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A SOUND  
MIND  
- AND -  
A SOUND  
BODY



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The Work  
*of the*  
**Turner Societies**  
(American Gymnastic Union)

A CATECHISM BY  
ERNST A. WEIER



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EXPLANATORY NOTE.

THE words "turn" (to practice or perform gymnastic exercises), "turner" (member of a turnverein), "turning," "turnverein," "turnhall," are fully accepted terms of the American language.

(See Webster's International Dictionary.)

"Turnerism" designates the "idea," that is, the essential nature or character of the American Gymnastic Union.

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# American Turnerism

## Just a Plain Question—What Is Turnerism?

“Turnerism” means a System of Education, combining Rational Physical and Mental Development for the express purpose of strengthening the National power and fostering true patriotism. True patriotism stands for the preservation of Democracy and the attainment and maintenance of political, economic, religious and personal liberty. This system of education and these political principles are today and always have been promulgated and promoted by the American Gymnastic Union.

**Turnerism Defined.**

## Was There Any Systematic Physical Training Before Turnerism?

Systematic and methodical physical training for the purpose of gaining strength, agility, health, grace and beauty, is known in the history of nations as Physical Education. Its highest development was reached in Ancient Greece, which attained a complete National gymnastic system of great value.

**Gymnastics in Ancient Greece.**

In Ancient Rome physical training never became a part of popular education. It was used solely for military purposes. Physical training of the Roman soldiers created those formidable legions which secured Rome’s world domination.

**Military Drill in Ancient Rome.**

In the days of Knighthood physical training became the prerogative of the knights, to whom strength, agility and endurance were indispensable.

**When Knighthood was in Flower.**



**Decadence  
of Physical  
Education.**

The invention of gunpowder and the change in warfare, together with the prevailing asceticism, promoted a long period of physical degeneration, during which physical education was entirely forgotten. A partial revival came with the Reformation, but the progress was very slow until the beginning of the nineteenth century with the advent of Turnerism.

**Renaissance  
of Physical  
Education**

### **What Causes Led to the Promulgation of Turnerism?**

**A People  
Outraged  
and  
Disgraced.**

After the battle of Jena, 1806, the German people faced a dark pit of National humiliation and contempt. The "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" had come to an ignominious end. Divided into small and impotent principalities, all of which governed by politically and morally degenerate princes, Germany was at the mercy of Napoleon.

**Traitorous  
Princes  
fawning  
before the  
Usurper.**

The princes fawned for the favors of the Corsican, the National spirit was dead, even the language was endangered. But deep in the hearts of the common people still smoldered the embers of true patriotism.

**The Call out  
of the  
Wilderness.**



In this emergency a High School teacher of Berlin, Frederick Ludwig Jahn, published a book on "Nationality." He held, that rejuvenation and restoration were possible only through the youth of the land. He strenuously advocated a rational physical education, designed to arouse the patriotic sentiments.

**His Voice fell  
pleasing on  
the Ears of  
the People.**



**The Prophecy  
fulfilled.**

The book struck home and everywhere the idea was discussed. Jahn perfected his system of education and in 1811 opened his Public Out-door Gymnasium in the Hasenheide, Berlin. (This was the first public playground in the world.) The children flocked to him in masses, and at the same time educators throughout the land followed his example. In a few months the Turner Societies spread to every city, town and hamlet of the country. The wars of liberation ensued. On October 18, 1813, the battle of Leipsic was fought and Napoleon driven out of Germany. Jahn and his disciples were the first to volunteer. He served as Captain with the daring Luetzow's Wild Hunters.

## What Was Jahn's First System of Physical Education?

Jahn divided his system into three groups, namely:

1. **ELECTIVE EXERCISES.** This group was designed to give each *Turner* an opportunity to perfect himself in exercises for which he was physically best equipped, such as Running, Jumping, Vaulting, Climbing, Swimming, Fencing and the higher forms of apparatus work.

**Elective Exercises.**

2. **OBLIGATORY CLASS GYMNASTICS.** In this group every *Turner*, as the pupils were called, had to participate. The instruction embraced every form of free exercises, orderly exercises, setting-up and march drills and the lighter forms of apparatus work.

**Class Gymnastics.**

3. **GAMES.** Jahn considered Games of the highest importance. Every *Turner* had to participate and joyfully did so. The games were designed to develop alertness, quick judgment, rapidity of decision and action, and especially to create an optimistic spirit, susceptible of patriotic fervor. Songs of country and home interspersed these games.

**Healthful Play.**

Furthermore, every lesson began with a patriotic song, followed by a short patriotic talk on some topic of the day. Each lesson closed with a patriotic song.

**Songs and noble words elevate and ennoble the mind.**

## What Became of Turnerism After the Wars of Liberation?

After the war the *Turner* societies immediately resumed their activity, and the people reviewed their political affairs. They began to clamor for their part in the fruits of the war. They demanded a Democratic constitution, more political rights, and more freedom of thought and action.

**The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings.**

Jahn personally was not a revolutionist. He was an outspoken Germanist and dreamed the dream of German unity. This prophetic dream found its fulfilment 60 years later with the close of the German-Franco War in 1871, 19 years after Jahn's death.

**Jahn not a Revolutionist.**

**Unity AND  
Liberty.**

Jahn's disciples, however, wanted Unity *with* Liberty. "Liberty" for the people was not in the program of the King of Prussia, nor in that of any of the other princes. In 1819 the king put a ban on Turnerism, the playgrounds and gymnasiums were closed. Jahn was arrested as a Democratic demagogue, and held a prisoner for five years until his trial in 1824. Then he was found "not guilty" and released. Notwithstanding this verdict the king issued a special order, under which Jahn was not permitted to reside in Berlin, or within 10 miles of it, nor in any other University city, but was to be interned under police surveillance in a town of his own choice. In "grateful" consideration of his services to his country, Jahn was paid his salary of \$1000 per year as a Professor of history, but not permitted to teach history nor turnerism.

**Five Years  
in Dungeons  
without  
Trial.**

**The Grace  
and  
Gratitude  
of Kings.**

Such is the gratitude of kings. Jahn selected Freiburg on the Unstrut and lived there until his death in 1852, long enough to see his life work come to honor.

