# PART III.—PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT.

## 1. *Scandinavian Retrospect.*

### *Swedish Gymnastics: Educational and Medical.*

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### I. *Educational.*

Having had my attention drawn by special circumstances to the Swedish gymnastics in England, I was induced to seek admittance to the Royal Central Institute at Stockholm in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the system, and as this system is beginning to attract much attention now in England, it may be of interest to have a short account of the Institution and of the course of instruction pursued in it.

The building occupies a triangle where two streets meet. A large gateway opens into a triangular court beyond, where various schools are drilled in fine weather. Two sides, looking on to the streets, are occupied by professors' dwellings and large lecture-rooms and dressing-rooms; on the third side are the two large gymnasiums, one of which is called the fencing hall.

The object of the course is to send out teachers, thoroughly trained, to teach, both practically and theoretically. The course is carried on in two great divisions, one for men and the other for women, and in these two the methods of instruction employed are quite distinct from each other. Of the former nearly all are young lieutenants who learn fencing, with military and pedagogical gymnastics, anatomy, and physiology. Their course lasts two years, one half of the students changing each year.

I shall speak almost exclusively of the women's course. None are admitted over thirty years of age or under twenty, except under special circumstances. The native students are limited to twenty in number, the class being formed only every second year. The foreigners are but three or four, Norway, Denmark, and Finland each having usually a representative there. All must bring a certificate of health and of freedom from deformity, signed by a doctor. The course of study lasts two years, and is tolerably severe, embracing several subjects. The system consists of two main branches, the medical and (as they are called in Sweden) the "Frisk" or health gymnastics, for all in health, of whatever age or sex. Anatomy, physiology, and

* Miss White is the first English lady who has passed this examination. The Medical aspect of the Swedish Gymnastics will be treated of in the next number. The bearing of the subject upon the treatment of the insane is obvious.—[EDS.]

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lessons in health are needed for both branches. The other subjects are theoretical gymnastics, pathology, and the mechanics of the body. There is a large staff of teachers, mostly gentlemen, many of them officers in the army.

The day's work begins at 8 a.m. with a practical lesson in medical gymnastics, under the superintendence of a lady teacher. A "table" of a certain number of movements is gone through by the students, so that all may in turn both give and take the movements.

Stays and heels are of course strictly forbidden, and the students are expected to wear a special gymnastic costume, consisting of a loose tunic reaching to the knees, with a belt and knickerbockers of the same length to match. A constant change of comrade is insisted on to accustom the student to patients of different size and powers. This lesson lasts an hour, and as the students become a little more expert they help in turn, two of them together, for a month at a time, with the patients. From 9 o'clock till 11 is free time, and is used mostly for reading and breakfast. From 11 till 3 class follows class as closely as possible.

Pathology is taken up the second year, when the students have become somewhat acquainted with the movements, and have gone through the anatomy and physiology courses. It is not only stiff joints, spinal complaints, and muscular contractions from burns and other causes which are treated, but diseases of all kinds. Consumption, indigestion, and even spasmodic asthma and affections of the heart may be greatly relieved, if not permanently cured. A Swedish author, writing on gymnastics and medicine, says that gymnastics are the only radical method for strengthening the digestive organs. Anatomy and physiology are both taken the first year, each having three hours per week devoted to lectures. The anatomy is taken by a doctor, and most of the time spent on this subject is passed in the dissecting room. The students are not expected to do the dissecting themselves, yet they may do it if they please. Lessons in health are also taken in the first year.

