulations; yet it is the most favorable time to spread the shoulders and deepen the chest. The young grow most in height and can best gain an harmonious development by frequenting the GYMNASIUM.

* * * * *

WHY DID THE GOVERNESS FAINT?

We were all sitting together in the evening, and my sister Fanny had been reading aloud from the newspaper. For my father's benefit, she had read all the political articles, and all about business, till he had said he had heard enough, and there was nothing in the papers, and then had left the room. So Fanny looked over the marriages and deaths, and read about the weather in New York and Chicago, and some other things that she thought would interest us while we were sewing. Suddenly I looked up, towards where Miss Agnes was sitting, far away at the other end of the room. She was leaning back in her chair, and, all in a moment, I thought she looked white, as though she had fainted. I did not say a word, but got up and went quietly towards her. I found she had fainted quite away, and her lips were pale, and her eyes shut. I opened the window by her; for the night was cool, and all the windows were closed. There came in a little breeze of fresh air, and then I ran to fetch a glass of water. When I returned, I found Miss Agnes reviving a little. The air and the water served to refresh her, and very gradually she came back to herself. As she opened her eyes, she looked at me wonderingly, then round the room,—then a shudder came over her, as if with a sudden painful memory.

"I'm better,—thank you for the water," she said; and then she rose up and went to the window, and leaned against the casement.

I had a glimpse of her face; so sad a face I had never seen before.

For Miss Agnes was not often sad, though she was quiet in her ways and manners. She could be gay, when it was the time to be gay. She was our governess,—that is, she taught Mary and Sophy and me. Fanny was too old to be taught by her, and had an Italian master and a French teacher; but she practised duets for the piano with Miss Agnes, and read with her,—and she made visits with her, for Miss Agnes was a favorite everywhere. She had a kind word for everybody, and listened kindly to all that was said to her. She talked to everybody at the sewing societies, had something to say to every one, and when she came home she had always something to tell that was entertaining. I often wished I could be one-quarter as amusing, but I never could succeed in making my little experiences at all agreeable in the way Miss Agnes did. I have tried it often since, but I always fail. Only the other day, I quite prided myself that I had found out all about Mrs. Endicott's going to Europe, and came home delighted with my piece of news. She was going with her husband; two of the children she was to leave behind, and take the baby with her; they were to be gone six months; and I even knew the vessel they were going in, and the day they were to sail. My intelligence was very quickly told;—Miss Agnes and many others would have made a great deal more of it. I had no sooner come to the end than Fanny said, "Who is going to take care of the children she leaves at home?" I had never thought to ask! I was disappointed;—my news was quite imperfect; I might as well not have tried to bring

any news. But it was never so with Miss Agnes. I believe it was because she was really interested in what concerned others, that they always told her willingly about themselves; and though she never was inquisitive about others' affairs, yet she knew very well all that was going on.

So she was a most valuable member of our home-circle, and was welcome also among our friends. And we thought her beautiful, too. She was very tall and slender, and her light-brown eyes were of the color of her light-brown hair. We liked to see her come into the room,—her smile and face made sunshine there; and she was more to us than a governess,—she was our dear friend.

But now she looked round at me, pale and sad. She suddenly saw that I looked astonished at her, and she said, "I am not well, Jeanie, but we will not say anything about it. I am going to my room; to-morrow I shall be better." She held her hand to her head, and I thought there must be some heavy pain there, she still looked so sad and pale. She bade us all good night and went away.

I did not tell the others what had happened,—partly because, as I have said, I was not in the way of telling things, and partly because they were all talking and had not observed what had been going on. But I found the paper Fanny had been reading, and wondered if there were anything in what she had read that could have moved Miss Agnes so much. I had not been paying much attention to the reading, but I knew upon which side of the paper to look. Fanny told me it was time for me to go to bed, however,

and I left my search before I could find anything that seemed to concern Miss Agnes. I stopped at her door, and bade her good night again; and she came out to me, and kissed me, and said,—I was a good child, and I must not trouble myself about her.

The next day she seemed quiet, yet the same as ever. Though I said nothing to anybody else about her fainting, I could not help telling my friend Jessie of it;—for I always told Jessie everything. Fanny called us the two Jays, we chattered so when we were together. I knew she would not tell anybody, so I could not help sharing my wonder with her,—what could have made Miss Agnes faint so suddenly? She thought it must have been something in the newspaper,—perhaps the death of some friend, or the marriage of some other. I was willing to look again, and this time remembered three things that Fanny had just been reading when I had looked up at Miss Agnes. One was about Mr. Paul Shattuck;—in descending from a haycart, he had fallen upon a pitchfork, and had seriously wounded his thigh. Another was the marriage of Mr. Abraham Black to Miss Susan Whitcomb, and Fanny had wondered if she were related to the Whitcombs of Hadley. Then she had read a singular advertisement for a lost ring, a seal ring, with some Arabic letters engraved upon it. I was of opinion that Miss Agnes was somehow connected with this signet-ring,—that it had some influence over her fate. Jessie thought that Miss Agnes must have been formerly engaged to Mr. Abraham Black, and that when she heard of his marriage—but I interrupted her in this suggestion. In the first place, she could

never have been engaged to a Mr. Abraham Black; and then, nobody who could marry Miss Agnes would think of taking up with a Susan Whitcomb. So Jessie fell back upon Paul Shattuck, and, to tell the truth, we had some warm discussions on the subject.

Time passed on, and it was June. One lovely afternoon, we had quite a frolic with the hay, the grass having been cut on the lawn in front of the house. Miss Agnes had been with us. We had made nests in the hay, and had buried each other in deep mounds of it, and had all played till we were quite tired. I went into the house in search of Miss Agnes, after she had gone in, and found her sitting at one of the side windows. I came near, then wished to draw back again, for I saw there were tears in her eyes. But when I found she had seen me, I tried to speak as if I had seen nothing.

"How high the cat has to step, to walk over the grass!" I said, as I looked out of the window.

Miss Agnes put her arms about me. "You wonder, because you see me crying," she said, and looked into my face.

"I never before saw anybody cry that was grown up," said I.

Miss Agnes smiled and said, "They tell children it is naughty to cry; but sometimes you can't help crying, can you?" And her tears came dropping down.

"Oh, Miss Agnes," I said, "I wish I could help your crying! It is too bad!—it is too bad!"