### **When and How Was the Ban of Turnerism Lifted?**

**The  
Chained  
Liberator.**

From 1819 to 1842 the institution, which had secured the liberation of the country, lay dormant under the ban. In 1842 the new king of Prussia came to the conclusion, that it might be better to utilize and control Turnerism than to prohibit it. The ban was lifted and physical education made a part of public instruction. Physical training was also merged into the military drill.

**The Revival  
of Tur-  
nerism  
under  
Monarchical  
Control.**

**The Spirit of  
Democracy.**

Turner societies were rehabilitated, and soon the old spirit of Democracy blossomed forth stronger than ever. The Turners became the leaders and the fighters in the German revolution of 1848.

**Jahn's Light  
Dimmed.**

Jahn, the leader of 1811, however, was not up to the revolutionary spirit of 1848. The ambitions of the revolutionists were strange to him. He felt himself to be misunderstood and his enlightened leadership became a record of the past.



## When and Through Whom Came Turnerism First to the United States?

Dr. Karl Beck, Dr. Karl L. Follen and Dr. Franz Lieber, three pupils, disciples and co-workers of Jahn, were the first pioneers of Turnerism in America. All three fought in the German wars of liberation and became victims of the reaction, when the people demanded liberty.

**Three Real Men—  
Born as Germans,  
Raised as Turners,  
Exemplary Americans.**

Beck and Follen came to the United States in 1824. Dr. Beck, together with the famous American historian George Bancroft, opened a Boys' School in Northampton, Mass., in connection with which he established a gymnasium according to Jahn's system. He also wrote the first Manual of Jahn's Turnerism in the English language. Then he became Professor of Latin language and literature at Harvard University and later devoted himself to literary pursuits. Dr. Beck became very wealthy, but when Lincoln called to arms, he was one of the first to volunteer as private soldier. Refused because of his age, he spent enormous sums of money in equipping soldiers for the cause of National Unity in America.

**Dr. Karl Beck**

**First in the Fight and every graceful Deed.**

Dr. Karl L. Follen was first employed in Beck's Round Hill School, but was called to Harvard University as teacher of German. Here he at once introduced Gymnastics for the students and established the first gymnasium. He also opened an out-door gymnasium to the public in Boston. In 1830 he became Professor of German Language and Literature at Harvard. Still later he was ordained as Unitarian minister. He was one of the most forceful writers and orators of the Abolition movement.

**Dr. Karl L. Follen.**

Franz Lieber came in 1827, three years after his friends. He established a swimming school in Boston and taught physical culture in Follen's gymnasium. Prominent and influential Americans opened other fields for him. In 1832 he published his first great work "Encyclopedia Americana" in 13 volumes, which established his reputation. Lieber became one of the greatest American authorities on International Relations and Law. Many of his "Manuals" are still used

**Dr. Franz Lieber.**

in Universities. His services to the United States were manifold. This man, most shamefully treated by the king of Prussia, became a most valuable asset to his adopted country.

**Ahead of  
their Time.**

The efforts of these men, Beck, Follen and Lieber, to establish Turnerism in the United States, failed, because the conditions were not ripe. Just as soon as these men had to give up their schools for greater work, the schools failed, because there was no one to take up the work.

### The Final Establishment of Turnerism in the United States?

**Revolutionary  
Exiles.**

Crushed in blood, the revolution of 1848 brought to the United States the most desirable emigrants from Germany. The refugees came in many thousands to the land of freedom. Among them were Frederick Hecker, the head of the revolution; Franz Sigel, the military leader of the revolutionary forces; Carl Schurz and many others, whose names are favorably known in American history. Hecker suggested to his friends in Cincinnati, most of whom were Turners, the formation of a Turnverein. The Cincinnati Turngemeinde, founded in November, 1848, is the first and oldest society of this kind in the United States. Turnerism in the United States is an offspring of the German Revolution in 1848. It was founded by the advocates of Democracy, who, rather than abandon their ideals, gave up the country of their birth.

**The First  
Turnverein  
in the  
United  
States.**

**From its  
Inception an  
American  
Institution.**

The example of the Cincinnati Turners was emulated in many other cities. Quite a number of organizations soon formed a National body and participated in their way in National affairs. Although originally German, and for a long time a sort of haven and anchoring place of the German emigrants, the Turnverein was from the beginning, in a National sense, thoroughly American. One of the first laws was and is, that no man can become a member of a Turnverein, unless he is a citizen of the United States, or has declared his intention to become one. This rule is rigidly enforced, and there are no exceptions to the same.

The Turner societies in the United States acted as Americanization agencies. All of them maintained night and Sunday schools, in which American history, American constitution and laws and other subjects were taught.

**Let our  
Object be  
Our  
Country—  
and nothing  
but Our  
Country.**

The Democratic institutions of the United States appealed strongly to all Turners. Their services in the defense of these institutions during the Civil War constitute a fine chapter in their history. In later years the Turners confined themselves mainly to the advancement of physical education in America, and advocating certain political demands in the cause of true Democracy.\* It must, however, be stated, that the advancement of "political demands" always was purely educational. The American Gymnastic Union never participated in party politics.

**They Demon-  
strated  
their  
Burning  
Zeal for  
Liberty.**

The organization asserted that in a Republic without standing armies, the man-power of the nation must be maintained through a rational system of physical training of the youth. They were animated by the idea, that physical education should be made the "common good of the American nation," and strove to introduce it into the elementary and secondary schools, in which it prevailed for the benefit of the masses of our great commonwealth.

Many of the original Turners took up the pioneer life in this country. Thousands of them became successful farmers. New Ulm, Minn., once destroyed by the Indians, was one of the Western Turner colonies at the outposts of civilization. These German exiles gave to the United States the best that was in them, in *all* walks of life.

**Earth is here  
so kind.  
Just tickle  
it with a  
hoe, and she  
laughs with  
a harvest.**

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\* Among the "Political Demands," originally made and advocated by the American Turners before any other organizations took them up, were the following: The Secret Ballot, the Referendum, the Initiative, the Recall, the Direct Election of United States Senators by the people, Proportional Representation, International Arbitration and Conciliation. Some of these demands were made as early as 1870; all of them were reaffirmed in 1878.