Sanitary science is not so far advanced in Sweden as in England, and the benefits of open windows and daily baths are far from being universally admitted even amongst the students, which renders these lessons doubly necessary. The part which brings most life into the course is the practical gymnastics. The students have an hour's "health" gymnastics every day, at which all must attend in their costumes. The lightness and ease of this dress seem to have a corresponding effect on the spirits of the students, who are brighter and more lively then than at any other hour of the day. The work done here is truly systematic, the movements following each other in a prescribed order. Progressive tables of movements having been drawn up by those well versed in the subject, so that no new movement can be taken without due preparation, the students are led on step by step from simple easy movements to those more complicated and difficult

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without the least danger of over-exertion. Thus, a balancing movement is introduced by resting the hands lightly on a support, and a back-bending movement is taken, at first with the hands on the hips, the exercise being increased in difficulty later on by stretching the arms upwards or outwards.

Apparatus is largely used from the beginning, many movements being performed with its aid which, without it, would be too difficult for the beginner. For instance, to rise from a recumbent to a sitting position is impossible for many without help; but if the toes are put under a bar, or if another person press on the insteps, the difficulty vanishes in most cases.

One of the most important principles laid down is that the aim of gymnastics is not to strengthen the arms and legs to jump higher or to run faster than others, but to develop the whole body, especially the organs of respiration, circulation, digestion, &c., in due proportion to one another, and to the muscular system of the body, so that the former may not be worn out by their efforts to supply the extravagant demands made upon them by over-developed muscles.

There is a school of instruction in connection with the Institute where the students learn to drill the children under strict supervision. The children are divided into so-called "squares," each square consisting of eight or ten children. Each student has a square committed to her care, and six or seven squares are drilled at one time. The children form in a long line, and at the word "March" from the teacher each student takes her square to the appointed place and puts them through the table of movements which she has prepared for them. To the uninitiated looker-on the scene is at first confusing, but it is soon perceived how everything goes in regular order, how the apparatus is used in turn, and how well the squares keep to their own place without interfering with one another. It would be doubtless easier to have the whole room at one's command; but one learns watchfulness, concentration, and readiness of resource which it would be impossible to learn under easier circumstances. The teacher is present the whole time, taking notes of mistakes to be commented upon afterwards, and ready to help in any difficulty which may arise.

The success of a class depends entirely on the teacher. If she be dull and uninterested, the children will become either sleepy or unruly. She must make the children feel that she is watching each one, and that nothing escapes her eye. She must be bright and lively, and show that she enjoys the lessons as much as they. The children's costume need not be such a difficulty as it is commonly made in England in girls' schools. The children in a Swedish school, at any rate the younger ones, often have their costumes of the same materials as their dress, so that the skirt is worn over the gymnastic dress, and slipped off for the lesson without time being wasted in changing. Younger children are easier to teach than older. They like to move about, but they must be kept occupied the whole time. There must be no spare moments when they can begin to talk or play.

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Let them rest and play, but let it be lawful rest. When once the word "Attention" is said all must be on the alert. Older girls often think it too much trouble, and are too fond of their stays and high heels, so that whilst needing the exercise more than the little ones they are more often excused attendance, and when they do come they bring to the lesson a passive indifference which is more trying to the teacher than the superabundant spirits of their juniors.

No protective apparatus, such as mats, pillows, &c., is used. If a new movement is taken, and the children after two or three days still fail to grasp the idea of it, this is a proof that it has been taken too soon, and it must be discarded until simpler exercises have prepared the way for it. It is this care which renders the use of mattrasses, &c., unnecessary. To take an example. The first lesson in jumping is (1st) to rise on the toes; (2nd) to bend the knees, keeping the body straight and well balanced; (3rd) to straighten the knees; and (4th) to lower the heels. When this can be done both slowly and quickly without any loss of balance, the child springs off the ground at 3, coming down with feet, knees, and body in good position. The next step is to jump forwards and sideways. Then to take one, two, or three steps before jumping. By the time these movements have been gone through sufficiently, the children are prepared to begin jumping down from a low elevation, and to do other more difficult exercises, without the least danger of tumbling forwards or backwards, or of injuring the back by coming down on their heels. The teacher must, of course, be constantly on the watch to give help at any moment if needed. Other exercises are all graduated in a similar way, and the children know very well that if they have to go back to an old movement it is because they have not been fully attentive.