"Yes, it is very bad," she said, as she held me in her arms, "it

is very bad; but you do help me. You shall be my little friend."

That was all. She did not tell me anything;—yet I felt as if she had said a great deal, and I did not speak of this to Jessie.

A few days after, as I was passing the door of the parlor, I fancied I heard a little cry, and it sounded to me as if I had heard the voice of Miss Agnes. I hurried in. A stranger had just entered the room. But before me stood Miss Agnes, pale, erect, her lips quivering. She held fast a chair, which she had drawn up in front of her, as one would place a shield between one's self and some wild animal. How slender and defenceless she looked! I followed the terrified glance of her eyes. There, in the middle of the room, stood a stranger,—not so terrible to look upon, for he was young, and it seemed to me I had never seen so handsome a man. His black hair and eyes quite pictured the hero of my romance. He was strongly built, and directly showed his strength by seizing a large marble table that stood near the centre of the room, and wheeling it between himself and Miss Agnes.

"If you are afraid of me," he said, "I will build up a barrier between us. Poor lamb, you would like to be free from the clutches of the wolf!"

"I am afraid of you," said Miss Agnes, slowly,—and the color came into her cheeks. "You know your power over me. I begged you, if you loved me, not to come to me."

"And all for that foolish ring! And the spirits of mischief betrayed its loss to you; it was none of my work that published it in the papers. Can you let a fancy, an old story in a ring, disturb

your faith in me?"

"If the faith is disturbed," answered Miss Agnes, "what use in asking what has disturbed it? Ernest, as you stand there, you cannot say you love me as you once professed to love me!"

"I can say that you are my guiding star,—that, if you fail me, I fall away into ruin."

"Can my little light keep you from ruin?" said Miss Agnes, shuddering.

"Do not talk to me so! Alas, you know how weak I am!"

"I know that you are an angel, and that I am too low a wretch to dare to speak to you. I came here to tell you I was worthy of your deepest hatred. But, Agnes, when you speak to me of my power over you, it tempts me to wield it a little longer, before I fall below your contempt."

He walked up and down the room, and presently saw me standing there.

"A listener!" he exclaimed; "you are afraid to be alone with me!"

I was about to leave the room, but he called me back.

"Stay, child!" he said; "if I can speak in *her* presence, it makes little difference that any one else should hear me. Agnes, little Agnes, you would not like to be quite alone;—let the child stay. Yet you know already that I am faithless to you. You know what I am going to tell you. I love you, passionately, as I have always loved you. But there are other passions hold me tighter. Money, and position,—I need them,—I cannot live without them. The

first I have lost already, and the claims I have to reputation will follow soon. I am mad. I am flinging away happiness for the sake of its mask. Next week I marry riches,—a fortune. With the golden lady, I go to Europe. I forsake home,—my better self. I leave you, Agnes;—and you may thank God that I do leave you, I am not worthy of you."

She lifted herself from the chair on which she was leaning, and walked towards him. She laid her hand upon his shoulder, and, white and pale, looked in his face.

"Do not go, Ernest!" she said. "You are mine. A promise cannot be broken;—you are promised to me.—Stay,—do not go away!"

"My beautiful Agnes!" he said, "do you come to lay your pure self down in the scale against my follies and all my passions? You stand before me too fair, too lovely for me. It is only in your presence that I can appear noble enough for you. Even here, by your side, I see the life I must lead with you, the struggle that you must share. In that life you would only see me fail. I am weak; I can never be strong. Let me go down the current. Your heart will not break;—I am not worth such a sacrifice."

"You are desperate," said she. "You say these cold, bitter words, and you must know that each word cuts me. Oh, Ernest, you are false, indeed, if you come to taunt me with your faithlessness!"

"I needed to see you once more," he said, imperiously,— "I needed it. But you were right, Agnes,—the ring was a true

talisman. It seemed to me that its letters had changed color. I carried it to an old Eastern scholar. He declared that the letters could never have formed the word 'Faith,'—that the word was some black word that meant death. I left it with him, that he might study it. When I saw him again, he declared he had lost it, and had advertised it. You see you can trust your talisman sooner than you can trust me."

At this moment the outer door opened, and presently Fanny came in, with one of her friends. Miss Agnes looked bewildered, but her visitor recovered his composure directly.

"Miss Fanny, I believe;—I have met you before. I have just been bidding good-bye to Miss Agnes, before leaving for Europe. Can I be of service to you?"

Before we had time to think, he had said something to each one of us, and had left the house. Fanny turned to speak to Miss Agnes, but she had fallen to the ground before we could reach her.

She was ill, very ill, for a long time. She had the brain fever,—so the doctor said. They let me stay with her,—she liked to have me with her. I was glad to sit in the darkened room all the long day. I never was a "handy" child, but I learned to be useful to her. I waited on all her wants. I held her hand when she reached it out as if to meet some kindly touch.

In the quiet of her room, I had not heard the great piece of news,—of the terrible railroad accident: that Mr. Carr, the Ernest who had been to see Miss Agnes, was among those who were

suddenly killed,—the very day he left our house! I had not heard it; so I was not able to warn Fanny, when she came into the sick room of Miss Agnes, the first day she was able to talk,—I could not warn Fanny that she must not speak of it. But she did. How could she be so thoughtless? Miss Agnes, it is true, looked almost well, as she was lying on her couch, a soft color in her cheeks. But then Fanny need not have told her anything so painful. Miss Agnes looked quite wild, and turned to me as if to know whether it were true. I could not say anything to her, but knelt by her,—and she seemed almost calm, as she asked to know all that was known, all the terrible particulars that Fanny knew so well.

She was worse after that. We thought she would die, one night. But she did not die. Either she was too weak or too strong to die of a broken heart. Perhaps she was not strong enough to love so earnestly such a one as Mr. Carr, or else she had such strength as could bear the trial that was given her to bear. She lived, but life seemed very feeble in her for a long time.

One day she began to talk with me.

"You would like to know, Jeanie, the story of that ring," she said.

