Books and Magazines

Terry Todd
The University of Texas

Iyer, K.V. *Physique and Figure*, (Bangalore City, India: By the author, 1940) 119 pp.

In this repetitious, yet interesting and honest, book the author discusses his theory of “stock vitality.” He wants an improvement in the general health of the people of his nation (India) and the world. He feels that proper exercise and nutrition can achieve this goal. He compares this “stock vitality” to such valuables as gold and diamonds and maintains that they are no less important than material wealth. He also discusses the necessity of maintaining a tranquil mind for purposes of health and successful living. Iyer states: “My purpose in writing this book is to place before (my country-men) simple exercises with solid iron dumbbells...to lead them to a correct way of performing them and to help them build their physique and health, so as to fit them for healthy citizenship and parenthood. This is the one service I can offer to my fellow men.” The book contains a short treatise on the value of progressive training with solid iron dumbbells, which will, Iyer believes, when coupled with proper diet, produce all that anyone could expect in terms of health and strength.


This book explains a system the author claimed to have used for 30 years. The system is one which “develops the various muscles of the body by dumb-bells, pulley-weights or other apparatus (that) requires the body or limbs to be placed in different positions, in order that they may be both contracted and expanded.” This system, when examined, bears a close resemblance to many weight training programs in use today. The author recommends the use of medium-heavy weights rather than light weights, which were in vogue then, or heavy weights. The exercises which are included are for both special (grip, biceps, neck, etc.) and general (all around) development. These exercises are illustrated by excellent line drawings and are fully explained to the reader. The author also included his personal opinions on such matters as diet, clothing, and training. Many of his opinions would hold true today, almost 100 years later.