Protective apparatus is, however, occasionally used by the young lieutenants under the trapeze. The feats then performed belong rather to acrobatic than to gymnastic exercises. But in the schools all movements done for show are carefully avoided, so that on a review day the children who learn gymnastics take part in a table of exercises which can be followed by all alike. This, of course, excludes those feats of skill in which a few may excel to the neglect of the many, but it ensures that all the children have their full share of attention.

Such children as may have any special delicacy or deformity ought not to be subjected to the same movements as the others. Still, they need not be altogether withdrawn from the school gymnastics. In my own division there was a child with a rupture. Such movements as climbing a rope, or hanging from a bar, running, jumping, and others she was not allowed to take. Before beginning with new pupils, the teacher should always take means to discover if there are any children with a special tendency requiring individual attention, so that, if possible, they may be relegated to a class by themselves.

Our gymnasium is most beautifully fitted up, the apparatus taking

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up no floor space when not in actual use. The great charm of it is its exceeding simplicity. The chief qualities required in the apparatus are—(1) that it can be used by persons of both sexes and of all ages; (2) that a great variety of movements can be executed on it; (3) that a considerable number can use it simultaneously; (4) that it takes up but little room when not in use; (5) that its working is so simple that children of 10 or 12 years of age can, if necessary, both set it up and put it away; (6) that it shall be inexpensive, and capable of being made by an ordinary carpenter. This may seem a formidable list of requirements, but it is one not impossible or, indeed, difficult to meet. A light horizontal bar, which can be raised or lowered at will from the floor to a height of seven or eight feet, and which with its upright support may be sunk into the floor when done with, is a most easily-managed piece of apparatus, admirably suited to its purpose. At the Institute, the original bar put up by Ling is still in existence. It runs the whole width of the gymnasium, a length of about 30 feet. Its ends fit into grooves in the walls, and it is raised and lowered by stout ropes running over pulleys. It is heavier and, perhaps, more clumsy, but it is just as useful as the lighter bar described above. It can be used by a larger number owing to its greater length and strength. But its weight and size place it beyond the power of children to raise and lower it. There is no part of the body which cannot be exercised on the horizontal bar. Another almost equally useful arrangement is the "rib stool," or climbing wall. This I have seen in England, in the Cheltenham gymnasium; but there were only two divisions there, whilst here two or three walls are lined with them, so that from 20 to 40 children can be at work together. The rib stool consists of upright posts fixed to the wall, three feet apart, in which are inserted horizontal bars about five inches from each other from the floor to a height of eight or nine feet. This can be used in as many ways as the horizontal bar.

Now and then, perhaps once in three or four weeks, the children are allowed, as a great treat and reward for good conduct, to play games instead of having a lesson, and if the teacher does not join she must at least watch the games to see that all goes rightly.

The exercises for the day are taken in a regular order, beginning with the gentler movements, passing on to the more violent, and concluding with movements calculated to quiet both the quickened pulse and the respiration. The table of exercises begins with (1) a short march and a few quick, decided movements as an introduction; (2) an exercise which brings the circulation into more active play, such an exercise being always followed by a simple leg and foot exercise, which draws the blood away from the heart again; (3) a hanging exercise, which is suited to the powers of the class and acts especially in widening the chest; (4) a balancing movement, with or without support, according to the proficiency of the pupil or the difficulty of the movement; (5) an exercise for the shoulders and

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back; (6) a general trunk movement, acting directly or indirectly on the circulation of the internal organs, and thus promoting their healthy action; (7) an alternate trunk movement, such as turning or bending from side to side; (8) jumping, to which some prominence is given, especially for the boys, as bringing every muscle into play, as also developing quickness, decision, fearlessness, correctness of eye, and also a power of gauging accurately what they can or cannot safely attempt. An infinite variety of exercises is included under the common name of jumping, from the first jump on the spot to springing on to a galloping horse's back. Then the lesson concludes with a few quieting leg and respiratory movements, and a march if the children are to return to their desks at once. This is the usual order followed, but it is subject to many modifications according to the time, space, and skill at the teacher's command.