## Is There Any Difference in the Character of Turnerism in the United States and That of Germany?

Like—but oh,  
how  
different.

The difference is very pronounced.\* Since the lifting of the ban on Turnerism in Germany, the institution has been fostered and controlled by the Government in the Public schools, in the Colleges and Universities, and especially in the Military and Naval organization. The Turnvereins all over the country, while independent of the Government, could not free themselves from the influence of the enthusiastic supporters of the Monarchical Government. While the more radical element of the Turner Societies kept up the demand for more "Political Freedom" and "Personal Liberty," still the extreme nationalists always prevailed.\*\*

American  
Hospitality  
Filling them  
with  
Gladness.

*American Turnerism*, on the other hand, developed in a different manner. Its pioneers and founders came to the United States still bleeding from the wounds which the Monarchical Government had inflicted upon them. On this side of the ocean they found in full measure what they had fought for on the other side. Here they found National Unity, Political Liberty and Freedom of Conscience.

A Free  
Country  
without a  
Dynasty.

Their intense hatred of the Monarchical institutions in the country of their birth was supplanted by unbounded love for the Democratic institutions in the country of their adoption. At once they made the newly-found love manifest. The Abolitionist move-

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\* As early as 1872 the National Executive Committee of the American Gymnastic Union took occasion to announce that there was absolutely no homogeneity between American and German Turnerism. In its independent form of organization, its constitution, its general principles and its practices, Turnerism in the United States was declared to be unequivocally American.

\*\* "Personal Liberty" must in this case be taken to cover the term "Liberty of Conscience." Our conception of "Personal Liberty" is, that there can be no Liberty of Conscience if one is forced to feel, to think or to act differently from the dictates of his own individual conscience.



ment appealed strongly to their sentiments. They furthered it in every way possible. That "all men are born free and equal" was applied by them with equal force to the black man.\*

When the Civil War came, the Turners at once forgot all else to serve their adopted country. They fully understood the issues of the war. Not only the humanitarian issue of emancipation, but also the political issue of "National Unity" determined their spontaneous action. Under the slogan, "The Union Forever," they took the blood baptism for *their* country. Their "Revolutionary" leaders in the country of their birth, became their Generals and Captains in the patriotic defense of the unity of their adopted country. (Hecker, Sigel, Schurz, Willich, and many, many others.) The record of the Turner regiments in the Civil War is an heroic page in the history of the war. Over 75% of all Turners in the United States were in active service.

**Liberty and  
Union—now  
and forever,  
one and  
inseparable.**

**In Records  
that defy  
the teeth  
of time**

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\* There was a time when the great Abolitionists, such as Wendell Phillips, could not rent a hall to speak in. The churches were closed against them. But the Turner Halls were wide open—free of charge. More than that: the Turners with guns over their shoulders, stood on guard and protected the speakers. Opposite the residence of Wendell Phillips in Boston, was a printing office, owned by a Turner. Every night for many months the Turners came from the Boston Turnverein and made this office their guard-house from which they protected the Phillips residence. Several times Mr. Phillips' life was saved by the guard.

In Baltimore, the Turner Hall was burned down by a mob, because the Turners refused to remove the Stars and Stripes and hoist the Rebel flag.

In St. Louis, the Turners took it upon themselves to storm and capture Camp Jackson with the arsenal. This episode saved Missouri for the Union.

Wherever Lincoln spoke on his tours, the Turners formed secret guards for his safety. With all this, they firmly held that the emancipation of the black man should be achieved by enlightenment and not by force of arms. But when the South threatened the unity of the Nation, in order to preserve slavery, the Turners were not too proud to fight. Consisting almost entirely of Turners, there were 21 regiments of infantry, two regiments of cavalry, and two batteries of artillery in the Civil War.

**Ah, why  
should Life  
all Labor be?**

**He is a  
Freeman,  
whom the  
Truth  
makes Free.**

**Every  
Citizen a  
Sovereign.**

The Social Question of course interested the Turners intensely. Recognizing that in our Republic the means of peaceable work for progress are at hand, and further, that social problems cannot be solved over night or by force, the Turners proclaimed as their motto: "Evolution—not Revolution." As pioneers of progressive thought in all political, economic, social and religious matters the Turners stand unwaveringly. A Turnverein cannot be made a playground of revolutionary activities, nor a kindergarten for partisan politics. The Turners stand for the ennoblement of the human race, for *broad-minded* liberation of humankind from all force, bigotry and superstition, for the truly Democratic development of the State, for the rational education of the youth to true and efficient citizenship of the Republic. Strongly individualistic, the Turner desires a republic, in which each citizen is truly sovereign, but in which the welfare of All stands higher than the advantage of individuals.

### **What Progress Was Made by Turnerism After the Civil War?**

**Give the  
world the  
best you  
have, and  
the best  
comes back  
to you.**

The end of the Civil War brought to the American Turners the achievement of the political ideals, for which they had fought: the Union was preserved, the issue of emancipation successfully concluded. Now they had plenty of time to look after their other purposes.

**The Recon-  
struction of  
the A. G. U.**

First of all a reconstruction of all the Turner Societies became necessary. In 1865 the National organization was reorganized under the name of "The North American Gymnastic Union." (The word "North" has since been dropped.) A spontaneous growth set in. At this time there were very few trained gymnastic teachers in this country, and the leadership in physical training was mainly in the hands of Turners, who had received their training in the old country. These "leaders" imparted their knowledge as a labor of love, and earned their livelihood in other callings. The self-sacrificing activity of these young men deserves unlimited praise.

**The  
Original  
"Turn  
Leaders."**

With the growth of the societies this became an unsatisfactory condition, especially in view of the agitation for the introduction of Physical Education in the Public Schools. The result was the establishment of the Normal School for Gymnastic Teachers in New York City, 1866. From a small beginning the school developed into an educational institution of highest rank. Since 1907 it is permanently located at Indianapolis under the name "The Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union." The College is accredited by the Indiana State Board of Education.