I told her I was afraid to have her talk about it, but she went on:—

"It is an old heirloom, and all our family history is full of stories of this ring. There are so many tales connected with it, that every one of us has looked upon it with a sort of superstition, and cherished it as a talisman connected with our lives. It was always

a test of constancy, and the stories of those occasions when it has detected falsehood have always been remembered. I suppose there are many when it has been quietly worn, undisturbed, that have been forgotten. It has told many a sad tale in my own family. It came back, broken, to my brother Arthur, and he died of a broken heart. My sister Eveline gave it to her young cousin, to whom she engaged herself. But afterwards, when she went to live with a gay and heartless aunt of mine, she broke her promise to him for the sake of a richer match. The day that she was married, our cousin far away saw the black letters turn red upon the signet-ring."

"Oh, Miss Agnes!" I exclaimed.

"And why should not letters change?" she asked, abruptly; and I saw her eyes look out dreamily, as if at something I did not see. "The letter clothes the spirit; and the spirit gives life to the form. A face grows lovely or unlovely with the spirit that lies behind it. I cannot say if there be a spirit in such things. Yet what we have worn we give a value to. It has an expression in our eyes. Do we give it all that expression, or has it some life of its own?"

She interrupted herself, and went on:—

"I had known that Ernest was not true to me. I had known it by the words he wrote to me. They did not have the ring of pure silver; there was a clang to them. When Fanny read aloud the loss of that ring, it spoke to a suspicion that was lying in the depth of my heart, and roused it into life. My little Jeanie, I was very sad then.

"You do not know how deeply I loved Ernest Carr. You do not know how I might have loved your brother George,—yes, the noble, upright George. He loved me, and treated me most tenderly; he found this home for me. I did not banish him from it,—he would have stayed all these years in Calcutta, if it had not been for me,—so he said. You cannot understand how it was that Ernest Carr, whom I had known before, should have impressed me more. You do not know, yet, that we cannot command our love,—that it does not always follow where our admiration leads. I loved Ernest for his very faults. The fascinations that made the world, its prizes, its money, its fame, so attractive to him, won me as I saw them in him. It is terrible to think of my last meeting with him; but his fate seems to me not so awful as the fate towards which he was hurrying,—the life which could never have satisfied him."

She left off speaking, and dreamed on, her eyes and thoughts far away.

And I, too, dreamed. I fancied my brother George coming home, and that he would meet with that ring somehow. I knew it must come back to her.

And it did; and he came with it.

TWO YEARS AFTER

Oh, I forgot that, long ago!
It was very fine at the time, no doubt,—
Remembering is so hard, you know;—
Well, you will one day find it out.
I love the life of the happy flowers,
But I hate the brown and crumbling leaves;
You cannot with spices embalm the hours,
Nor gather the sunshine into sheaves.

We are older now, and wiser, too.
Only two summers ago, you say,
Two autumns, two winters, two springs, since you—
Will you hold for a moment my bouquet?
Yes,—take that sprig of mignonette;
It will wither with you as it would with me:
Freshness and sweetness a half-hour yet,
Then a toss of the hand, and one is free.

Why will you talk of such silly things?—
What a pretty bride! Do you like her hair?
See Madam there, with her twenty rings.
Ogling the youth with the foreign air!—
The moon was bright and the winds were low,
The lilies bent listening to what we said?
I did not make your lilies grow;

Will they bloom for me now they are dead?

You hate the rooms and the heartless hum,
The thick perfumes and the studied smile?
'Tis the air I love to breathe,—yet come,
I will watch the stars with you awhile;
But you won't talk nonsense, you promise me?
Tear from the book the page we read;
We are friends,—dear friends. You must come and see
My new home, and soon.—What was it you said?

Heartsick, and weary, and sad, and strange,—
Ashes and dust where swept the fire?
I am sorry for you, but I cannot change.—
Did you see that star fall from the Lyre?
A moment's gleam, and a deeper night
Closing around its wandering way:
But then there are other orbs as bright;
Let your incense burn to them, I pray.

Oh, conjure your mighty manhood up!
Let it blaze its best in your flashing eyes!
Can it stare my womanhood down, or hope
To scorch my pride till it droops and dies?—
There, do not be angry;—take my hand;
Forgive me;—I meant not anything:
I am foolish, and cannot understand
Why you throw life out for one dumb string.

Sweeter its music than all the rest?
It may be so, though I cannot tell;
But take the good when you lose the best,
And school yourself till it seems as well.
Love may pass by, but here is fame,
And wealth, and power;—when these are gone,
God is left,—and the altar-flame
May, brightening ever, burn on and on.

And yet to my heart at times there come
Tidings of lands I shall never see,
Sweet odors, and wooing winds, and hum
Of bees in the fields that are far from me,—
Far fields, and skies that are always fair;
And I dream the old dreams of heaven, and you.—
But here comes the youth of the foreign air.
I will dance and forget,—and you must, too.

A BUNDLE OF OLD LETTERS

To struggle painfully for years, spending all of life's energies for others, and then to be forgotten by those for whom all was hazarded and consumed, is a lot demanding the most unselfish aims. Yet this befell many a suffering patriot in our Revolutionary struggle. The names of those who were the leaders in battle and in council, men whose position in the field or whose words in Congress gave them a country's immortality, have remained bright in our memory. But others there were who cheerfully surrendered eminence in their private walks and happiness in social life to endure the hardships of a protracted contest till life was spent, and who, from the very nature of the services they rendered, have remained in obscurity. They would not themselves repine at this; for they gave their strength, not for their country's applause, but their country's good. They sought, not our remembrance, but our freedom.

In many an old garret, or treasured up in some old man's safest nook, are worn-out, faded letters, telling of struggles and hopes in that long contest, that would make their writers' names bright on the nation's record, were not the number of those who rendered that our golden age so countless. Pious is the task of tracing the services of some revered ancestor, who gave whatever he had to give, when his country called, but whose name is not now remembered. Those days are fast becoming to our younger race

almost mythical, so that every living word from the actors in them is of use in vivifying scenes that else would seem dim fable.

From a somewhat bulky bundle of yellow, tattered letters, long cherished with fond and filial care, a few are selected to interest the readers of the "Atlantic," who, it is supposed, will first be glad to know a little about their writer.

