

While such men may succeed or fail they do either with keen appreciation of what is going on. The poet d'Annunzio made a far finer hero at Fiume than many brave men who died on the Piave because he saw every item of danger and disgrace that must meet him if he failed.

It is for this reason that the phlegmatic man may be temperamentally better in theory to face danger, yet not always be desirable as a member of a "lost hope" attempt to achieve the impossible. He lacks imagination; is inclined to let things slide; and often lacks the initiative of the more nervous yet more imaginative man.

Probably the great leaders of modern exploration have on the average been the best examples of balanced temperament. Amundsen, Peary, Scott and Shackleton, were men of rather silent grim personalities. Yet their writings, their friends, their works, all testify to the heights of fancy their ardour could carry them on occasion. It was this combination of dreamer and fighter that largely set each apart from his fellows.

Compared with abstractions like temperament and imagination it would seem easy to define men who stand hardship best. Every leader knows that hardship, or physical stress, is sure to come before the expedition is over. Whether it be cold, and toil as in the north, or sleeplessness and nerve strain as on a long flight, some form of suffering is bound to come. The effect of this suffering on each of his men is what the leader would give his bottom dollar to know before he leaves home.

I am inclined to put age as the first limiting factor. Youth will be served. The young man has zest of life and ambition for the future. He has an internal machinery not long out of the factory.

He instinctively longs for combat, man or nature, he cares little which. The Almighty has endowed him with a desire to shoulder up through the vicissitudes of life.

Getting down to cases, I would say that the average man does not get his full strength until after twenty. He reaches his peak around twenty-five and is close to the down-hill side -- physically, I mean -- before he is thirty-eight.

Of course there is enormous variation among individuals. I have yet to find the doctor who will give me a satisfactory answer to endurance. They can tell me if a man is sound, how strong he is, and what the likelihood is of his breaking down under any specific load. But they can't tell me how long his nerves and muscles will last under strain.

I know a lad of twenty-two who is splendidly set up and has a perfect health record. But he cannot stand long muscular strain. In contrast there is the case of that great Alaska missionary, arch-deacon Stuck, who at the age of sixty, if I remember rightly, did forty-five miles a day over a tough trail at about fifty below zero and worse.

Petty Officer Evans of the Scott expedition, whom Scott called "our strong man" was first to go when they began to die. He had a fall, to be sure; but I don't think that did great damage. The heavy man wears out footgear, chafes in heavy garments, and strains his heart if he must keep at a task for a long time.

Colonel Lawrence, the British hero of Arabia, was spoken of as that "runt" before he showed he could outlast men twice his weight and stature, whose health records were equally good.

Other things being equal, I incline to the slight wiry man,

although the stocky fellow is a great help in heavy labor.

There are a lot of things that weaken a man as he goes along in life. It might seem that diet and habits belong to the doctors rather than in the limbo of exploration. Yet when a young man stands before me and says yearningly: "I wish you would take me along," nothing could be more helpful at the moment than an exact and confidential chart of his past life.

I don't mean anything serious, such as the effects of dissipation. They are always visible to the discerning eye. I refer to those small but insidious foxes that tear at the vitals of a man without his being conscious of their presence: overeating, under-eating, too many stimulants, too much sugar, unbalanced diet, and so on.

Any good dietician can tell a man what and how to eat. Any good doctor can specify the ailment that has arisen from abuse of digestive apparatus. But when there isn't any ailment, when only a weakening all along the line has occurred, it takes a magician to know just how far the man can go under field conditions.

I cannot be very definite in this point any more than I can about the age or size of man to take. But I do know that a good heart and digestion mean more than anything else an explorer can have. If illness or poor hygiene have injured either it is fairer to leave the man home. I favor a light eater, who has no idiosyncrasies of diet, and whose appetite is normal and steady.

To me exercise can justly be classified with diet. The body needs it in regular proportions and tends to disintegrate the moment the diet of regular muscular exertion is removed.

I know I never could have stood the strain of my war work had

I not been brought up on the splendid regularity of the Virginia Military Institute and the Naval Academy at Annapolis. I should have broken down in Greenland from the sleepless worry of our 1925 expedition had I not kept myself in good condition by daily exercise, night and morning, ever since I graduated. I am positive that regular habits, proper diet and as much optimism as I could command were what took me through the terrific strains of flying to the North Pole and across the Atlantic Ocean.

I have been too busy in recent years to go in for any complicated system of exercise. But I make it a point to get a good eight hours sleep and eat three hearty meals a day, to have a few hours of fresh air and keep away from disagreeable matters whenever I properly can. As a net result I find my strength keeping up and my desire for more work unflagging.

I bring out my own case for the very good reason that it is the only first hand knowledge I have of what makes for health and endurance. When I choose a man for hard work and danger I cannot specify that he will take so much exercise or that he should show me a record of past athletic competence. But I try to be sure what his viewpoint is about taking exercise, and how far he has applied it to his own life.

Not long ago a young man spoke to me about joining an expedition to the Himalayas. I discovered that he did not believe in exercise. His philosophy was somewhat East Indian, in that he thought it far better for a man to sit about and meditate in his leisure time than to rush about in play. Perhaps he was right. But I advised him not to try to climb Mt. Everest with a philosophy like that.

The emotional man has no place on a long hard expedition. No

doubt, if he is a fine strong character, he keeps his emotions under control. But this very keeping them under control tends to weaken him.

For the same reason the emotional man may have been undermining his nervous fabric for years before he ever gets into the field. During the war men who had had clerical and other sedentary jobs showed the most extraordinary sides of their natures when under stress of trench fighting.

I make very little attempt to find out what a man has done that might weaken him in the past. Instinctively he hides any habits about which he is in doubt. However, I definitely try to drag out into the open the things that for years have been building up his resistance to hardship, discomfort and all the other irritations of a voyage into the unknown.

There are several tell-tale items. What kinds of friends a man has and what they think of him helps. The sociable man, good mixer and tolerant enemy is bound to have a large leavening of love of human nature. He is likely to look on the weaknesses of his shipmates with a kindly eye and be the first to condemn any show of weakness on his own part.

On the other hand this business of being a good mixer can be overdone. Vanity is not infrequently at the root of boisterous good fellowship. The vain man takes this means of winning public approbation.