**The Normal School for Gymnastic Teachers established.**

**The Normal College of the A. G. U.**

The Normal College comprises the following departments:

First, the department of Theory and Practice of Physical Training.

**Three Departments.**

Second, the department of Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene.

Third, the department of Letters and General Science.

Each department is headed by a Dean, the three Deans constituting the Administrative Board of the Faculty, which embraces at present 27 part-time professors. The following courses are offered:

*A four-year course* leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Gymnastics (B. S. G.) and to certification as Teacher of Physical Training for Colleges and Universities.

**The different College Courses.**

*Graduate courses* leading to the degree of Master of Science in Gymnastics (M. S. G.).

**Degrees obtainable in the College.**

*A two-year course* leading to the title of Graduate in Gymnastics (G. G.) and to certification as Teacher of Physical Training for Elementary and Higher Public schools.

*An elementary one-year course*, open only to Turners of highest proficiency in gymnastics and meeting other educational requirements. Graduates in this course receive a certificate qualifying them to teach gymnastics in schools maintained by societies of the A. G. U.

**Elementary, Special and Summer Courses.**



There are further other Special Courses and Summer Courses. The equipment of the college is of highest efficiency.

The Normal College has graduated up to 1919, over 600 teachers of gymnastics of all grades. Among these graduates are most of the recognized authorities on physical education in the United States.\*

**A Contribution to Education.**

This Normal School maintained by the membership of the A. G. U. is indeed no small contribution to the educational endeavors of the land. About 250 male and 150 female teachers of gymnastics who graduated from the Normal College, are at present employed in public schools.

### **What is the Present Status of the Organization?**

**Membership and Participation.**

The American Gymnastic Union consists at present of 23 Territorial Districts with 194 Societies; 75 of these societies have existed for more than 50 years. There are about 50,000 members (men and women) over 18 years of age, and 22,000 (youths and children) below 18 years. 38,000 persons (members and pupils) participate in the gymnastic schools of the societies.

**Properties and Investments.**

Almost all the societies are incorporated, and 148 of them own their buildings and gymnasia. The total property of the societies amounts to over \$13,000,000, which is in its entirety devoted to educational purposes.

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\* To mention just a few: Lieut.-Col. Herman Koehler, Director of Physical Training, United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.; Dr. E. Herman Arnold, Director of New Haven Normal School of Gymnastics; Alvin E. Kindervater, Supervisor of Physical Training, Public Schools, St. Louis; Richard Pertuch, Director of Physical Training, Turngemeinde, Philadelphia; Emil Rath, President of Normal College of the A. G. U., Indianapolis, Ind.; Wm. A. Stecher, Supervisor of Physical Training, Public Schools, Philadelphia; Henry Suder, Supervisor Physical Training, Chicago; Dr. Carl Ziegler, Supervisor of Physical Training, Public Schools, Cincinnati; George Wittich, Supervisor of Physical Training, Public Schools, Milwaukee, Wis.; Wm. Reuter, Supervisor of Physical Education in Davenport, Iowa, and many others.



All societies maintain schools for physical training. Most of the societies have lecture courses and debating clubs. The larger societies, and sometimes the districts, establish from time to time "Leaders' Courses." Many of the societies have swimming pools and swimming schools, also summer camps. There is no legitimate sport or other physical activity, which is not taken care of in a rational manner.

**Educational  
Efforts  
of the  
Societies.**

**Swimming  
Pools and  
Summer  
Camps.**

The affairs of the American Gymnastic Union are administered by thoroughly democratic methods. The executive power rests in the National Executive Committee, now in Indianapolis, Indiana. National Conventions of Delegates from all Districts and Societies are held every second year. The great National Gymnastic Festivals are held every fourth year.

**National  
Conventions  
and  
National  
Gymnastic  
Festivals.**

The Districts arrange Gymnastic Festivals, Field Days, Physical and Mental Tournaments on their own initiative. All these activities, however, can only be conducted according to rules and regulations, based on scientific investigations and approved in the National conventions. All matters pertaining to physical education are solved by the National Committee on Physical Training, composed of physical educators of the highest rank. Conventions of gymnastic teachers employed by the A. G. U., are called from time to time to discuss physical training matters and report on same. These teachers are organized, and affiliated with the American Physical Education Association as the A. G. U. Teachers' Section.

**The Applied  
Science of  
Physical  
Education.**

**Teachers of  
Gymnastics  
are  
organized  
for creative  
work.**

The Physical Training Classes are graduated according to age of participants, as follows:

Business Men's Class from about 35 to 80 years.

Married Ladies' Class.

1st, 2nd and 3rd Ladies' Classes for single ladies (16 years and over), grouped according to physical efficiency.

Seniors—from 18 to 35 years.

Juniors—from 14 to 18 years.

1st Boys' Class—6 to 9 years.

2nd Boys' Class—9 to 12 years.

3rd Boys' Class—12 to 14 years.

Three Girls' Classes—Same as boys.

Individual instruction is given when hygienic or orthopedic reasons demand it.

**Physical  
Training  
Classes.**

**The Curriculum.**

The curriculum embraces every form of Calisthenics, Gymnastics and Athletics. Special instruction is given in Fencing, Boxing, Wrestling, Swimming, and other activities if desired. The fundamentals of these arts are taught in the general classes.

The progress of participants is carefully noted, and any shortcomings corrected. All rules of Hygiene are rigidly observed.

**Turnerism versus Militarism.**

**Good Citizens first, then good soldiers are easily made.**

Turnerism aims to create a better and more efficient type of citizen. Military Drill aims to create the most efficient type of soldier. But—let us not forget it—the advocates of Turnerism claim, that the greater purpose of the one includes the lesser purpose of the other. And history bears out this contention.\*

**There is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than beauty.**

Turnerism in its exercises tempers rigorousness with flexibility. It fosters the esthetical—it strives for rhythm, harmony and beauty.

Military drill is inexorable in rigorousness, and has no particular use for the beautiful.

