

SCHOOL ATHLETICS.

BY

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

I BELIEVE with all my heart in athletics, in sport, and have always done as much thereof as my limited capacity and my numerous duties would permit; but I believe in bodily vigor chiefly because I believe in the spirit that lies back of it. If a boy cannot go into athletics because he is not physically able to, that does not count in the least against him. He may be just as much of a man in after life as if he could, because it is not physical address but the moral quality behind it which really counts. But if he has the physical ability and keeps out because he is afraid, because he is lazy, because he is a mollicoddlle, then I haven't any use for him. If he has not the right spirit, the spirit which makes him scorn self-indulgence, timidity, and mere ease, that is if he has not the spirit which normally stands at the base of physical hardihood, physical prowess, then that boy does not amount to much, and he is not ordinarily going to amount to much in after life. Of course, there are people with special abilities so great as to outweigh even defects like timidity and laziness, but the man who makes the Republic what it is, if he has not courage, the capacity to show prowess, the desire for hardihood, if he has not the scorn of mere ease, the scorn of pain, the scorn of discomfort (all of them qualities that go to make a man's worth on an eleven or a nine or an eight); if he has not something of that sort in him, then the lack is so great that it must be amply atoned for, more than amply atoned for, in other ways, or his usefulness to the community will be small.

So I believe heartily in physical prowess, in the sports that go to make physical prowess. I believe in them not only because of the amusement and pleasure they bring, but because I think they are useful. Yet I think you had a great deal better never go into them than to go into them with the idea that they are the chief end even of school or college; still more of life. There was an article in one of the *Atlantic Monthly's* which all parents should read, by Lawrence Lowell, on the careers in after life of those who have distinguished themselves as scholars and as athletes in college; and the showing for the athletes was not as good, either, as I had hoped or as I had expected that it would have been. I believe that to have been in athletics is an advantage to a man only if he realizes that even when

From an address at the Prize Day Exercises at Groton School.

he is in college it is not his chief end, and if he realizes that once out of college it cannot be his end at all. It is a mighty good thing to be a halfback on a varsity eleven; but it is a mighty poor thing, when a man reaches the age of forty, only to be able to say that he was once halfback on an eleven. Do not lose the sense of proportion.

Remember that in life, and above all in the very active, practical, workaday life on this continent, the man who wins out must be the man who works. He cannot play all the time. He cannot have play as his principal occupation and win out. Let him play; let him have as good a time as he can have. I have a pity that is akin to contempt for the man who does not have as good a time as he can out of life. But let him work. Let him count in the world. When he comes to the end of his life let him feel he has pulled his weight and a little more. A sound body is good; a sound mind is better; but a strong and clean character is better than either.

SPORTS, PASTIMES, AND PHYSICAL TRAINING.

BY

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THE day is long past since people in general have come to realize the absolute need of physical exercise in order that one may attain the full vigor of manhood. Especially is it the general agreement among students of the race, that each individual, in coming to adult life, must pass through stages of development, corresponding to the gradual development of the race from its earliest form. This view of human growth puts emphasis upon physical training, for it has been through physical struggle of various kinds that the body, and even the mind, have come to their present structure and functions. The cultivation of the body is, then, a necessary antecedent which must accompany, and be basal to, a full development of mind and character. The French philosopher Guyau has reference to this when he says "Sedentary habits are the greatest enemies of the body; the greatest enemy of the mind is inattention. The weaker the body is, the more it commands: the stronger it is, the more it obeys."

Among animals, this training of the body is carried on unconsciously by means of the various sports and plays of each species; but it is not so with the human animal. With the advancement of civilized life, the young generations are being sent to school earlier and kept in school longer, with the result that the natural activity of child life is being materially lessened. We are finding with alarm-

ing rapidity that individuals come to adult life lacking that vigor and bodily control which is every one's right.

And so the solution of the problem came. Gymnasias are springing up all over the country. College, club, or church is incomplete without its physical adjunct. The prospect for the century is brighter, but still the value of training for and by games and gymnastics has not impressed itself upon the great majority. Our national education upon the subject of health training and athletics is haphazard, to say the least. We all should know how necessary a certain amount of systematic exercise is, in order that the mind may be kept clean, the moral tone high, and that this great machine called the human body may be well oiled and in good working order continually.

"The wise for cure on exercise depend.
Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught."

So says Dryden, and Henry Ward Beecher adds, "There are many troubles which you cannot cure by the Bible and the hymn-book, but which you can cure by a good perspiration and a breath of fresh air." Then think over this statement by Dr. Rush, an eminent medical authority:

"Inactivity and supineness have undermined more constitutions than were ever destroyed by excessive labors. Exercise, so far from prejudicing and alienating, strengthens and consolidates the body."

