Nautilus Bulletin #2

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What to Expect

Ultimate development, as I have pointed out repeatedly, primarily depends upon individual potential – which is hereditarily determined. But such ultimate development will not result without proper training – good heredity merely makes good results possible, it doesn't produce them.

More than a generation ago, a well-known, greatly respected – and probably well-meaning – scientist clearly stated in print that he could, ". . . take any child at a very early age, and make him into anything I desire." (or words to that effect) Meaning, simply, that environment was "everything" –and that heredity was "nothing", or almost nothing.

He probably believed what he was saying – and, unfortunately, a lot of other people believed what he said also; then, later, for political and-or "humanitarian" reasons it became popular to believe such outright hogwash, such a self-evidently false statement – and, now, most of the really worthwhile developments of civilization have been all but destroyed by people who have based their actions on this belief. Race-hate talk? Don't be ridiculous – a simple statement of the fact that people are different, sexually different, individually different, and racially different; the average "Nordic type" couldn't duplicate the muscular definition of the average Negro short of almost literally starving himself to death – and the average Negro couldn't rid himself of the fat stores in the area of his buttocks without starving himself.

Also – the average Negro has "high" calves and "high" forearms, and regardless of the size of his calves or forearms they will never look as big as they really are; yet Sergio Oliva is a Negro, and he has very "low" calves and very "low" forearms – perhaps the best forearms in the world, and calves that compare favorably with anybody's.

But Sergio is not a typical Negro insofar as his muscular shape is concerned – and he is not even typically "human" insofar as his muscular size is concerned; he is an individual, like all of us, simply a very outstanding individual, a very unusual individual, a rare type of individual – almost one of a kind.

Insofar as physical "types" are concerned, there seem to be two rather distinct categories – the type that easily develop large limbs but never quite bring their torso muscles into proportion – and the type that build large torso muscles and never reach a proportionate degree of development in their arms and legs. And, of course, a third – rather rare – type that can build overall size and maintain good proportions; Sergio is an example of this third type – Casey Viator is an example of the first type (a "big limbs" type) – and Ellington Darden is an example of the second type.

Such differences are hereditarily determined – and if all of the muscular structures of the body are developed as much as possible, then the final proportions may or may not be pleasing; but if the final result is not pleasing, then all you can do is purposely neglect the development of some of the muscles – in order to restore good proportions.

By contemporary physique standards, a man with ideal proportions insofar as function is concerned would stand no chance of winning – not, at least, if all of his muscular structures were developed as much as possible. Which is unfortunate, since it simply means that the people who "look strongest" are actually not as strong as they look – and nowhere near as strong as some men who don't look very strong at all. Perhaps our standards are wrong; but it is certainly not surprising that bodybuilders and weight-lifters have gradually drifted apart – which is wrong, because appearance of strength, or actual strength, depends primarily upon heredity, but increasing one increases the other, in direct ratio.

Nobody could reasonably expect a man who was only five feet tall to become a champion basketball player against opponents that are seven feet tall –but people do expect bodybuilders with outstanding muscular size (which size in many cases, is a result of very poor leverage factors) to be very strong; which is also unreasonable.

So don't expect unreasonable results; but you can expect – and you can produce – results far beyond what most people believe possible. The greatest danger – and it is a danger, today – is falling into dangerous training habits so widespread at the moment, the use of drugs, the exotic diets, over-attention given to training itself, or simply believing any of the hundreds of outright myths so firmly supported by most bodybuilders and weight-lifters. By and large, if you have been fortunate enough to avoid such contact up to now, the best thing you can do is to stay entirely away from "experienced" trainees – most of who can tell you nothing of any value, and almost all of whom will lead you astray.

But while it is neither necessary nor desirable to seek the advice of experienced trainees, it does not follow that nothing of any value can be gained from the experience of others; on the contrary, the experience of others can save you – and should save you – an enormous amount of personal experimentation. Thus, for example, it is not necessary to invent, design, and build your own tools – a good available tool already exists, the barbell; nor is it necessary to invent specific exercises – which already exist. But it is necessary to choose which exercises to use – since you can't use them all – and it is necessary to decide how to use these exercises, how much to use them, and how often to use them; and in these areas, advanced trainees will merely lead you astray in the direction of their individual bias. This bulletin is designed to lead your thinking in the direction of a logical approach to the matters involved; you can reasonably expect nothing more from me – nor from anyone.

But you can expect to encounter stumbling blocks along the way – obstacles that, in the end, you must overcome for yourself. And you can expect to encounter some problems that will never be solved – since, at this point in history, physiology is certainly not yet an exact science.