Dr. Isaac Foster was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, on the 28th of August, 1740. His father, in early life a sea-captain, making frequent voyages between Boston and Europe, was for many years a prominent citizen of Charlestown, participating largely in the measures that preceded and led to the Revolution. At the age of eighteen, Dr. Foster graduated at Harvard, in the class of 1758. He then studied medicine under Dr. Lloyd of Boston, and afterwards completed his studies in England. He married, as his first wife, Martha, daughter of Thaddeus Mason of Cambridge, and at her death, some years later, Mary, daughter of Richard Russell of Charlestown. In his profession he achieved a considerable reputation, acquired a large practice, and numbered among his pupils Doctors Bartlett, Welch, and Eustis.

But while he was working his way to position and influence, more exciting themes began to attract his attention. With the earliest signs of coming conflict he took a determined stand on the Colonial side. In the town-meetings of the day he seems to have been prominent, and his name appears on most of the important committees appointed by the town in reference to public affairs. Thus, when, as early as November, 1772,

the Committee of Correspondence in Boston called upon the other towns "to stand firm as one man," his name is found upon a committee appointed to answer this letter and prepare instructions to the representative of the town in the General Court.¹

He was also one of a committee appointed to consult with the committees of other towns concerning the expected importation of a quantity of tea. This was November 24th. On the 22d of December of the same year, a petition numerously signed was presented to the selectmen, asking that a meeting might be called to take some effectual measures to prevent the consumption of tea. Among the signatures is Dr. Foster's.²

He was elected a delegate to the Convention in the County of Middlesex, in August, 1774, and a member of the first Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, in October of the same year. Early in 1775, he was appointed a surgeon, and was, for some months, at the head of the military medical department, while General Ward commanded at Cambridge. The day after the battle of Concord, at the urgent request of General Ward and Dr. Warren, he gave up his private practice, then very large, to attend the wounded. On the 18th of June, he was appointed by the Committee of Safety to attend the men wounded on the previous day at the battle of Bunker's Hill. He was soon after appointed Surgeon of the State Hospital, and by General

¹ FROTHINGHAM'S *History of Charlestown*, p. 286.

² FROTHINGHAM'S *History of Charlestown*, p. 293.

Washington, on the discovery of the treachery of Dr. Church, in October, Director-General, *pro tem.*, of the American Hospital Department. Congress soon nominated to this post Dr. John Morgan of Philadelphia, Dr. Foster remaining as the oldest surgeon in the hospital.

It seemed necessary, before selecting some of Dr. Foster's letters, to give this account of his earlier life, to show that he was no soldier of fortune or eleventh-hour laborer, but that his sympathies were enlisted and his aid given among the earliest of the friends of a then doubtful cause,—and that he ventured influence, wealth, and professional fame, and abandoned home and ease, at what seemed to him the call of his country.

The first extracts shall be from a letter to his wife, dated
"New York, Sunday, P.M.,
"June 2, 1776_.

"MY DEAR POLLY,

"I received your kind letter of the 27th last, and thank you for your ready acceptance of my invitation to come to me. Indeed, my dear, you could not have given a stronger proof of your affection for me. Heaven only knows what dangers and difficulties you may be exposed to in this undertaking; but it shall be my constant endeavor to keep you out of the way of danger, and procure the best accommodation for you this country affords. If mother will add to her former kindness by taking the charge of our children, it will greatly ease my mind; and as our enemies have, by their wanton barbarity, from being inhabitants

of Charlestown, made us citizens of the United Colonies at large, I believe you will be as safe and happy with or near me as anywhere....

"The night before last, the city was much alarmed. A signal had been made from one of the islands of the arrival of a ship to join the small fleet at the Hook. Some one raised this to a large number of transports with the expected German forces; some of the Tories here had the impudence to affirm they had seen eleven sail. When I came from the hospital to my lodging, in the evening, I found the neighborhood in confusion, the women talking of and preparing for flight. I thought it my duty to wait on General Putnam, who at present commands here; in my way, I met Major Webb, who acquainted me with the truth of the matter. Upon this occasion, I could not help thinking I should go to my post with much more alacrity, if I might have the pleasure of seeing you again first....

"Your affectionate husband,

"ISAAC FOSTER."

* * * * *

The next is a short extract from a letter to his father, bearing date June 6th, 1776. Speaking of his wife, he says:—

"I wish she may have a pleasant journey, and arrive here in season to see the city before our enemies attack us. We are in daily expectation of them, and tolerably prepared to receive them. I am under no apprehension of their being able to get footing here; but if they behave with spirit, the city must suffer

in the contest."

The next is also to his father.

"*New York, July 7th, 1776.*

"HONORED SIR,

"It is with the greatest pleasure I embrace this opportunity of congratulating you on the most important event that has happened since the commencement of hostilities. On Tuesday, the 2nd inst., the Honorable the Continental Congress declared the Thirteen United Colonies free and independent States. This Declaration is to be published at Philadelphia to-morrow, with all the pomp and solemnity proper on such an occasion; and before the week is out, we hope to have the pleasure of proclaiming it to the British fleet, now riding at anchor in full view between this city and Staten Island, by a *feu de joie* from our musketry, and a general discharge of the cannon on our works. This step, whatever some lukewarm would-be-thought friends or concealed enemies may think, the cruel oppression, the wanton, insatiable revenge of the British Administration, the venality of its Parliament and Electors, and the unaccountable inattention of the people of Great Britain in general to their true interest and the importance of the contest with their late Colonies, had rendered absolutely necessary for our own preservation,—and has given great spirits to the army, as, by shutting the door against any reconciliation in the least degree connected with dependence on Great Britain, they know for what they are fighting, and are freed from the apprehension of being duped by Commissioners,

after having risked their lives in the service of their country, and to secure the enjoyment of liberty to their posterity."

* * * * *

The next letters of public import are addressed to his father, and relate mainly to the expected attack upon New York.

"New York, July 22nd, 1776.

"HONORED SIR,

"I received your kind favor of the 15th inst. I am glad to hear our friends are all well. I congratulate you on the spirited behavior and glorious success of our army under General Lee. It is generally thought to have been a decisive action, at least for this summer, as the two fifty-gun ships are never like to get to sea again. I hope by the next post you will hear some of our exploits, if the enemy have courage enough to attack us. It is my week at the hospital; and if anything happens, I hope to give you the particulars. Polly has got much better; she joins me in duty to mother and love to the children. There has been another flag from the fleet; the Adjutant-General of the British troops has been on shore to wait on his Excellency. He endeavored, but in vain, to persuade him to accept the letter which had been twice refused. In conversation he related its contents, much the same as those to the late Governor. He was answered, (as I am told from good authority,) that it could not be expected people who were sensible of having committed no offence should ask pardon,—that, as the American States owed no allegiance, so they were not accountable, to any earthly prince. He tarried about half an hour,

and seemed pleased with the politeness of his reception."

