

Notes on the movement-cure, or remedial gymnastics, the diseases in which it is used, and on scientific educational gymnastics / by M. Roth.

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NOTES

ON

THE MOVEMENT-CURE,

OR

RATIONAL MEDICAL GYMNASTICS,

THE DISEASES IN WHICH IT IS USED,

AND ON

Scientific Educational Gymnastics.

BY

M. ROTH, M.D.,

PHYSICIAN TO THE PRIVATE INSTITUTION FOR THE TREATMENT OF DEFORMITIES AND
CHRONIC DISEASES BY MOVEMENTS AND THE RUSSIAN BATH, IN OLD
CAVENDISH STREET, LONDON, AND TO THE INSTITUTION
IN GLOUCESTER PLACE, BRIGHTON.

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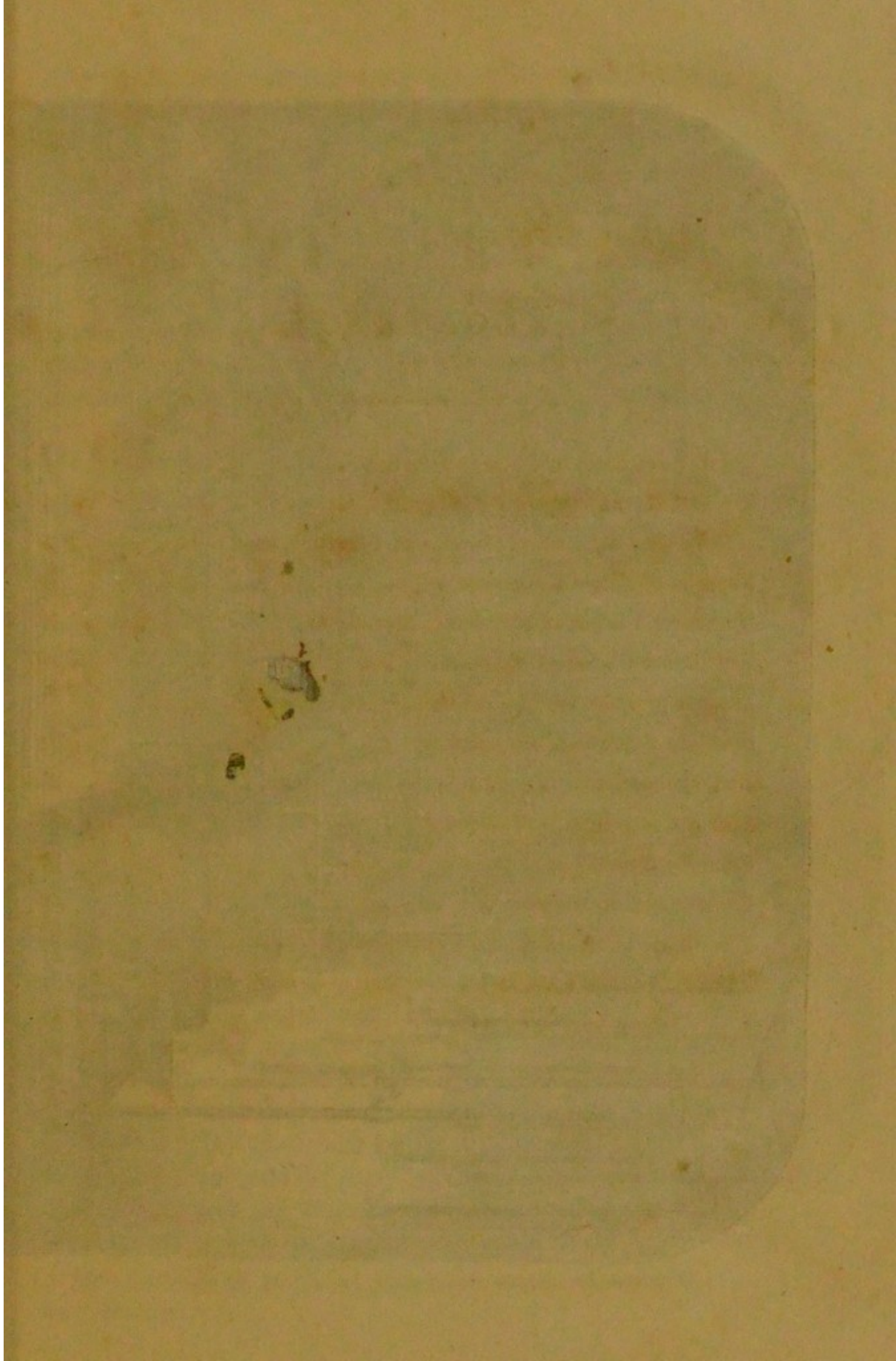
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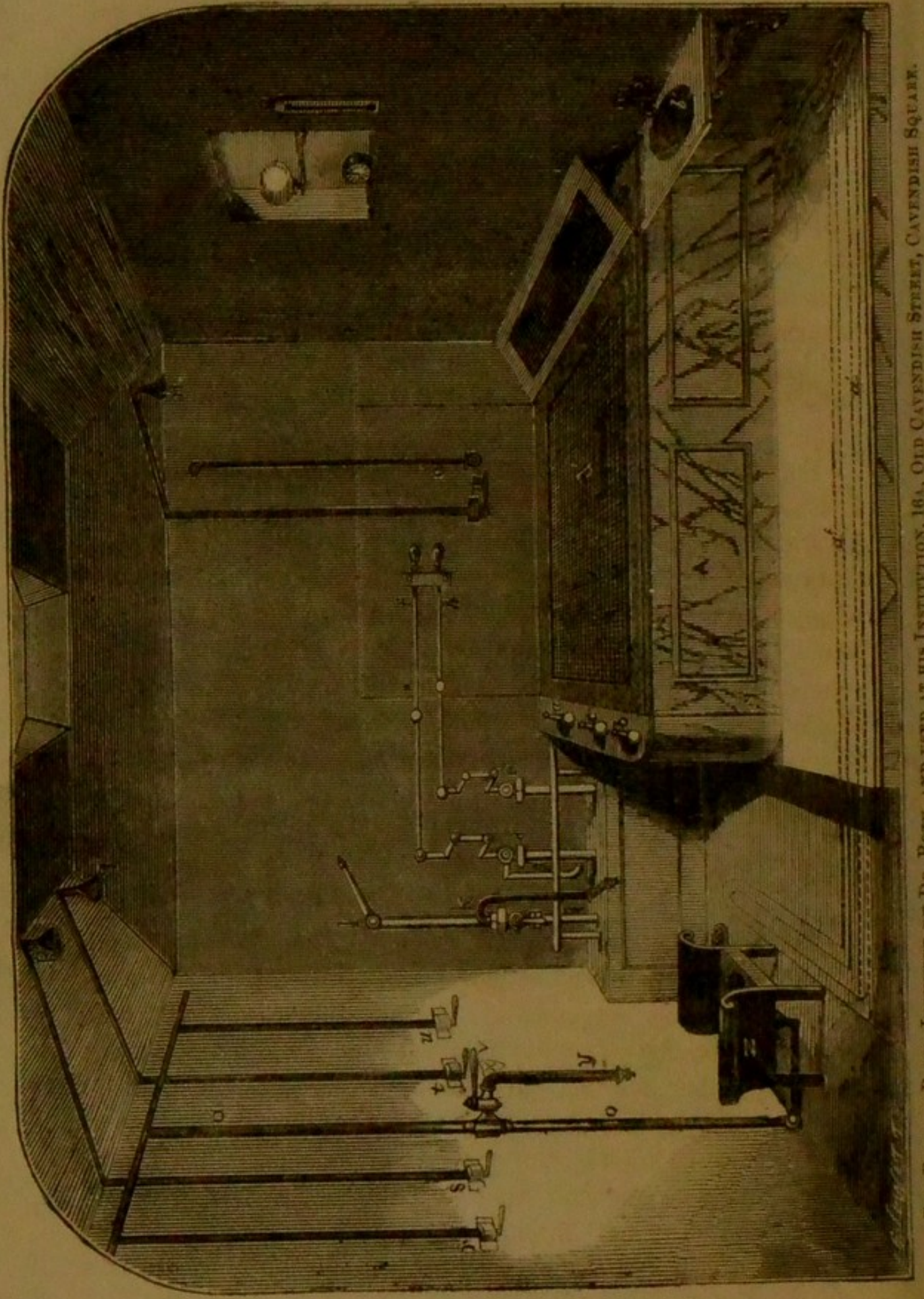
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THE RUSSIAN BATH. INVENTED BY DR. ROTH, AND USED AT HIS INSTITUTION, 161, OLD CAVENDISH STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

