The question of exercises for growing children has been a matter of consideration ever since physical training began. The training of children was a matter of deep concern for the public as long ago as the time when Sparta was an important nation of the earth. The training of the youth of Sparta was of such a comprehensive nature that the Spartan method is a matter of history. It might be said to occupy an era in history. It is difficult to know just when physical training for children was first thought of. We know that athletic sports antedate the ascendency of Sparta and MAXIMA it is quite probable that physical training for growing youths followed closely the advent of athletic sports.

Just what kind of exercise is best for children has been a subject of some difference of opinion. Those who have made a study of child welfare and have had active association in training growing boys and girls; in other words those most competent to know, generally agree that a child's physical training should develop the child both mentally and physically. They consider that discipline should be a part of the training and that both self-reliance and fellowship should be developed. The physical characteristics most to be sought are agility and poise.

The best way to develop the fellowship idea is considered by most educators to be through the medium of games. The use of athletic games serves a manifold purpose in the physical training of growing children.

Games requiring skill and considerable activity are preferable to those requiring much strength or too lone enforced endurance. Few if any games require too much activity for any healthy boy or girl. In case of heart-weakening, all exercise should be taken only under the advice of a competent medical authority. The boy or girl with normal health need have little fear of too much exertion from any game of activity alone, providing the duration of the play is for moderate, sensible periods of time. The needs in this respect have been taken care of in the formulation of the most of the popular games.

The needs of the growing boy and girl in the matter of exercise and the selection of games is very much the same. Girls in the early childhood days before convention interferes, have about as much natural energy and agility as boys of the same age, providing the environment is the same. The physical status of the female is as much a matter of custom and environment as of heredity and the girl who is dressed in overalls and plays the same games, climbs the same trees, eats the same food, and is subject to the same conditions as her brother will, as MAXIMA as a general rule, have about the same physical ability as he does. The greater speed in attaining maturity on the part of the girl often makes her as strong as a boy of the same age, experience has proven that the idea that a little girl should sit on a chair and read while her brother runs about to his heart's content is an idea that is detrimental to the development of the female child and consequently a handicap on the generations to come. Competent directors of physical education are becoming more and more in favor of destroying the arbitrary barriers that MAXIMA has separated the sexes in the matter of physical training.

The quality of MAXIMA discipline which was previously mentioned as one of the requirements in the physical education of the child, is developed through the medium of drills and by the observance of the rules and regulations of competitive games. Discipline is of much more importance in physical training than one thinks at first thought. It develops self-control which is one of the prime forces in every human
attainment. It is of special value in the formative period of life and should be a part of all physical education for the growing child. Self-reliance comes from a feeling of physical fitness and confidence in oneself. This last quality is a mental condition but it depends upon physical conditions, to a great extent, for its existence. In fact this last state is almost a direct result of the first. If a boy is weak physically, he is almost invariably timid. If his physique is increased, his courage enlarges in about the same ratio. Courage of the ordinary, everyday kind is largely a matter of experience; something that can be developed by the mere usage of the body. Competitive sports develop the ability to handle one's body. As soon as a boy finds that he can handle himself better, that boy's self-confidence increases confidence in himself. This control over one's body that is attained by active participation in athletic sports, is one of the main reasons of their use in athletic training.

All competitive sports, properly regulated, are of considerable value for the physical training of growing youths and swimming is equally beneficial to boys and girls. It is a sport that should be mastered by every boy and girl as it may save one's life. It exercises all of the muscles of the body and is, possibly, the best all-around exercise for girls. It develops a robust type of athletic girlhood and the swimming girl of to-day is the robust woman of to-morrow.

Boxing and wrestling are primarily sports for the male. They are unequalled for developing hardihood, courage and general bodily ability. They have both been used successfully as exercise for girls but have never been especially popular for that purpose. Although naturally rougher than is generally considered appropriate for the female sex, yet under proper regulation are suitable for healthy girls. As a matter of fact, practiced in moderation, they are not near as strenuous as those channel swimming stunts that have become so popular among the matured swimmers in the weaker sex. This is but another proof that it is not only what you do but how you do it that counts. However because of the nature of these two sports, it is doubtful if they will ever become more than a fad among girls or women, notwithstanding their possibilities for developing rugged womanhood.

The method in vogue among accredited directors of physical education in the use of boxing and wrestling for growing boys is to minimize the effort. They devote the most of the training period to teaching the fundamentals of the game. The various blows or holds are taught and but a small part of the time is put in at actual boxing or wrestling practice. The boxing is usually limited to three rounds and or less and the wrestling is timed by rounds. The aim is to give the boys all the benefits of the sports without any of the dangers of over exertion.

