

## VII

### *The Problem of Exercise Is Personal*

The question as to how much exercise and what kind one needs is peculiarly personal. Its answer varies greatly with one's age and type of work, especially. Some people need much exercise, others none at all. Many of the world's most strenuous workers have never taken any, while others have testified to a doubling of their powers through physical culture. On no subject are loose generalizations more dangerous.

It is undoubtedly true that many people can greatly increase their powers through exercise. But nobody has yet been able to define the class of such people. Common sense would suggest that robust persons engaged in sedentary work ought to seek considerable exercise, not so much for the purpose of doubling their powers as for preventing a serious unbalance and consequent breakdown. Frail people, on the other hand, probably should not exercise much no matter what their type of work may happen to be. To have suggested calisthenics to William James or Gamaliel Bradford would have been ludicrous, and if anybody had attempted to drag me out on a golf course or into a gymnasium since

my thirtieth birthday, only disaster would have resulted.

So here, as elsewhere, we leave the problem for you to solve. But not without a word of warning. Never exert yourself to your maximum efforts. This is not only dangerous, but sometimes fatal. Secondly, when exercising, keep moving at an even pace throughout the exercise. Don't speed up and slow down at intervals throughout a single stretch. Not only do you waste your energies thus, but you put needless stress and strain on muscles adjusted to rhythmic, steady motion.