THE MOVEMENT-CURE.

THE following few observations on this treatment, which has been introduced in several countries on the Continent,* are published with the view of calling the attention of medical men to its study, and to induce patients to avail themselves of a mode of treatment which, although based on simple principles, is remarkably efficacious in its results.

The first Institution for the Cure of Disease by Physiological Movements.

For the last thirty-eight years there has been an Institution at Stockholm, established and kept up at the expense of the Swedish Government, in which many thousands of persons, of every age, sex, and rank, afflicted by diseases, which in many instances were considered incurable, have been treated by Movements, and for the most part successfully. Ling, an eminent member of the Royal Swedish Academy (born 1777, died 1839), who first introduced the curative Movements now made use of, was appointed as Director and Professor at this Institution, at the head of which he remained for twenty-six years.

Difference of the Movements, according to Ling's system, from those used in common Gymnastics.

The Movements of Ling differ entirely from those generally used in our gymnastic and orthopædic institutions, to which they have scarcely any resemblance; they are based on the most accurate knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathology, and are used either for the prevention or cure of disease; the hygienic and educational movements are used for the strengthening of the healthy adult, and for the development of the human frame during its growth; they combine mental with bodily development, and act through the mind on the body. The ordinary medical gymnastic treatment is applied only for the cure

* See, at page 12, the list of Institutions established during the last few years.

of malformations, and not for the cure of internal complaints, as Ling's movements are.

The Aim of Ling's Movements.

The aim of these movements is, in the healthy state, to develop in the growing person and to preserve in the adult, the harmony between mind and body, and to restore such a harmony in the diseased organism.

The treatment by Movements aims at an increase and development of the vital and nervous power, which can be directed to any part of the body; it serves to draw the blood from one set of organs and bring it to others; to develop the strength in one part and to diminish it in another; to remove congestion from internal organs, and to make the circulation more uniform throughout the body; to increase absorption in one part and nutrition in another; to relax the contracted muscular fibre, and to contract it when relaxed; to restore the disordered muscular, tendinous, elastic, and cellular tissues to their normal condition—in short, to substitute health for disease.

Number and Selection of Movements for Curative Purposes.

The number of curative movements suitable to every individual case varies from eight to twelve, which are selected according to the cause and symptoms of the disease, and according to the general state of the patient and the local state of the affected part. The movements are set down in the form of a prescription, according to certain rules, regulating the quantity and intensity of the single operations. The prescription or only some of the movements are changed, as the case requires, every fortnight or month. The patient is placed by the medical man and his assistants in the prescribed positions, which may vary for each movement, and may be lying, half-lying, sitting, kneeling, etc. The assistants (generally called *gymnasts*), instructed in the elements of anatomy and physiology, are well skilled in the movements and manipulations, and aid the patient in the execution of those which are requisite.

The various Classes of Movements.