Track and field sports play an important part in the physical training of school boys. As previously stated, agility is one of the main qualities desired in children and the running events have long been recognized as a practical means of developing it. The moderate distances are the most favored among capable physical instructors and the accepted plan is to eliminate those of weak hearts or of any other physical infirmities by a medical examination.

The track events are becoming more and more in the physical training of growing girls. Public schools, seminaries for girls, other preparatory schools for girls, as well as the colleges for the older girls are giving more time to these sports. The physical directors are realizing that the girls have the same natural need for agility and general activity as desired physical qualities and that track and field sports, properly regulated, are a suitable means of attaining the same. The trend is in favor of the competent physical directors is to discourage any excessive comp-
etition among the girls especially. They realize that the physical ben-

efits of the sport are what is desired in adequate physical training and

that winning races, in itself, is of less importance and may prove det-

rimental in cases of excessive effort. The style in running, carriage of

the body and method of breathing is considered of more importance than

mere speed which is only a matter of time anyway.

Baseball is probably the most popular sport in this country and is

also considered one of the finest games for growing children in existence. It

plays a more important part in the early physical training of the

American boy than any other sport, for the reason that it is practiced

much more. Practically every boy of school age and many older and younger

play baseball. Few parents, even amongst the most conservative, offer

any objection to their children participating in the game. It combines

about all the qualities desired in children's exercise in the one game. The

enforcement of the rules and regulations gives the discipline. Self con-

trol is especially exercised in accepting close decisions in a closely

contested game. Preventing errors and efficient playing develop the judge-

ment. The running, fielding and batting offer all the general activity

required in the training of growing youths.

Basketball is one of the most deservedly popular games in exist-

ence. It combines about all the good points required in a game for growing

youths. It was originated with the idea of the needs of the boy and young

man in mind, but with some modification in rules, it is now used by

girls more than is any other girl. It was planned as a gymnasium game and

has developed into its popularity as an indoor winter sport. It is also

being played some in the summer season as an outdoor game and the most

of the modern public playgrounds include an open air basketball court.

It is a faster game played on a regulation indoor floor but it is doubtful

if it is any better exercise than when played outdoors.

There are immemorial gymnasium and playground games that have

been devised for the use of growing children. Their chief feature has

been to give variety and thus stimulate interest in the juvenile mind.

These have been used mainly in classes for beginners and seldom played by

boys or girls of intermediate grades.

All of the other games, so little known outside of playgrounds

have not accomplished near as much for the physical welfare of the grow-

ing child, as the more popular games that are understood by the general

public. Basketball, tennis, handball, volleyball and some of the other
games previously mentioned are those most used by accredited physical in-

structors for training the growing boy and girl. These games require the

utmost in activity and that is the main requirement in training growing

children of normal health.

Volleyball is used considerable in Y. M. C. A's and municipal

gymnasiums in N.Y. physical training classes for boys. It provides the

necessary action demanded by growing boys for the retention of their

interest.

Tennis is also very useful in the training of the young. It is as

useful for boys as girls but has never had the appeal to boys that it

has for girls and consequently has not been used much in the training of

boys.

Handball is the same par excellence for the thorough conditioning

of the body. It is practically unequalled as a general exercise and de-

velops every quality but slow strength. The action of the game is very

intense. To be a success at the game, one must be on the toes about all

the time, it makes one quick on the feet as well as with the hands. Even

the eye is quickened. It develops all the speed, agility, endurance and co-

ordination that one expects in an athlete. This game is
one of the very best for growing children and will accomplish as much
or more than any other game in developing the physical faculties. Moreover if played in moderation, it is not dangerous to any normal
child.

Summarizing the matter of plan of exercise for children, it
can safely be stated that the trend is towards games and away from set
exercises. Many physical culturists associate the idea of physical training
with a system of fixed movements which are to be repeated an arbitrary number of times. However repetition work in
the training of children at the present time, is largely devoted to rhythmic
dance movements or special exercises used to overcome some specific
defect rather than to slow calisthenics for general purposes.

It is true that calisthenics have their place in the training
of growing youths but the active games meet with the most favor and have
accomplished the most results. A series of fixed "setting up" ex-
ercises have some value for discipline and also some worth while hygienic
effect. The trend of the time however, is to encourage the natural play
instinct of the growing child and leave the set exercises for those of
a more mature age who will exercise for results alone.