"July 23d, P.M.

"I write to congratulate you on advice received this day from Virginia, an agreeable supplement to the paper I sent yesterday. On the 9th instant, Lord Dunmore with his slavish mercenaries and stolen negroes were driven from their post on Gwin Island in Virginia, and the piratical fleet from their station near it, with the loss of one ship, two tenders or armed vessels burnt by themselves, three armed vessels taken by our people, and Lord Dunmore wounded; on our side not a man lost. I would be more particular, but, as I had only time to read the Philadelphia paper of yesterday which contains the account, and Mr. Mayo is just setting out, it is not in my power."

"New York, Aug. 12, 1776

"Polly is still here with me, and we are both very well, but disappointed in not hearing oftener from our friends at Boston. For news in general I must refer to the inclosed paper. I was in company the evening they came to this city with the two gentlemen who came from England in the packet. They say the British force on Staten Island is from twelve to fifteen thousand, of which about one thousand are Hessians; that Lord and General Howe speak very respectfully of our worthy commander-in-chief, at their tables and in conversation giving him the title of General; that many of the officers affect to hold our army in contempt, calling it no more than a mob; that they envy us our markets, and depend much on having their winter-quarters in this

city, out of which they are confident of driving us, and pretend only to dread our destroying of it; that the officers' baggage was embarked, a number of flat-bottom boats prepared, and every disposition made for an attack, which we may hourly expect. On our side, we have not been wanting; our army has for several nights lain on their arms, occasioned by several ships of war and upwards of thirty transports going out at the Narrows and anchoring at that part of Long Island best calculated for their making a descent, and where they received, by means of flat-bottom boats, a large detachment from the army on Staten Island. But this fleet went to sea yesterday, where bound we know not; some think, to go round the east end of Long Island, come down the Sound, and land on our backs, in order to cut off any retreat, and oblige us to surrender ourselves and the city into their hands: but if they are so infatuated as to venture themselves into a broken, woody country, between us and the New England governments, I trust they will have cause to repent their rashness. Generals Heath, Spencer, Greene, and Sullivan are promoted by the Honorable Congress to the rank of Major-Generals; and the Colonels Reed, Nixon, Parsons, Clinton, Sinclair, and McDougall to be Brigadier-Generals. We have removed all our superfluous clothing, and whatever is not necessary for present use, to Rye, whither General Putnam's lady has retired. Miss Putnam is yet in town, and the chaise is in readiness for her and Polly to remove at a minute's warning."

* * * * *

The following copy of an "Order from Head-Quarters" was found among the papers, directed apparently to his father; and as Washington's Orderly Books have never been published, with the exception of a few orders chiefly relating to court-martials, it has been thought that it would be interesting. Though dated on successive days, it seems to have been issued as one order. A note by Dr. Foster, at the close, says,—"This copy was made in a hurry by one of the mates. Some sentences are omitted. Imperfect as it is, I thought it would be agreeable. The principal omission is the order for having three days' provisions ready-dressed, and that all who do not appear at their posts upon the signal are to be deemed cowards, and prosecuted as such."

Head-Quarters, August 14, 1776.

"The enemy's whole reinforcement is now arrived, so that an attack must and soon will be made. The General, therefore, again repeats his earnest request, that every officer and soldier will have his arms and ammunition in good order, keep within their quarters and encampment as much as possible, to be ready for action at a moment's call,—and when called upon, to remember that liberty, property, and honor are all at stake, that upon their courage and conduct rest the hopes of their bleeding and insulted country, that their wives, children, and parents expect safety from them only, and that we have every reason to expect that Heaven will crown us with success in so just a cause.

"The enemy will endeavor to intimidate us by show and appearance; but remember how they have been repulsed on

these occasions by a few brave Americans. Their cause is bad, their men are conscious of it, and, if opposed with firmness and coolness at their first onset, with our advantages of works and knowledge of the ground, the victory is most assuredly ours. Every good soldier will be silent and attentive, wait for orders, and reserve his fire till he is sure of its doing execution;—the officers to be particularly careful of this. The colonels and commanding officers of regiments are to see their supernumerary officers so posted as to keep their men to their duty; and it may not be amiss for the troops to know, that, if any infamous rascal shall attempt to skulk, hide himself, or retreat from the enemy without the orders of his commanding officers, he will instantly be shot down as an example of cowardice. On the other hand, the General solemnly promises that he will reward those who shall distinguish themselves by brave and noble actions; and he desires every officer to be attentive to this particular, that such men may be afterwards suitably noticed."

"Head-Quarters, August 15, 1776.

"The General also flatters himself that every man's mind and arms are now prepared for the glorious contest upon which so much depends.

"The time is too precious, nor does the General think it necessary, to spend it in exhorting his brave countrymen and fellow-soldiers to behave like men fighting for everything that can be dear to free-men. We must resolve to conquer or die. With this resolution, victory and success certainly will attend us.

There will then be a glorious issue to this campaign, and the General will reward his brave soldiers with every indulgence in his power."

"New York, August 16, 1776.

"HONORED SIR,

"It is now past ten o'clock, and Mr. Adams, who favors me by carrying this, sets out by five o'clock to-morrow morning, so that I have only time to acknowledge the favors received by Dr. Welch. If I survive the grand attack hourly expected, or if it is delayed until then, I will write again by next post. Polly has her things packed up; the chaise can be ready at a minute's warning; if the wind favors our enemies, it is probable she will breakfast out of the way of danger. To-morrow is watched for by our army in general with eager expectation of confirming the independence of the American States. All the Ministerial force from every part of America except Canada, with the mercenaries from Europe, being collected for this attempt, God only knows the event. To His protection I commend myself, earnestly praying that in this glorious contest I may not disgrace the place of my nativity, nor, after it is over, be ashamed to see my wife, my children, and my parents again. To the care of Providence, and, under that, to you, honored Sir, with our other friends, I commend all that is near and dear to me, and am, with duty to mother, love to the children, &c., &c.,

"YOUR DUTIFUL SON."