The question of drilling boys and girls together must inevitably come prominently forward if, as in Sweden, the number of schools common to both sexes should increase. At present it has not been tried much, save in the preparatory schools, where no difficulty has been found in drilling the children together up to the age of 12 or 13. As they grow older their powers seem to diverge more and more. The boys gain quickness and greater power for more difficult and stronger exercises; whilst the girls develop a sense of form, so that they are able to execute slower movements without losing time or form. The power of girls in gymnastics depends, however, very much upon their bringing up. Were they allowed as much freedom and activity as their brothers, and assisted by a rational dress in which they might have the full use of their lungs and limbs, bloodlessness, headaches, and backaches would become far less frequent than at present amongst school girls.

I think it is not well to mix boys and girls above the age of 13 in the gymnasium. But it has not been tried sufficiently at present to draw any very definite conclusions. It does not seem to have been a success in our own school of instruction at Stockholm. In this school there were boys and girls from the age of eight to that of 16; and the head-master would not allow them to be separated even for this one lesson. For the junior classes it worked well; but the senior classes were difficult to manage, the girls keeping back the boys, and the boys not being able to appreciate the more accurate and refined work of the girls. The highest class of all consisted entirely, however, of boys of 15 and 16 years of age, and this class was admirably managed by one of our number, who had sufficient power of command to keep them well under her control.

The length of the daily lesson should be from 30 to 40 minutes. If the teacher is not up to her work and makes the class as dull and spiritless as herself, the shorter the lesson the better. A daily lesson should be the rule, even if it does not last more than 20 minutes, rather than a long and exhausting lesson twice a week. In Sweden

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seven or eight years is the age fixed by law for children to begin gymnastics. From 30 to 50 children are in ordinary cases enough for a class, but if the children are of fairly equal strength 80 to 90 may be exercised together with advantage, provided space and apparatus will allow. But in places where there are large numbers to be drilled, 100 at a time in some cases, it is exceedingly difficult to give individual supervision, and the age of 9 or 10 is then quite early enough to begin with. On the other hand, medical gymnastics, and gymnastics given individually under the teacher's hand, may begin with the earliest years of childhood.

The boys' drill in the senior classes prepares the way for military drill, into which it imperceptibly merges. Ling defines educational gymnastics as "putting the body under the control of its owner;" military gymnastics as "putting another's body under one's own control." Even in the military branch the harmonious development of the body holds a prominent place, no position being tolerated which hinders a full and free respiration. The art of swimming is also included in the system. It is taught on dry land and with great success. Out of 60 children taught by this method in one of the National Schools 40 could swim at once on getting into the water. This method is fully described in a little book called "Home Gymnastics," published by Isbister and Co., but space forbids me to go into further details.

The whole subject is too wide to be more than touched upon in a paper like this; but there is one point to which I should like to draw attention. It is this—that, whilst deprecating the gratuitous feeding of the children of the poor, I should hesitate to give any which come to our schools in a half-clad and half-starved condition a gymnasium-lesson without their first being fed. Otherwise the lesson can only be to them a pure loss of strength and warmth which they can ill-afford to spare.

(*To be continued.*)

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## 2. *French Retrospect.*

By D. Hack Tuke, F.R.C.P.

We resume the analysis of the work on Hypnotism, by M. Beaunis, which we noticed in the April number of the Journal (p. 147).*

Hallucinations of hearing appear to be very clearly defined. Subjects are easily made to hear words very distinctly. They resemble the "voices" which the insane hear, commanding them to do things. Nothing is easier than to suggest visceral sensations, hunger or thirst, or the sensation of burning or shivering with cold. Motor hallucinations are most striking in their character, for certain movements may be suggested to the hypnotized while they remain absolutely im-

* A second edition of this work has now been issued.

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