These are—1. *Active*; that is, executed by the patient alone, or with the help of the assistant. 2. *Passive*; that is, executed

by the assistant only on the patient, and comprising frictions, kneading, pressure, vibration, percussion, sawing, fulling, etc.

3. Movements in which the gymnast, to the extent, and in the direction specified in the prescription, resists the patient's effort, or in which the patient resists the gymnast's effort of making a certain and determined form of movement.

In the gymnastics in common use, only active movements are known; we find none either of the second or third class of movements, although there is the greatest curative power in the two latter classes, which fact is abundantly proved by the vivifying effects and increased strength experienced by the patient himself.

Want of space will not allow me to enter into the details of Ling's ingenious system, which has been more perfected since his death, by his disciples and other zealous advocates of his ideas; and I may observe that those interested in the subject, will find information in the books which I have published on the Movement-cure, and which are, hitherto, the only ones in which the English student can find any practical information—the titles are to be found at the end of this pamphlet.*

Although I am very zealous in my advocacy of the treatment by Movements (which is also called Kinesitherapy, Kinesiatic, Swedish medical gymnastics, and must not be confounded with the old medical gymnastics), I wish it clearly to be understood that I do not recommend it as a panacea in all diseases. It will be useful in one stage or in one form of a disease, and not in another; it will suffice in one case, and will not help in another, without other remedial agents, which it does not exclude, except they are physiologically opposed to the effect to be produced by the Movements.

Among the Ailments in which the Movements have been successfully applied I will mention the following:—

1. Those DISEASES OF THE CHEST which, under the form of consumption and asthma, destroy so large a proportion of the human family, and are known to receive but little benefit from

* With the exception of some fragments on scientific gymnastics which have been left by Ling, in the Swedish language (translated by Dr. Massman into German), and the German works of M. Rothstein and Dr. Newman, no guide or handbook of the Movement-cure has been published in any language.

any kind of medicine as yet employed. The statistics of the Stockholm and other Institutions abundantly prove, on the other hand, that this dreadful malady is frequently under control, and is, in many instances, radically cured by the mode of treatment I am advocating.

Daily experience proves, that the formation of the chest in consumptive people is, for the most part, such as would predispose to the development of the disorder; the shoulders are brought forwards, the anterior of the chest is contracted and flat, while the posterior surface is constantly found rounded and larger than the anterior, and this mischief is brought about by the muscles not acting uniformly over the whole surface of the chest. It is self-evident that this state cannot be changed by the internal administration of medicine, the use of mineral waters, or change of air alone. By the second and third class of movements, however, it is possible to strengthen such muscles, to remove congestion of the blood, to restore, by degrees, the capacity of the chest to a healthy standard, and thus to bring the organs, particularly the lungs, to a condition in which they may perform their functions in a normal way.

It may perhaps be objected to this assertion—how is it, then, that common gymnastic exercises are found to be so often prejudicial to consumptive patients? But gymnastics, as now usually practised, embrace only active movements, which, by bringing into play the greater part of the muscles of the whole body, increase the circulation of the blood to an inordinate degree, and oblige the lungs to act more frequently than in the natural state, and thus obviously tend to hurry on the disease.

2. That class of diseases generally known as NERVOUS DEBILITY, combined with disordered nutrition and irregular formation of blood, as they appear frequently in young females, under the form of chlorosis; too much or too little periodical secretions, nervousness, spasms, bad digestion, etc.,—all of which have been removed by this system of treatment, while medicine alone rarely contributes to their cure.

3. HEADACHE, CONGESTION TO THE HEAD, CONSTIPATION, CONGESTION OF THE LIVER, etc., accompanied with a state of weakness, are another class of ailments from which many persons labour, they are only palliatively treated and only temporarily re-

lieved by medicines; these are frequently and permanently removed by the method under consideration and a suitable regimen.