"P.S. Our troops are in good spirits, and, relying on the justice

of their cause and favor of Heaven, assured of victory."

* * * * *

The next four months were, of course, spent amid the hardships of camps and removals. The frequent letters sent to his father and other friends are all of interest to those who claim descent from him, but the general reader can be concerned in but a few of more public import, and, in most cases, only in extracts from these.

"_Bethlehem, State of Penn.,

"Dec. 24, 1776_.

"HONORED SIR,

"I returned from General Washington's head-quarters last evening, and had the pleasure of finding Polly well and as agreeably situated as I could expect. Were I to attempt writing all I wish to communicate, a week's time and a quire of paper would hardly suffice. I fancy I shall be no gainer by lending my furniture to the General Court;—General Washington would have paid me for the use of it before I left Cambridge, but, for the credit of Massachusetts, I declined it."

_"Fishkill, State of N. York,

"Jan_. 20, 1777.

"HONORED SIR,

"After spending the winter hitherto in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, with frequent removals, some loss, much expense and fatigue, we are once more on the east side of Hudson's River. We arrived at this place last Friday, in good health, after a journey

of more than one hundred miles, in severe weather, through the upper part of New Jersey, a new-settled, uncultivated country. The sight of a boarded house or glass window was a great rarity; a cordial welcome to any connected with the American army still greater. Although they are fully sensible of the value of money, and we offered cash for all we wanted, yet I believe we were not a little obliged to their fears for what civility we met with, except only from one family. But I must defer a particular account until I have the happiness to see you.

"I have nothing of news to write but what you must hear sooner in another way. General Heath and the militia are besieging Fort Independence; if they can carry that, they will attempt New York. It is not improbable I shall join him in a few days."

* * * * *

The office of Deputy Director-General of Hospitals was established by ordinance, April 7th, 1777; and four days later, Dr. Foster was chosen by Congress to this office, having charge of the Eastern Department. His subsequent residence was mainly at Danbury, Connecticut.

* * * * *

Of Tryon's expedition against Danbury we have the following account, differing in some respects from the common version:—

"Danbury, May 1, 1777.

"You have doubtless heard of the enemy's expedition to this place, and been anxious for us. This is the first moment of leisure

I have had, and, if not interrupted, I will endeavor to give you a particular account.

"On Saturday morning, about three o'clock, an express from Fairfield brought advice, that a large body, three or four thousand British troops, had landed from upwards of twenty transports, under cover of some ships of war near that place, and that it was probable their design was against the provision and other stores collected in this town; another express soon after sunrise informed us of their being on the march. The militia were mustered, and a few Continental troops that were here on their way to Peekskill prepared to receive them; but their number was so inconsiderable, and that of the enemy so large, with a formidable train of artillery, I had no hope of the place being saved.

"I had, upon the first alarm, ordered all the stores in my charge to be packed up, ready for removal at a minute's warning. Upon the second express, I persuaded Polly, with what money was in my hands, to quit the town: she was unwilling, but I insisted on it. We were so much put to it for teams to remove the medicines and bedding, that I determined rather to lose my own baggage than put it on any cart intended for that purpose; and had not a gentleman's team, already loaded with his own goods, taken it up, I must have lost it. As the enemy entered the room at one end, after our troops had retreated to the heights, I went out at the other, not without some apprehension (as I was to cross the route of their flank-guard) of being intercepted by the light horse.

"After having seen the medicines, all of them that were worth moving, safe at New Milford, I returned to town the next morning, and went with our forces in pursuit of the enemy. About noon the action began in their rear, and continued with some intermission until night; the running fight was renewed next morning, and lasted until the enemy got under cover of their ships. We have lost some brave officers and men. Their loss is unknown, as they buried some of their dead, and carried off others; but, from the dead bodies they were forced to leave on the field, it must have greatly exceeded ours. General Wooster was wounded early in the action; he is in the same house with me, and I fear will not live till morning.

"Our loss in provisions, &c., is between two and three thousand barrels of pork, a quantity of flour, some wheat, and some bedding."

* * * * *

In this bundle are many letters from Mrs. Foster. They are interesting for their true-hearted patriotism and domestic love; but there is room for only a brief extract from a letter referring to this same expedition.

"Danbury, May 13, 1777.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I received yours and father's by Messrs. Russell and Gorham. Doctor had not the pleasure of seeing either of the gentlemen, as he was gone to Fishkill to oversee the inoculation of the troops, which was a very great disappointment.

"I expected last Monday to have been with you by this time, as I was driven from here by the enemy (tho' very unexpected, as this place was thought to be very secure). I removed to New Milford, from whence I intended to have set out for Boston. On Sunday, the Doctor took his leave, and left me to take care of the wounded. Monday morning, everything was got ready for me to set out at twelve o'clock, when I received a note from the Doctor, desiring I would tarry a little longer. I have now returned to my old lodgings at Danbury, where the Doctor thinks of building a hospital. He joins me in duty and love.

"Your affectionate daughter,

"MARY FOSTER."

* * * * *

Much of Dr. Foster's time was necessarily spent in journeyings to the several divisions of the army and various military stations. On such journeys his letters to his wife were very frequent. We extract a part of one.

"_Palmer, Thursday even'g,

"July 31, 1777_.

"DEAR POLLY,

"I arrived here, which is eighty-three miles from Boston, about sunset this evening, in good health. The enemy's fleet has sailed from New York, and was seen standing to eastward. Some suppose them bound for Boston; but I cannot think so, as General Washington, who, I presume, has the best intelligence, is moving towards Philadelphia. Before you receive this, it will be made

certain with you. Should they attack Boston, I would have you get as many of our effects as possible removed out of their way, and inform me by the post where you remove to. Should such an event take place, it will become my duty, after visiting Danbury, to return to the scene of action. To your own prudence and the care of Heaven I leave all, and am, with love to the children, ever yours."

* * * * *

In the lapse of years, many letters have, without doubt, been lost. Thus, but two remain bearing date of 1778. Neither of these contains matter of public import. In May, he speaks of intending a journey to Yorktown, and says, "if anything extraordinary happens between the two armies," he shall be on the spot. In a letter addressed to his father, dated November 27, 1778, he says,

* * * * *

"Public business calls me to Philadelphia; but the state of your health, and my own, which is much impaired, determine me to visit Boston first. I expect a visit from the Marquis La Fayette next week, on his way to Boston, and shall set out with him."

