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Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
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**Swimming Scientifically Taught A  
Practical Manual for Young and  
Old**

Frank Eugen Dalton

# Imprint

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## TO MY FATHER

### **The Late Capt. Davis Dalton**

who swam the English Channel from Cape Grisnez near Boulogne, France, to Folkestone, England, August 16-17, 1890; whose enthusiasm and unflagging interest in all matters pertaining to swimming and life-saving have been excelled by none, and who was a faithful practitioner of the methods herein set forth, this book is affectionately dedicated by his son,

THE AUTHOR [p. 6]  
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## PART I

### INTRODUCTION

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF SWIMMING

That all persons ought to know how to safeguard themselves when in deep water is becoming more and more recognized as time passes. While swimming is probably the oldest pastime known to man, and has had, and still has, its votaries in every country, civilized or uncivilized, it is curious that this most useful science should have been so much neglected.

For an adult person to be unable to swim points to something like criminal negligence; every man, woman and child should learn. A person who can not swim may not only become a danger to himself, but to some one, and perhaps to several, of his fellow beings. Children as early as the age of four may acquire the art; none are too young, none too old. Doctors recommend swimming as the best all-around exercise. It is especially beneficial to nervous people. Swimming reduces corpulence [p. 16], improves the figure, expands the lungs, improves the circulation of the blood, builds up general health, increases vitality, gives self-confidence in case of danger, and exercises all the muscles in the body at one time. As an aid to development of the muscular system, it excels other sports. Every muscle is brought into play.

In other important ways it is a useful, and even a necessary accomplishment; no one knows when he may be called upon for a practical test of its merits. The *Slocum* steamboat catastrophe in the East River, New York, several years ago, gave a melancholy example of what better knowledge of swimming might have done to save the lives of passengers. That awful tragedy, which plunged an entire city into mourning, was too appalling to have its details revived here, but, regardless of the fact that the life-preservers on board

were found unfit for use, the loss of life would have been made much smaller had the unfortunate passengers known how to keep their heads above water until help arrived. Millions of people are transported yearly by river craft, and just for lack of knowledge of how to swim a repetition of the *Slocum* disaster might occur any summer.

Only about 20 per cent. of the entire population of the United States know how to swim. A visit to any of the beaches along the Atlantic coast will convince any one of this fact. There is no excuse for this ignorance, especially in a city like New York, with miles of water front and fine beaches at its very door; nor is there excuse in other places where an ocean, lakes and rivers afford opportunities for swimming.

Swimming is a tonic alike for muscle and brain. The smallest child and the weakest woman can enjoy it equally with the strongest man. When slaves of the desk and counting-house are looking forward for an all too brief vacation and seek the mountains or seashore to store up energy for another year's work, they should know how to swim. Poor, indeed, is the region which can not boast of a piece of water in which to take an invigorating plunge.

The importance of being able to swim was very generally recognized in ancient times, notably by the Romans. Roman youth, as early as the Republican era, when trained to bear [p. 18] arms, were made to include in their exercises bathing and swimming in the Tiber, where competitions were frequent. Cassius in his youth became renowned as a swimmer. Shakespeare, in a familiar passage, describes a race between him and Julius Cæsar, Cassius being made the speaker:

"I was born free as Cæsar; so were you:  
We both have fed as well, and we can both  
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.  
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,  
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,  
Cæsar said to me, 'Dar'st thou, Cassius, now,  
Leap in with me into this angry flood  
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,  
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in,

And bade him follow; so, indeed he did.  
The torrent roared; and we did buffet it  
With lusty sinews; throwing it aside  
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;  
But ere we could arrive the point propos'd,  
Cæsar cried, 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink.'  
I, as Æneas, our great ancestor,  
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder  
The old Anchises bear, so, from the waves of Tiber  
Did I the tired Cæsar: And this man  
Is now become a god."

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Macaulay, in one of his "Lays of Ancient Rome," describes the scene which followed after Horatius had been left alone to face the troops of Lars Porsena, his codefenders having escaped across the bridge:

"Never, I ween, did swimmer,  
In such an evil case,  
Struggle through such a raging flood  
Safe to the landing place,  
But his limbs were borne up bravely,  
By the brave heart within,  
And our good father Tiber  
Bore bravely up his chin."

It was not until the nineteenth century that swimming really became a science. In fact, it was only within the last half-century that a real awakening to its importance occurred. At the present day swimming has come to be regarded as an indispensable adjunct to the education of the young. In many parts of Europe it forms part of the school curriculum. Of such paramount importance is it there held to be that, on entering the army, the first thing taught a young recruit is swimming. On this side of the Atlantic its importance is

becoming more evident daily. [p. 20] That the benefits to be derived from it have manifested themselves to municipalities is evidenced by the fact that, in addition to free swimming baths on the water front of New York in summer, there have been established several indoor bathing pavilions which are open and accessible all the year round.

Swimming, aside from its importance as a possible means to self-preservation in case of shipwreck, the upsetting of pleasure-boats, or any of the numerous accidents that so frequently happen on the water, and also, on occasion, as a means of saving life, is not only one of the best physical exercises known, but when one swims for exercise he is also conscious of receiving great pleasure. Most other forms of exercise, after they have been participated in for some time, are apt to become something like efforts, or even hardships. Swimming, on the other hand, continues to be exhilarating.

Unfortunately, those who have been best able to teach the science of swimming, because of having technical knowledge and proficiency, have not made systematic attempts to disseminate knowledge through scientific methods. [p. 21] In this respect the author claims to differ with most other instructors. He has endeavored, in this work, to treat the subject scientifically and to use simple and concise language. His success as a teacher is attested by thousands of pupils who have acquired the principles of a system long known as the Dalton system [p. 22]

## **LEARNING BY THE BOOK**

The question is often asked whether it is possible for a person to learn to swim by studying a book or a series of articles. Much depends on the person. In the case of a very nervous person, it is improbable that this may be satisfactorily accomplished, for it is then absolutely necessary that a pupil must have an instructor, in order, at the start, to obviate dread of the water.

Where this dread of water or nervousness does not exist in any marked degree, study of a work such as this may be of unlimited advantage. By carefully following its instructions it will be possible to become a very fair swimmer without the aid of an instructor or any second person.

Naturally, it is not claimed that a majority of such self-taught swimmers will ever become experts at the art, altho even this is possible in a great many cases; but there is a moral certainty that, with the exception of the aforementioned nervous beginners, a fair knowledge of the science of swimming may be attained in this manner. Numbers of very good swim [p. 23] mers have had no other tuition than which came from study of a book. Especially is this true when following the directions outlined in this book in the matter, first, of practising keeping the eyes and mouth open under water, which will eliminate all nervousness; and, second, in practising the movements used in the breast and back strokes, which are of inestimable aid when actually taking to the water.

Of course, where the swimmer desires to attain true scientific knowledge of the art, the beginner needs the aid of an instructor who may watch for and correct any faults noticeable, for the simple reason that bad habits once contracted are more difficult to eliminate later on.

If the lessons herein set forth are carefully followed, there is no reason why, with the exceptions before mentioned, one should not become a good swimmer. [p. 24] [p. 25]



## **PART II**

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