**Self-Assertion versus Self-Abnegation.**

Participants in Turner exercises act voluntarily for collective benefits and retain their individuality. Participants in military drill are part of a collective unit and lose their individuality. (This is one of the reasons why school boys should not be given military drill.)

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\*In the American Selective Draft at the entry of the World's War, only 6.8 per cent of the men who were members of Turnvereins were rejected, while of the men without previous physical training, 33.2 were rejected. Turners who were accepted as soldiers invariably withstood the rigors of the service better than their less prepared comrades; they soon became teachers of their squads and proved of great help in putting the raw recruits into shape. Very few of the former Turners returned from the war without advancement in their rank. The officers easily detected the Turners in their commands and entrusted them with special work, requiring better physical and mental equipment.

## In What Manner Do the Turners Promote Their "Declaration of Principles?"

"Free thought, free speech, free action" is a conspicuous maxim of Turnerism. The general principles of the American Gymnastic Union were not promulgated as a platform of a political party or sect, obligating its members. They are intended as guideposts for the conduct of members as citizens of the Republic. Not to establish certain tenets in the minds of the members, but rather to arrive at fundamental truths in all things, is the endeavor.

**Precepts  
rather than  
Principles.**

**Great is  
Truth and  
mighty  
above all  
things.**

The honest opinion of an honest man, honestly and intelligently expressed, is certain to be respected in all Turner circles, even if it involves a criticism of any of the principles. In the immediate affairs of Turnerism itself the Democratic majority rule prevails. But that need not discourage the minority, because the Turners acknowledge, that the force of all really progressive ideas is invincible.

The cosmopolitan aphorism of the ancient Roman: "Homo sum, nil humani a me alienum puto" (I am a man, and what concerns humanity, concerns me) expresses the mental attitude of the Turners.

**In the  
Service of  
Humanity.**

Lectures, discussions and debates of not only the general principles, but of all public questions, ought to be and generally are a part of the work of a Turnverein. All members are given an equal opportunity to teach and to learn, to formulate own opinions, to express and to defend them intelligently.

**Learn to  
demonstrate  
what you  
know.**

The National organization as well as all the districts and all the societies have special committees on mental training to conduct and superintend this feature of Turnerism.

The National Committee on Mental Training prepares and submits to all affiliated societies from time to time, a number of General Topics for discussion and debate. These topics refer to timely problems, and all fields of human thought are drawn upon, Philosophy, Science, Art, Political and Social Economy, etc. Only partisan politics and sectarian ten-

**To help  
build up a  
mentally  
and physi-  
cally free  
Humanity.**



ligion are tabooed. This has been done since 1898 and about 220 different topics have been issued up to this time.

**The Right  
Hand of  
Fellowship.**

In Social life the American Turners are partial to jollity, good will, and good humor. They are steadfast friends and helpful comrades. They like to enjoy life.

### **In What Manner Has the American Nation Been Benefited by Turnerism Up to This Time?**

**Don't pat us  
on the  
back, but  
shake us  
by the hand.**

Turners are not given to claims or assertions. They rather prefer to let their actions speak for themselves.

The Government of the United States and all prominent educational authorities fully recognize the merits of the Turner movement. Rational physical training becomes year by year more and more a part of public education. So does the public playground.

**A fair witness  
to the  
Turner  
Cause.**

More than twenty years ago a prominent American authority on education, Professor M. D. Learned, of Philadelphia, made a thorough investigation of Turnerism, German as well as American, and became and has been since an enthusiastic admirer of the institution. In an essay, issued 1897, Professor Learned, very conservatively and making only what he terms "safe" statements, gives Turnerism credit as follows:

**They gave  
the best  
they had.**

"*Firstly*, the German Turners gave to America a system of gymnastics, which laid the foundation for the all engrossing institution of American athletics and particularly that form of athletics which centers about the new college gymnasiums.\*

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\* In 1898 Dr. E. M. Hartwell conducted a thorough investigation of physical education in the United States. In his report to the United States Commissioner of Education he states: "Neither the colleges nor the athletic organizations of the country have earned the right to speak with authority on the question of what constitutes a well-ordered system of physical training for schools." He further contended that *only* the Turners were prepared to speak with knowledge and act with intelligence in this matter. The promotion of physical education in the public schools, and also of the public playground movement, has ever been, and is today, one of the cherished aims of the American Gymnastic Union.



"*Secondly*, the Turners have constituted a strong bulwark of National defense in times when rowdyism and other forms of disorder threatened the lives of defenseless citizens, their discipline filling the place in many instances of well organized troops of militia.

**A Bulwark  
against  
Rowdyism.**

"*Thirdly*, the Turners set the noble example of being in the first ranks of Americans in the abolition of the institution of slavery. This was preeminently their first mission in America. They came with a burning zeal for liberty, but recognized that the only sure avenue to freedom was along the lines of popular enlightenment and only in the last issue to resort to arms. This is an unwritten chapter in the history of the great war of secession. The stimulus to the heroism of many a bold German, who sacrificed his life for the freedom of the negro is traceable to the precept and example of the early Turners of the school of Father Jahn.

**Wherever  
yokes and  
chains are  
broken,  
Does proudly  
wave the  
Turner's  
token.**

"*Fourthly*, the Turner movement has stood and still stands for the right of the individual, for the freedom of thought and conscience, and the presence of such organizations in the land of liberty is a wholesome check upon many abuses to which republics are likely to fall a prey."

**They were  
taught how  
to live,  
they knew  
how to die.**

**A wholesome  
check upon  
Abuses of  
Liberty.**

### **What is the Turners' Attitude Towards Women's Rights and Suffrage?**

The Turners believe that the right to vote is inherent in citizenship without regard to sex or color. Economically, women ought to be given the same rights and duties as men. While the Turners recognize the women's right to vote they do not anticipate great results from the same. In fact, they believe, that the changes thereby effected in the Republic's political and moral life will be quite insignificant. There will be *more* votes, but not *better* votes, nor will there be worse votes. After all, women are just human beings like men with the same traits, good and bad in about the same proportion.