* * * * *

May 11th, 1779, he writes,—

"To-morrow all the gentlemen of the department at this post [Danbury] dine with me, and the next morning I begin my journey to Head-Quarters. I mean to take Newark in my way.

"General Silliman was taken prisoner last week, and carried

to Long Island."

* * * * *

In the two following letters to his wife he speaks of this visit.

"Philadelphia, June 5, 1779.

"My business is almost completed, and to my mind. I now wait for nothing but the money which the Medical Committee recommended I should be furnished with; I expect to receive it the beginning of next week, when I shall set out immediately. Mr. Samuel Adams travels with me; indeed, the time seems tedious until get away. Give my duty to our parents, love to the children, &c., and believe me to be, with the sincerest affection, my dearest Polly,

"Ever yours."

* * * * *

Philadelphia, June 9, 1779.

"MY DEAR POLLY,

"Another post has arrived, and no letter from Boston. It is now a month, and near five weeks, since I have heard from you. If I thought you had neglected writing, it would make me very unhappy; but, from your usual goodness, I cannot think that is the case, but am confident your letters must have miscarried. I have wanted nothing but hearing from you to make my time here perfectly agreeable. I have been received with the greatest politeness and friendship, and every attention paid to me, by men I most esteem, I could wish for; at the same time my business has gone perfectly to my mind. I have leave to reside in Boston

for the future, and shall be under no necessity of attending the camp, nor be obliged to visit Philadelphia oftener than once a year. I am to have a mode of settling my accounts pointed out to me, that will be easy, simple, and much to my mind. I now wait for nothing but money to begin my journey. The Treasury Board this morning passed a resolve recommending it to Congress to furnish me with \$150,000. I expect to receive the warrant to-morrow, and as soon as I get the money shall set out, which I expect will be about next Monday, until which time I am engaged for almost every day. I dine this day with Mr. Adams; tomorrow with Dr. Shippen, in company with the New England delegation; Thursday and Friday I expect to spend with Dr. Craigie in visiting Red Bank, Mud Island, and other principal scenes of action while the enemy were here. We have an account that the enemy are in motion up the North River; but of them you will hear sooner than I can inform you. General Lincoln has actually defeated the enemy in Carolina, and is like to take them all prisoners. The express is on the road, and expected in town to-morrow, when there will be great rejoicing."

* * * * *

The following letter describes one of Dr. Foster's frequent journeys on business of his department.

"Windsor, October 7, 1779.

"MY DEAR POLLY,

"As I am waiting for Mr. De Lamater to come up, I will endeavor to give you an account of our journey. The evening we

left Boston Dr. Warren rode with us as far as Jamaica Plains; after he left us we proceeded to Dedham, where we arrived about dark, and were exceedingly well entertained: we had a brace of partridges for supper. Colonel Trumbull spent the evening with us. The next morning we proceeded nine miles to Heading's to breakfast, and from thence seven miles to Mann's, where we fed our horses, and dined at Daggett's, nine miles further; that afternoon we arrived at Providence, and put up at our old friend Olney's. The next day we dined with Adams and Townshend at their quarters; the General honored us with his company; the same evening supped with the General. Sunday, dined with the General, in company with some of the principal ladies of the place; here I also saw your old acquaintance, General Stark; he drank tea at my quarters one afternoon, and inquired after you. Having finished my business much to my mind, I continued my journey on Monday morning; the General, Colonel Armstrong, and Dr. Brown were so polite as to ride out four miles with us. After they left us, we proceeded to Angell's, twelve miles from Providence, where we dined,—not on the fat of the land. After dinner we rode to Dorrence's, an Irishman, but beyond all comparison the best house on the road; here we were exceedingly well entertained, and, as it looked like a storm, intended staying there, but, it growing lighter towards noon, we set out, but had not rode far before the rain came on; however, as we had begun, we determined to go through with it, and rode a very uncomfortable ten miles to Canterbury, where we dined, poorly

enough, at one Backus's. Not liking our quarters, we proceeded, notwithstanding the rain, to Windham, eight miles further, where we were well entertained at one Cary's. As the storm looked likely to continue, and I was so near Windsor, I was determined, if I must lie by for it, to lie by in a place where I could do some business. I accordingly proceeded fifteen miles in the forenoon to Andover, where I dined at one White's, and fifteen miles in the afternoon to Bissell's at East Windsor, where I lodged. I was thoroughly soaked, but do not find that I have got any cold. Indeed, I find my health considerably better than when I left Boston. This morning it has cleared off very pleasant, and I crossed from East Windsor to this place. I have just returned from visiting Mr. Hooker's and Dr. Johonnot's stores. I find everything in such excellent order as to do credit to the department. Mr. De Lamater is not yet come up; as soon as he arrives we shall visit Springfield. I shall not close this letter until I meet the post; if anything worth notice occurs, I shall mention it. Adieu, my love.

"*October 8.*—Mr. De Lamater arrived last night. Altho' it is very raw and uncomfortable, I shall proceed immediately after dinner to Springfield. We have certain advice that the Count D'Estaing has been at Georgia, and taken all the British ships there; it is reported, and believed by many, that he is arrived off Long Island. You see, my dear Polly, I have set you the example of a very long letter. I hope, as you have leisure enough, you will follow it, as nothing can give me greater pleasure."

* * * * *

"Fishkill, October 21, 1779.

"MY DEAR POLLY,

"I returned from Head-Quarters this forenoon. We went down yesterday morning, and dined with General Heath, who was so good as to lend us his barge to carry us to Head-Quarters. His Excellency received us as I could wish. He invited us to dine with him this day. Upon my excusing myself, as being in haste to finish my journey, he accepted the excuse, and invited us to breakfast with him, which we did. We returned last night to Robinson's house, and slept with our friend Eustis. General Heath favored us again with his barge to carry us to Head-Quarters, and after breakfast his Excellency ordered his own to convey us to our horses, which we had ordered four or five miles up the river. One principal reason of my declining the General's invitation to dinner was my impatience to return to Fishkill, that I might receive a letter from you. Judge, then, what was my disappointment to find the post arrived and no letter. I shall cross the North River to-morrow morning to proceed on my journey to Philadelphia. If the nature of the service will allow it, General Heath and his suit propose returning with me to spend the winter in Boston. Eustis desires you would look out some suitable object of his attentions, while in Boston. He pretends it is only with a view to keep him alert and properly attentive to the ladies in general; but I suspect he designs to become the domestic man."