4. FOR CURVATURES OR DISTORTIONS OF THE SPINE, exercises have been prescribed as a remedy, and would, no doubt, act beneficially, if the right movements were applied on the right place. By movements of the second and third class, and by knowledge of the diseased structure, a certain set of muscles can be acted on as the case requires, and thus antagonistic effects on the spinal column may be neutralized. This mode of treatment by Movements will be hailed as the greatest of blessings by those afflicted by spinal disease, who have undergone the tedious process of lying in bed for years, and whose general health has thus been more or less undermined—to say nothing of the tortures of pitch plasters, issues, setons, moxas, etc., applied from one end of the backbone to the other. I may observe that all deformities of the spine or limbs are treated by this system, without the aid of any of the machines as at present used in the so-called orthopædic institutions, and, in general, without any machine at all. In the cure of distortions, deformities, and curvatures of the spine, the Movements have this advantage over any other treatment—that the improvement is not merely apparent, like that produced by a steel corset or any other machine, by which a deformed person is suddenly made to appear straight. A cure of spinal deformity by Movements is a gradual one; because the parts which contribute to hold the spine upright must be made strong, in order to obtain support from the increased strength of these parts, and not from an external mechanical contrivance. This explains also why no relapse of the curvature takes place, if actually cured by the Movements; and I agree entirely with the following advice given to the parents and friends of those who suffer from deviation of the spine:—

“*a.* Seek the cure at the very onset of the disease, but do not use half measures, such as supporting stays and machines, or the lying-down system, on prone couches or extension beds. If the disease is taken in time, it may in all cases be completely cured by Ling’s specific movements.

“*b.* Do not expect that an already established curvature will disappear of itself; you lose valuable time, during which the evil increases, and at last becomes incurable.

“ 2. Do not interrupt the cure as long as any amelioration is apparent or is still possible. The same rules apply to children or youths of consumptive tendency, and to those threatened with apoplectic fulness of the brain.

“ 5. PARALYTIC AFFECTIONS are a class of diseases in which the usual remedies have, in general, no prominent effect, and in the majority of inveterate cases nothing is even attempted for restoring the patient's power of movement. The passive movements, by acting on the part which cannot be moved by the patient himself, improve a large number of cases, and the instances of radical cure are also not rare.*

“ 6. IN CONTRACTIONS OF THE LIMBS, STIFFNESS, and other AFFECTIONS OF THE JOINTS, of a chronic nature, the Movements are most beneficial.

“ 7. RUPTURES. Many cases, not only of considerable improvement but of radical cure, of umbilical and inguinal ruptures by the Movement-cure have been recorded. This important discovery will save many ruptured persons not only the inconvenience of wearing a truss during their whole life, but also the danger of undergoing a perilous operation.

“ 8. GOITRE, TUMOURS, and SWELLING OF THE GLANDS, SCROFULA, RICKETS, HYPOCHONDRIASIS, HYSTERIA, and several MENTAL and MANY OTHER DISEASES, may be alleviated or cured by these Movements alone, or in conjunction with other curative agents. The history of numerous cases, and the prescriptions of the Movements applied in each individual case, are to be found in the “ Handbook of the Movement-cure,” “ Cure of Chronic Diseases by Movements.”

Scientific Educational Gymnastics.

Those interested in matters of education will find in Ling's system the most complete and most scientific practical system of training the body, which is the only way of counteracting the effects of the now so fashionable practice of cramming to the utmost degree the brains of our children and youths; a practice which, unhappily, the parents themselves encourage in the

* For further information on these complaints, see “ Contributions to the Hygienic Treatment of Paralysis and Paralytic Deformities,” by Dr. Roth. Groombridge and Sons, 1860.

majority of cases, in order to shorten as much as possible the time of education, and thus to save a sum of money, very small in comparison to what is afterwards expended in attempting to restore health, when *too late*.

Bad Gymnastics.

