Newspapers by ancestry

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CROSS-COUNTRY RUNS.

Pleasure and Profit of This Sort of Exercise—Growing Popularity of Cross-Country Clubs.

OH, ATHLETES of the city, limited to the stuffy gymnasium, have you ever, while plodding round and round the padded indoor track, dreamed of trotting in your light running suit along a smooth country road in the June time? Has there ever come to you a whiff of the flower-perfumes, a breath from the wood and the field and the river?

If you would know the supreme joy of being alive, leave the city and the gymnasium, and the heat and the dust behind you some summer's afternoon, and seek a lonely shaded road in the country. Leave your "civilized" duds at some farmhouse, don your jersey and light knee trunks, and set out along the road at an easy, gladsome trot. Don't make hard work of it; just hold your head up, breathe deep, enjoy the green around and the blue above, and the fresh, pure air, permeating all, and jog for two, five, or even ten miles—just as far as you feel like. When you get back to your starting point, rub off with a rough towel and throw a pail of water over yourself, and you will wonder why you never felt like this before.

Cross-country running is nature's own sport. Football, baseball and track racing are all splendid, manmaking institutions, but they are work—hard, hard work. The hero of the gridiron or the diamond must train carefully and conscientiously. All the cross-country runner needs to do is to eat good, wholesome food, bathe often—and nature will do the rest. Long-distance jogging in the open gives you big, deep lungs, a strong heart, a good digestion, alert, springy muscles and the endurance of a locomotive. It exercises almost every bit of your body, throws impurities out of your system, and lets God's light and sunshine in.

But too few, alas, know of its virtues. Its chief devotees are found in the colleges, and nearly every prominent university now has its cross-country club. In the east the cross-country runs are made intercollegiate events, and the winners are awarded 'varsity insignia.

Out at the University of Michigan, interest in the sport is only three or four years old. But in that time it has grown to wonderful proportions. All around Ann Arbor are splendid gravelly roads, and you can find any distance you want, from one to sixteen miles. Every afternoon in the warm springtime, a dozen bunches of fellows—three, five or ten in a bunch—start from the Waterman "gym" and jog out into the country for a half hour or so, much to the consternation of matrons along the way and to the delight of their offspring. But the boys care little for all this, and swing along smooth, hard roads and grassy lanes, free as the wind, till the old "gym" comes in sight once more. There is a flourishing cross-country club at the university, too, and every spring and fall it holds a meet. The five best men are awarded the club insignia—a jersey bearing the letters "C. C. C."—and the winner has his name engraved on the Wright, Kay & Co. trophy cup. Some day the western university men will follow the example of their eastern brethren and cross-country meets will be a regular feature of intercollegiate athletics.

"But these long runs are dangerous," someone will object. "They overtax the heart and exhaust one's vitality!" Not a bit of it. Try it yourself. Don't run too fast at first. Take an easy mile or so to begin with, and increase the distance a little each day. And, as time goes on, you will be surprised to find what strength and endurance you are unconsciously gaining. Of course, if your heart is diseased, you must be careful. Limit yourself to short distances and run them slowly, and in any case consult an athletic director who is also a physician—not a doctor, merely, mind you.

After the run, you will find a few dumbbell movements splendid for the finishing touches. They give the exercise a pleasant variety, and relax and limber the muscles.

Try it some day, when aweary of the life artificial. If, after a good cross-country run, and a dash of cold water, you don't feel new in mind and body, it's because you are a fish and no human being.

Brain and Mental Activity.

Much the larger part of a brain is composed of white matter—that is, of nerve fibers—which has nothing whatever to do with real brain work and which only carries messages. Again if research is to be trusted, it is only the brain cells of very limited (probably the frontal) region which have to do with the highest mental operations. When, therefore, we talk about the size of the head and brain and the weight of the brain we should clearly understand that only an infinitesimal fraction of the three pounds' weight or so of an ordinary brain can be reckoned as representing brain cells—that are the agents of our nervous governance. Practically the brain cells (of the cerebrum or great brain at least) bear no larger proportion to the grain's mass than the rind of a Dutch cheese does to the eatable portion.

A. U. OF M. CROSS-COUNTRY SQUAD.

UNIQUE BUILDING

The Alfred University building is unique building in America. Indeed, in its style of architecture it is also unique in the fact that the rock found in the drift near Alfred, of which itself is a veritable museum. In it are archaeology, mineralogy, conchology and the university.

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