**The vote  
that shakes  
the turrets  
of the land.**

**Their ready  
help is  
always  
nigh.**

Almost every society of the American Gymnastic Union has a Women's Auxiliary. These auxiliaries are of great benefit and are much appreciated. The Turners cannot do and achieve the same results without them. Women have the right and privilege to become full-pledged members of any Turner society. They seldom exercise this right, but prefer the membership in the Ladies' Auxiliaries. Recently these Auxiliaries have also formed a National organization.

### **What is the Difference Between a Gymnasium Pure and Simple and the Gymnasium of the Turners?**

**They are full  
of good  
work.**

The Turners are the very last to disparage the work of the various Athletic Clubs or that of gymnasiums of the Y. M. C. A. and kindred institutions. In fact, some of these are excellently equipped and are a great boon to many people. As far as the physical exercises are concerned, there is comparatively little difference, as these exercises are derived from the Jahn system. Many of the teachers employed in the institutions are graduates of the Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union.

**A purpose  
firm is  
equal to the  
deed.**

The difference is again in the purpose, in the aims and objects. One might say, the purpose of the Turners is *altruistic*, while the purpose of the other institutions is *egoistic*. For instance, the Athletic Clubs advocate and practice Physical Exercises for the benefit of the individual. The Turners advocate and practice Physical Education for communal benefits. (Always remember, of course, that the greater purpose includes the lesser.) The Athletic Club trains the individual, the Turners train the masses. The masses, of course, always include individuals, who excel in certain exercises, and that accounts for the fact, that the

Turners can always enter a contest with the Athletes and carry off their share of the honors.\*

### What is the Ultimate Goal of American Turnerism?

The goal of American Turnerism will be achieved, when every boy in the United States and every girl for that matter, receives the education which aims to make him or her physically, mentally and morally sound—an education quite as advantageous for peace as for war.

**Mens sana in  
corpore sano.**

The physical training of Turnerism develops mind and character as well as body. Such training counts heavily in war, but it counts still more in the production of cheerful, efficient and peace-loving citizens.

**Men with  
hearts stead-  
fast as oaks.**

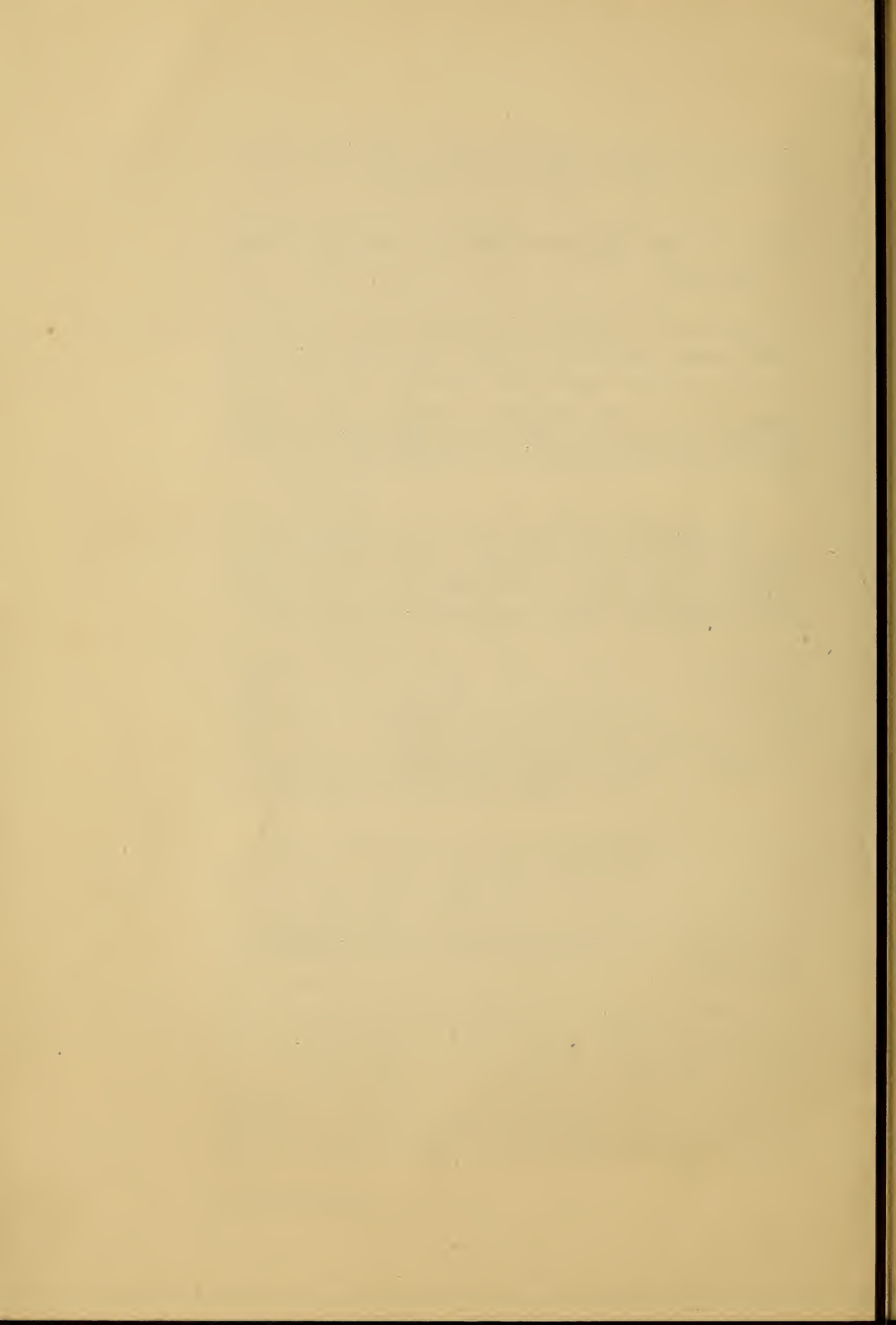
Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.—*Longfellow.*

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\* American Turners participating in any gymnastic or athletic event are recognized by the emblem on their gymnasts' shirts.

It ought to be emphasized that the Turners never tolerate professional gymnasts to participate in any Turner events. Participants must be members of the Society and must not practice gymnastics or athletics for pecuniary gain.