At present, the majority of teachers, principals of educational establishments, directors of institutions for the education of the blind, the deaf and dumb, and idiots, head masters of colleges, tutors, parents, medical and even military men, are generally unacquainted with rational or scientific gymnastics, or the art of simultaneous and harmonious development of body and mind; and the few who do think about physical education at all separate mind from body, and believe that climbing poles, ascending ropes, leaping, flinging the body round and round a bar, and other feats of strength, as practised in the majority of the so-called gymnasia, constitute gymnastics. "They forget that it is a soul, not a body only which we must educate; it is a man, of whom we must not make two; we must not train the one without the other, but must guide and lead them like a pair of horses harnessed to one shaft" (*Montaigne*).

The consequence of this erroneous idea of gymnastics is, that drill sergeants, teachers of calisthenic movements and of common gymnastics, and dancing and fencing masters, are intrusted with the management of what is called *physical* education. Apparatus of various kinds—masts, poles, bars, ropes, vaulting-horses, etc.—are provided, on which the pupils may hang, climb, swing, or make any other exercise at their option; and thus all rational instruction in this branch is neglected, and indeed impossible, because the teachers themselves have not been taught the elements of anatomy and physiology, so indispensable in this branch of education. Their aim is only to produce brute muscular strength. So that a being endowed with reason is worse trained than even the lower animals. "It is very singular that we would not confide the care and training of a valuable horse to a man who had not the knowledge of the animal's anatomy and physiology, while the man who is intrusted with the development of the human body is not expected to possess any knowledge whatever of such sciences" (*Rothstein*).

With regard to the advantages to be derived from scientific gymnastic training, I refer to a letter which I have addressed to Earl Granville, as President of the Council on Education, under the title, "On the Importance of Rational Gymnastics as a Branch of National Education," etc.

List of Continental Institutions for the Treatment of Diseases by the Movement-cure, with the names of their Medical Superintendents.

Berlin (three), Drs. Neuman, Eulenburg, Löwenstein. Bonn, Dr. Budge. Breslau, Professor Remer. Christiania, Dr. Fugelli. Cassel, Dr. Becker. Dresden (two), Professor Richter, Dr. Fleming, and Dr. Friedrich. Freiberg, Mr. Nitzsche. Giessen, Drs. Weber (father and son). Hamburg, Mr. Scheerer. Heringsdorf, Dr. Wallenstadt. Königsberg (two), Dr. Vogelgesang and Dr. Münchenberg. Königsbrunn, Mr. Wilbold and Dr. Putzar. Leipzig, Dr. Schreber. Lago di Como, Dr. Mayer. Liebenstein, Dr. Martini. Misdroy, Dr. Oswaldt. Prague, Dr. Spott. Stuttgart, Dr. Studel. Stockholm (two), Professor Branting and Dr. Sätherberg. Petersburg, Dr. Berglind. Vienna (two), Dr. Melicher and Dr. Streintz. Wiesbaden, Dr. Genth. Würzburg, Dr. Confeld. Also Bromberg, Crefeld, Graudenz, and Posen, and many other towns have such Institutions.*

Scientific Gymnastics in Lunatic Asylums.

In the Lunatic Asylum of Vienna, at Sonnenstein, in Saxony, Rational Gymnastics are introduced; and Dr. Laehr has introduced the treatment in his private asylum near Berlin.

Government Institutions for Scientific Educational Gymnastics.

Sweden, Russia, Prussia, Saxony, Austria, and Hesse-Darmstadt have *normal training Institutions for educational and military gymnastics*, supported by the Government, where anatomy, physiology, and hygiene are taught; the knowledge of these sciences being considered indispensable for the teacher of scientific gymnastics. Professor Branting at Stockholm, M. Rothstein at Berlin, M. de Ron at St. Petersburg, Mr. Spiess at Darmstadt, and Mr. Kloss at Dresden, are at the head of these Institutions, in which thousands of pupils have been trained in a rational way.

* The Institutions at Stockholm and St. Petersburg are partly supported by the Government.

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