

METHODS OF TEACHING GYMNASTICS

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Methods of Teaching Gymnastics by William Gilbert Anderson

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WILLIAM GILBERT ANDERSON

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TEACHING
GYMNASTICS**

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BY

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY FATHER,
Edward Anderson,
WHO, TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO,
STARTED ME IN THIS WORK,
AND WHO HAS ALWAYS
BEEN MY COUNCILOR
AND ENTHUSIASTIC
SUPPORTER.

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METHODS OF TEACHING GYMNASTICS.

INTRODUCTION.

IF an excuse were made for writing this book, it would be that many teachers of gymnastics need it. It cannot be said that the book will contain many new or startling axioms, but it will try to prove that the laws of pedagogy are as applicable to teaching gymnastics as to teaching the three R's. In short, the principles of schooling should be known to instructors in any branch. A teacher may or may not be successful. She may have a fund of knowledge at her disposal; her record in the normal school from which she graduated may have been the best, yet she may fail as an instructor; she cannot impart her knowledge to others. What is it that makes one a good instructor, while another, who has had the same training and stood equally well, fails? This question will be discussed in the following pages. An attempt will be made to lay down teaching rules for the one who trains the body. Experience is a good educator; a wise man learns from the experience of others. Consequently, if one who has made many mistakes during ten years of tuition makes statements based upon his experience, they should be of some value to the beginner.

It will be said that successful teaching is a matter of natural aptitude, or that the instructor possesses a special form of genius. This is only partly true. A

person who is greatly interested in a subject, and at the same time anxious to instruct others, can learn to teach. If we were to enforce the law that only those who were born teachers should instruct classes, a large per cent of those who are now giving instruction in this country would drop from the ranks. There are hundreds of born or natural teachers who never give instruction. It would be impossible to find them, and so long as it is necessary for people who are not classified under the head of naturalists to educate, it is well for them to be guided by the laws of pedagogy.

It is time for our teachers to read the various works upon the art of teaching. The theory of gymnastics is fascinating, the practice more so; but the application of the many rules which are found in works on pedagogy has not yet been considered by the majority of physical directors.

The object of this work is not to set forth the claims of or criticise any system but to present methods. One who has not taught teachers will be surprised at the limited knowledge of many of them. Men and women who have been teaching for years violate so many rules of what, in the generally accepted term, is called pedagogy that we are surprised. The fact that these teachers keep their positions, draw fair salaries, and give satisfaction shows that this part of the subject is new not only to the instructor but to the employer.

Experience proves that the laws of pedagogy should be applied to teaching gymnastics, and while the author of this work hesitates to rush into print, he believes it imperative that the teacher should read more and