Honor prizes for excellence in any branch of gymnastic exercises are given and strenuously contested for. Pecuniary prizes or prizes of great pecuniary value are discouraged and frowned upon.





## APPENDIX.

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### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

*of the*

### AMERICAN GYMNASTIC UNION

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The American Gymnastic Union is a federation of gymnastic societies of the United States of America, organized for the purpose of furthering physical education and disseminating rational opinions and ideas, the realization of which, according to scientific knowledge and experience, may be assumed to advance the physical, moral, intellectual and material welfare of mankind.

**Statement  
of  
Purposes.**

We, the members of this Union, believe in the United States of America as a democracy in a republic established upon the principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity, and recognize in the harmonious education of body and mind one of the most important prerequisites for preserving and perfecting this democracy.

**Our Faith  
in the  
U. S.**

It is the principal duty of our societies to provide courses in physical education for adults and juveniles, based upon rational principles, and further to promote their intellectual and moral welfare by maintaining suitable schools and providing for instructive lectures and debates. Through this we expect the participants to attain that efficiency which will enable them at all times to fully perform their duties as citizens and to enjoy life in its various phases with appreciation and moderation.

**Duties of  
Turner  
Societies.**

**Freedom of  
Conscience.**

In matters of religion and conscience we demand freedom in the broadest sense. We strive for the dissemination of a philosophy based on knowledge of natural forces and their effects. Believing in the well-established American principle of complete separation of state and church, we resent interference on the part of religious organizations in matters of state.

**Human  
Society and  
State.**

Human society is a living organism, growing and developing steadily in its essence and form. The state, whatever its form may be at any given time, with all its institutions, laws, rights and duties, is only one phase in the progressing development of human society. The steadily growing security and equality of rights, as well as the growth of influence and power of the masses of the people, indicate progress in its political institutions. If economic conditions are such as to produce extremes like the millionaire and the pauper, the centralization of political power in certain classes becomes inevitable. For these reasons we endorse efforts tending to equalize conditions in our economic life.

**Labor and  
Capital.**

We favor social institutions and legal enactments which will check the exploitation of labor by capital; have a tendency to secure to the worker the fruits of his labor; prevent wrongs and injustice in the struggles between capital and labor and give the development of our economic conditions a direction toward abolition of all class distinctions.

Greater esteem of human life is essential for the welfare of man. We strive for better protection of the citizen and a valuation of life higher than property.

**Opportunity  
for All.**

Opportunity must at all times be afforded every human being to secure for himself, by application of his mental and physical labor, a dignified and worthy livelihood in accordance with the existing state of civilization, and likewise to share in the manifold achievements of past centuries. Such opportunity should be recognized not merely as a moral right, but should be secured by positive legal enactments. We,

therefore, favor direct participation of the people in matters of legislation and the establishment of the most comprehensive democratic means for political activity.

**Government  
by the  
People.**

The greater and more extensive the rights of the people and the more use they make of these rights, the greater, in proportion, will be the necessity of a clear understanding of cause and effect in human society, and of the social and economic needs of the people. We, therefore, hold that the state, representing the whole people, has the duty to further the intellectual elevation of all by perfecting our school systems and supporting free scientific research.

**Intellectual  
Elevation.**

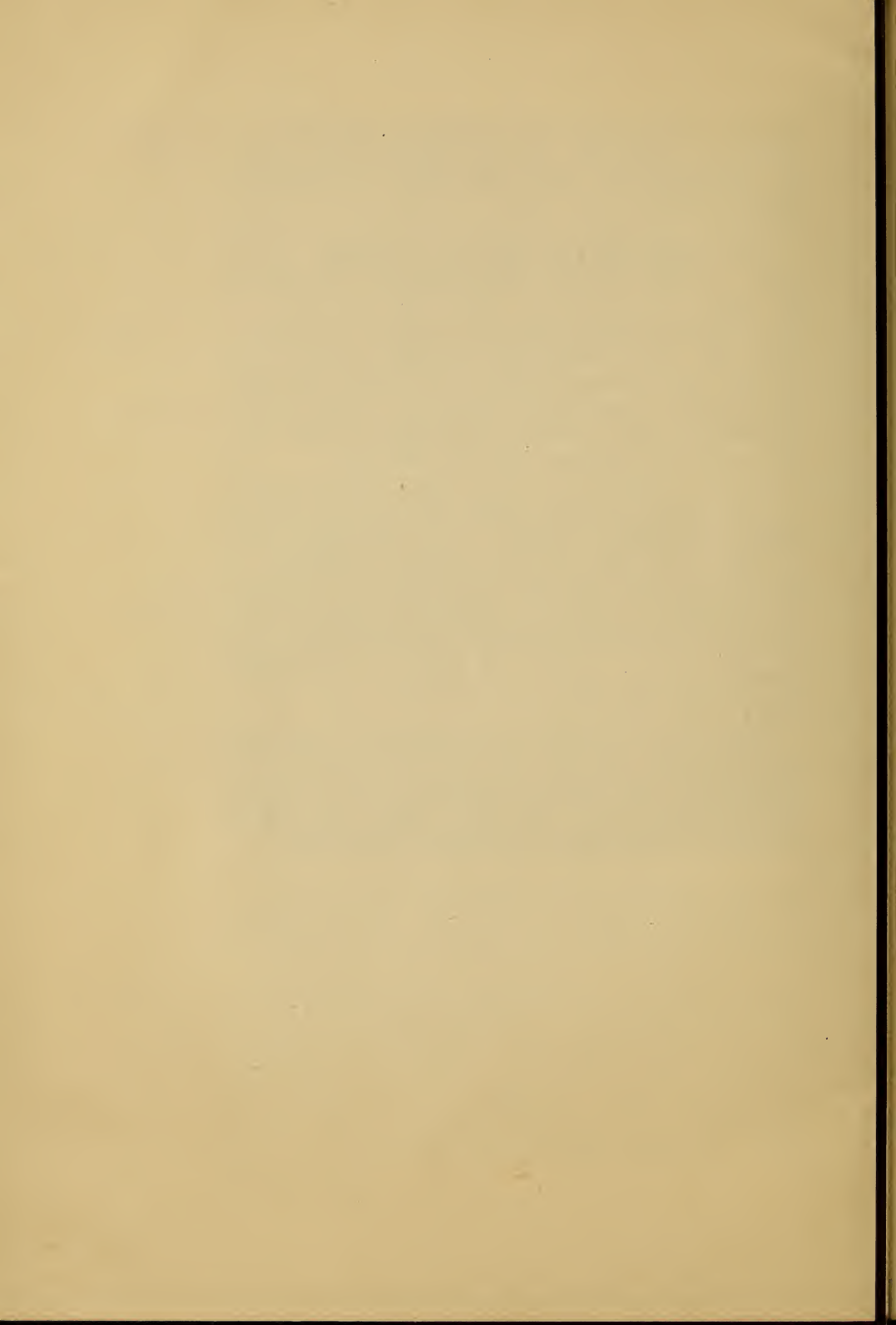
History evidences the gradual growth of the supremacy of right over might in the relations between individuals as well as between states and nations. In our opinion the time is ripe for a wider application of this principle. For this reason we favor the settlement of international disputes by judicial proceedings and the support of all endeavors toward the elimination of conflicts between nations and toward a harmonious organization of mankind.

