

MIND AND MATTER.

A recent writer bemoans the thinness of the American people and he lauds the athletic sports introduced into college and university work. Fatness, as he interprets it, is the unfailing sign of healthfulness of body and elasticity of mind. This is very beautiful in theory but exceedingly crude in fact. All attempts to develop man into a splendid animal rather than into a rational human being must terminate disastrously. Health is a great factor in human happiness, but that it implies higher moral and intellectual power is not a scientific fact, but materialistic theory. The blood corpuscle theory of greatness is a negation of more than half the greatness the world has yet produced. It may have been that a professional dumb-bell lifter and football fighter might have made Carlyle a grander or more original character. But more than half the world's greatest men have been frail physically, while millions of splendid animals are mere dwarfs in point of intellect and moral development. The mind is the real essence, and although a strong mind in a weak body may mean a sorrow, a weak mind in a cultivated body is a far more sorrowful thing indeed. As a rule the world's greatest thinkers have been weak men physically, yet men of indomitable will power. The giants physically only in rare instances have created a ripple beyond a limited sphere. Because a man weighs 200 pounds it does not follow that he can manage men better, either in large or small masses, than one who tips the beam at 140. Success depends entirely on the motives one can set to work in the minds of others, not on flesh and bone.

It is not denied that a healthy body is a great factor in working power generally, but it is not the first consideration. The most thorough-going mind-workers, the world over, have suffered more or less from frail bodies, dyspepsia, torpid liver, weak lungs, anæmia in general. About as much as is needed is a good body, trained and obedient servant of a well-disciplined mind, and it should, as a piece of machinery, be kept in good condition; but there is really nothing noble in man but mind, and this is the basic fact of all life and of all philosophy.

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