

**HINTS TO GYMNASTS: BEING
SOUND ADVICE AND HINTS
TO LEADERS AND TEACHERS
IN GYMNASIA AND SCHOOLS**

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Hints to gymnasts: being sound advice and hints to leaders and teachers in gymnasia and schools by F. Graf

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F. GRAF

**HINTS TO GYMNASTS: BEING
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FIRST EDITION.

HINTS TO GYMNASTS

BEING SOUND ADVICE AND

HINTS TO LEADERS AND TEACHERS

IN

Gymnasia and Schools.

COMPILED AND ARRANGED BY

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INTRODUCTION.



IN compiling this book our object has been to bring within the reach of those Teachers of Physical Education, Amateur or Professional, who have not had an opportunity of going through a proper Course of Instruction in Gymnastics, a means of acquiring the necessary knowledge to enable them to fulfil their duties in a creditable manner. Notwithstanding the many laudable efforts made by several Institutions, notably the Orion and German Gymnastic Clubs, the British College of Physical Education, the Amateur Gymnastic and Fencing Association, and recently the Gymnastic Teachers' Institute, to spread a more scientific knowledge of Gymnastics among Leaders and Instructors, our experience, extending over 20 years, has taught us that the great majority of Provincial Teachers have still much to learn as to the benefits to be derived from a system of teaching based on scientific principles. There are, of course, notable exceptions, but these only tend to prove more conclusively the truth of our assertion.

It is, of course, impossible for us in these few pages to entirely cover the whole field of gymnastics, but it is hoped that our readers may find therein the groundwork whereby they may be enabled to teach a more modernised system than that which now generally obtains.

Much of the matter that appears in this book has been published in the columns of "THE 'GYMNAST' AND ATHLETIC REVIEW," but knowing from personal experience how desirable it is to have Articles and Exercises such as these in handy book form, we have, at the repeated request of many of our readers, decided to so publish them, and we trust that it may be the means of popularising a better Gymnastic knowledge among a class of Gymnasts who have no other means of making themselves acquainted with the art of teaching others.

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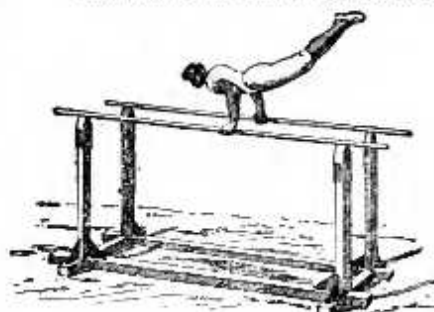
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PART I.

IDEALS.



To an onlooker the work of leading a squad in a gymnasium is apparently a very small contract. To the executive of a club, possibly nothing gives greater anxiety than securing proper men for this position. In no department of practical life is it so absolutely necessary for success that love of the work in hand shall be the actuating motive, as it is in the science of instruction. Probably no occupation requires such a combination of powers as will be found to be possessed by the successful instructor in any given art. Next to a thorough knowledge of the work, perhaps the most valuable qualification is the power to raise in the minds of the pupils that same feeling of enthusiasm as should possess the mind of the tutor himself, which, in turn, can only be thoroughly used by being accompanied by a patience which at times will "pass all understanding." To expect such perfection among the very young men who constitute the leaders in most gymnasia is likely to lead to disappointment; but to aim at securing it must be the object of the directing authority of every gymnasium. No club of any size can depend on the efforts of the instructor alone, and an efficient number of leaders is really quite as necessary as the possession of a good instructor. Generally both will be found going together, the two being quite interdependent. At one time a club was tested by its possession of crack gymnasts. Now the question more frequently asked is what kind of men are the squad leaders? In other words, with us gymnastics have now passed from the mere amusement stage, and are now being recognised for the potent and necessary educational force they really are. How much this recognition adds to the difficulty—and at the same time to the dignity—of the position of leader in a gymnasium, be it large or small, it is here unnecessary to consider, but such undoubtedly is the case. Knowing this, it now becomes the duty of all club leaders in their turn to recognise the responsibility of their position; to realise that while as leaders they lose no privilege their club offers, still that on their efforts will depend the success of their club, and that in no small measure they can influence for the better the lives of many entrusted to their charge. At the beginning of each winter season leaders are fresh to their work, and with the incoming of new members, require little or no incentive to discharge their duties regularly and energetically. It is later in the season that the drag comes. Then the members, having

worn off the novelty of the position, get lax in attention and irregular in attendance. Now is the time when a good leader can prove his right to his position, and to do this there is no better means, there is no stronger claim on his squad than previous regularity on his part to his own duties. Nothing plays such havoc in a club as does the continually changing of leaders through the absence of some of them. Nothing keeps a club together so much as regularity in the attendance of the leaders. A third rate leader, who is always found at the head of his squad, will accomplish more lasting work in a single season, and will leave a better reputation behind him when he retires, than will the man who otherwise is at all points his superior, but who is not to be found leading his squad except when it suits his own convenience, or, in other words, his own vanity.

THE TRAINING AND DUTIES OF LEADERS.

THE national importance which is now attached to Gymnastic Societies renders the position of the squad leaders in these clubs one of vastly more difficulty and importance than was the case a few years back. But while the duties of their posts have been rendered so much more onerous, the sources of instruction open to those willing to act in this capacity have unfortunately not increased to the same extent. In fact, it is not exceeding the limits of truth to say that leaders have almost entirely to pick up the knowledge of their duties haphazard, aided perhaps by a little cursory tuition from the professional instructor of their club, who but too often is only a few degrees higher in the scale of knowledge than themselves.

In the present series of articles it is the intention to give as shortly as possible a few general directions on the selection, preparation, and duties of leaders.

The authority by which leaders are appointed will be found to vary in all clubs. In one it is the duty of the instructor, in another the captain appoints them, or again it may be that the club committee exercises this control. But in whosever hands this authority rests, it is a duty which must be ever kept in mind. By continually being on the alert to note promising men, especially among the younger members, advantage can be taken of any special ability directly it is manifested, and by carefully fostering and encouraging it, it can be thoroughly and permanently developed to its fullest extent. By this means the tuition is made less laborious to all, and what is of more importance, a young member has a definite aim provided for his efforts. The faculty of imparting knowledge to others is a natural gift of a most rare order. For-