**Inter-  
national  
Conciliation.**

We are not a political party, obligating its members to any definite demands, but we expect them always to live, strive and conduct themselves as men and citizens in accord with a philosophy whose fundamental principles are laid down in the above declaration.

**Not a  
Political  
Party.**





APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP  
**AMERICAN GYMNASTIC UNION**

I hereby apply for membership in the

.....  
and promise strictly to observe the General Principles and Statutes  
of the American Gymnastic Union as well as the Statutes of the  
.....District, and those of the above society.

.....  
Signature of applicant

Proposed and recommended for membership by

.....  
Signature of proposing member

City .....

Date.....19.....

Name .....

Address .....

Occupation .....

Place of birth?.....

Date of birth?.....

Date of arrival in the United States?.....

Citizen of the United States?.....

If not a citizen, has application for citizenship been made?.....

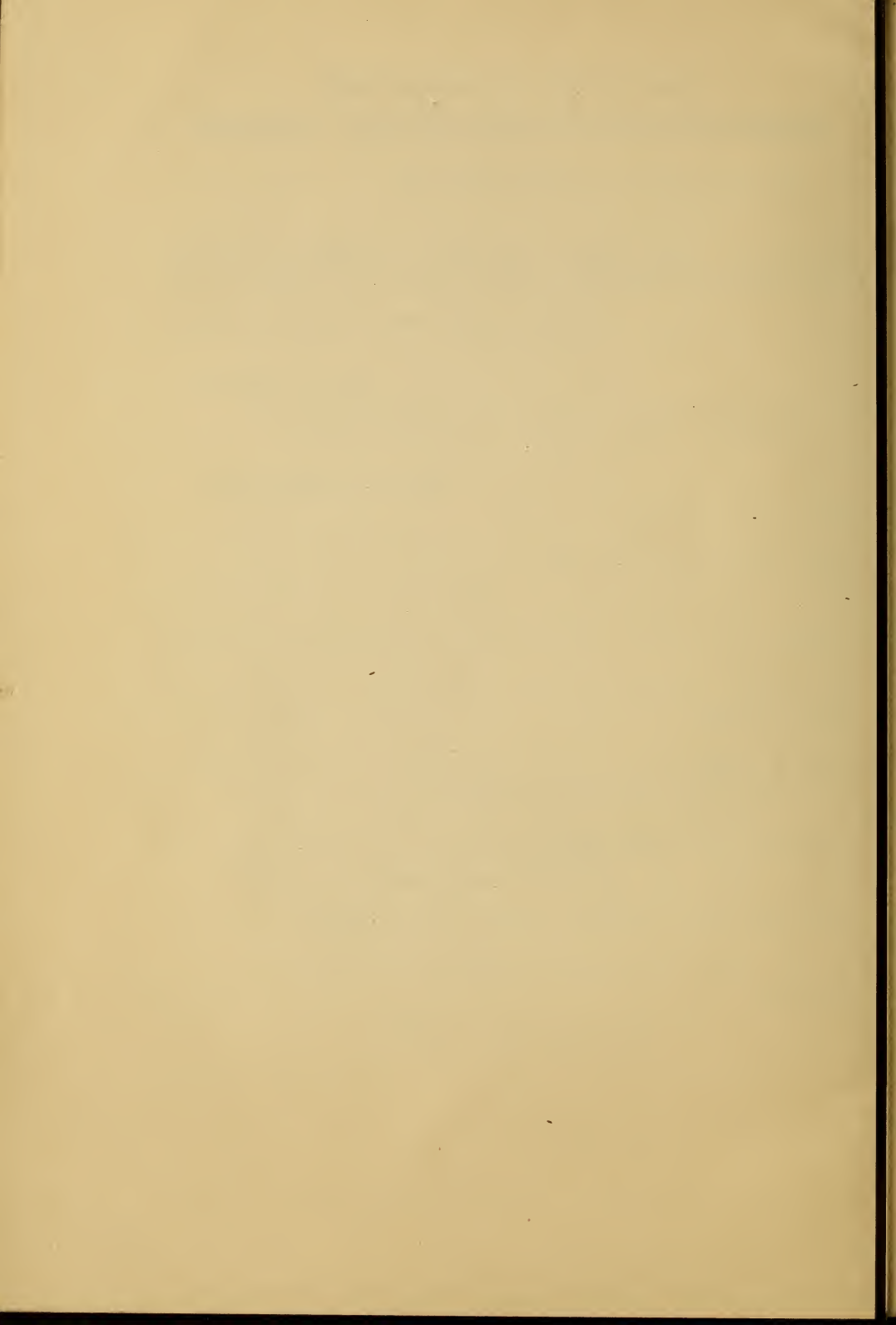
Have you been a member of the A. G. U. before?.....

Do you intend to take part in gymnastic work?.....

Married? .....

Names and age of children:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....







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