* * * * *

Morristown, Oct. 26th, 1779.

"MY DEAR POLLY,

"I wrote you from Fishkill the day before I left it, and shall put this into the office here for the post to take as he comes along. On Friday, towards evening, we left Fishkill. It was dark and squally when we got to the landing, and we had nine horses in the boat, which made us a little uneasy, as a few days before a boat had been overset and some people drowned; however, we got safe over, and lay that night at Colonel Hawsbrook's, where you spent two or three days on your return from Bethlehem. The next morning we breakfasted with Dr. Craik at Murderer's Creek, and then proceeded through the Clove, a most disagreeable place, and horrid road. In the evening we got to Ringwood. Upon our arrival there, we were informed there was no public house in the place, and it was after dark. Colonel Biddle had favored me with an order on all his magazines to supply me with forage; he has one in this place. I waited on his deputy and presented the order; he went out of the room, and in a few minutes returned with a Mr. Erskine, who is surveyor-general of the roads; he gave me a polite invitation to spend the night at his house, where we were entertained in the most genteel, hospitable, and friendly manner. A shower of rain yesterday morning prevented our proceeding, but, as it cleared up about noon, we came on thirty-four miles to this place. I expect to reach Philadelphia the day after tomorrow. I have been from home almost a month, and have received but one letter, but hope to find several waiting for me at Philadelphia,

as I cannot think you would miss a post. The enemy last Thursday left their posts at Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, and retired to New York."

* * * * *

"Bristol, October 27, 1779.

"MY DEAR POLLY,

"I wrote you from Morristown, which it is probable you will receive by this post. Lest that should miscarry, this will inform you that I am at length arrived within twenty miles of Philadelphia, where I expect to dine this day. A few days will determine how long I am like to be detained there;—I think it upon every account best to finish all my business. The gentlemen have bound themselves to each other by an engagement upon honor, if nothing is done for our department by New Year's day, all to resign, and have informed Congress of it: I have joined in the engagement. If I find I am like to be detained here any time, it is not improbable I may put my accounts in the hands of the Commissioners, and, if I can get fresh horses, proceed with Mr. Lee on a visit to Mrs. Washington at Mount Pleasant in Virginia. Mr. Lee desires his compliments. Adieu, my love. I am, with the sincerest affection,

"Ever yours."

* * * * *

"Danbury, December 8, 1779.

"MY DEAR POLLY,

"I am once more returned to dear Danbury, on my way

to Boston. I arrived here about an hour since, and never had a more fatiguing, disagreeable journey in my life than from Philadelphia here. I expected to have been in Boston by this time; but two severe storms, and one day waiting for his Excellency at Morristown, have made me twelve days performing a journey which according to my usual way of travelling I should have performed in four. I have, however, no reason to repent my undertaking this journey.

"If sickness or very bad weather does not prevent, I shall certainly be home by Christmas, and wish to have all our friends together;—I promise myself a great deal of happiness, and hope I shall not be disappointed. Adieu, my love."

* * * * *

September 30th, 1780, the Hospital Department was newly organized, and the office of Deputy Director-General was abolished, and of course the incumbents of that office were no longer in the hospital service.

Dr. Foster's health was irreparably injured by the fatigues and exposures he had undergone, and he lingered but a few months longer, dying on the 27th of February, 1781, in his forty-second year.

One sentence in his will deserves record, as in harmony with the disinterestedness of his life. After desiring that all debts due him should be collected as soon as possible after his decease, he adds this clause: "But I would not have any industrious and really poor persons distressed for this purpose."

The writer of these letters needs no additional eulogy. He sacrificed all the prospects of his life to give his services in our struggle for freedom. He, too, was but one of that innumerable multitude who, in more exalted or in humbler stations, freely gave their exertions, their wealth, their comfort, and their lives for freedom and right. It is possible so to linger by the grave of the past as to forget the living present; but the grateful memory of those who have in their times contended for truth with self-denial should be ever animating to those now laboring in the holy warfare, to which, in every age, whether the outward signs be of peace or strife, God calls the noble of mankind.

"Therefore bring violets! Yet, if we,
self-balked,
Stand still a-strewing violets all the while,
These had as well not moved, ourselves not
talked
Of these."

* * * * *

IN THE PINES

If I were a crow, or, at least, had the faculty of flying with that swift directness which is proverbially attributed to the corvine tribe, and were to wing a southwesterly course from the truck of the flag-staff which rises from the Battery at New York, I should find myself, within a very short time, about fifty miles from the turbulent city, and hovering over a region of country as little like the civilized emporium just quitted as it is well possible to conceive. Not being a crow, however, nor fitted up with an apparatus for flying,—destitute even of a balloon,—I am compelled to adopt the means of locomotion which the bounty of God or the ingenuity of man affords me, and to spend a somewhat longer time in transit to my destination.

Over the New Jersey Railroad, then, I rattled, one fine, sunshiny autumn morning, in the year that has recently taken leave of us, as far as Bordentown, a distance of some fifty-seven miles, on my way to a locality the very existence of which is scarcely dreamed of by thousands in the metropolis, who can tell you how many square miles of malaria there are in the Roman Campagna, and who have got the topography of Caffre Land at their fingers' ends. It is a region aboriginal in savagery, grand in the aspects of untrammelled Nature; where forests extend in uninterrupted lines over scores of miles; where we may wander a good day's journey without meeting half-a-dozen human faces;

where stately deer will bound across our path, and bears dispute our passage through the cedar-brakes; where, in a word, we may enjoy the undiluted essence, the perfect wildness, of woodland life. Deep and far "under the shade of melancholy boughs" we shall be taken, if together we visit the ancient Pines of New Jersey.

In order to do so, we must make at Bordentown the acquaintance of Mr. Cox, and take our seats in his stage for a jolt, twelve miles long, to the village of New Egypt, on the frontier of the Pines. Although the forest is accessible from many points, and may be entered by a number of distinct approaches, I, the writer hereof, selected that *viâ* New Egypt as the most convenient to a comer from New York, and as, perhaps, the least fatiguing to accomplish.

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