Just now the country is overrun with football. Somewhat too rough it may be, but Oh! the exhilarating effects of a good football game! How strong and healthy one feels throughout the entire season, and through the year as a result of the season. So it is, too, with baseball, hockey, basketball, and all of those games which require strength and endurance, and whose very nature is vigorous activity. In these games, lessons are being learned every day, better than they could be taught in any classroom—I say better, because one learns by example and illustration much more quickly than by precept and exhortation—lessons about the great principles of mutual dependence, co-operation, division of labor, of independent self-activity combined with obedience to certain written laws and to a stricter but unwritten code of honor. And they are a wonderful means of social intercourse as well as social and national unity. Does it not pay to absorb these truths and take them into our very beings? What are a few bruises now and then in comparison?

And yet there are not a few even in our own generation who will object to games and sports on the ground that the boy could spend the time so much more advantageously in other ways. True, we don't want him to play all the time, nor would you have him work all the time. But when he has leisure, let him engage in some vigorous pastime which will bring out his whole nature and tend to make him the all-round man, the ideal of every healthy boy. But do not mistake me. I do not claim that these games will provide every-

thing a boy needs in the line of exercise. There is not a physical director in the country who does not believe in the intrinsic value of sports and games as a pastime. Yet every one of them will add that as the boy grows older, these games must be coupled with some systematic physical exercise to bring out the best there is in him. At a recent national convention of the A. A. A. P. E. the following resolutions were discussed and voted:

"Whereas, we believe that two serious obstacles to the advancement of Physical Education in the United States are:

"(1) The disproportionate promotion of athletic sports precluding devotion of the requisite time and attention to thorough and symmetrical physical development; and

"(2) The too frequent failure of school and college authorities to recognize and encourage such systematic gymnastic training: Therefore, be it

"Resolved, That to this end the Physical Director should have control of both gymnastics and athletics in schools and colleges."

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, in his "Outdoor Papers," says, "We must not ignore the play-impulse in human nature, which, according to Schiller, is the foundation of all art. Meet Nature on the cricket ground or at the regatta; swim with her, ride with her, run with her, and she gladly takes you back once more within the horizon of her magic, and your heart of manhood is born again into more than the fresh happiness of the boy."

But with all this we must remember that the play-life is one small department of our physical nature, and in order to approach our ideal perfect man we insist that systematic physical training must be first and foremost in our minds always.

THE GENTLEMAN IN HIS SPORTS.

BY

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THE rules of a game set the limits of fair play. It is agreed by all concerned to test strength and skill within these rules. If a man makes a home run without touching all four bases, he is declared out and his team given no credit on the score.

This is the ruling whether he skips a base on purpose or by mistake. In addition to these playing rules there are accepted among sportsmen some general laws of conduct, which are matters of tradition, and apply to all sport. During the thousands of years that men have had their sports there has grown up an ideal of conduct, which has

NOTE.—The Eight Great Laws of Sport were formulated for the Moral Education Board Lectures and are copyrighted by Mr. E. M. Fairchild.

strong backing in the sentiments of sportsmen. It is wise for a boy to discover these unwritten laws, else he is in danger of appearing green, and being discredited for conduct unbecoming to sportsmen. If a boy has skill, all acknowledge him an athlete: but if he will not be a sportsman in his games, true sportsmen do not like him, nor take interest in his success. Sometimes they condemn him scathingly.

Athletes are divided into two great groups,—professionals and amateurs. Professionals earn their living by exhibition of their strength and skill. They are in position to give their whole attention and energy to training, and can outclass the amateurs. Amateurs are those who enter games because they love the sport, but having something else that is their business, the money earning thing they do, they can give only leisure time to training.

Let us consider a famous college pitcher at his practice. His college studies are supposed to be his main concern, since they are to prepare him for his life's career. Even before graduation he became professional by signing as a pitcher on salary in a national team. This made his pitching his chief concern, and terminated his career as an amateur. He could no longer take his sport for the love of sport, and keep it something unrelated to his work in life. It was no longer fair that he should pitch for amateurs. In becoming a professional he did not lose his standing as a gentleman and sportsman, but as an athlete he raised himself to a higher class than amateurs.

The laws of sportsmanship are chiefly the concern of amateurs, because they are necessary to make sport universally enjoyable. A single boor among contestants may rob the rest of all their pleasure in the game. They prescribe the personal treatment a man may expect from his opponents. Underneath them are those more general laws governing the conduct of a gentleman. If you are not trying for standing as a gentleman, you can hardly expect to be considered sportsmanlike.

But there are also special laws that govern the conduct of a gentleman while taking part in sports, and these you need to know.

The first great law is this,—“Follow sport for sport's sake.” This means that the win is not the whole of sport. Both the victors and the vanquished are to have the pleasure of a contest. To care too much about the win is very bad form, and impolite. Win if you can, but throughout the game, play for the fun there is in the contest as a whole. A boy who bubbles over with joy when he is winning, and looks sour, half mad, and disheartened when he loses is not yet by any means a sportsman.

Sport for sport's sake means also that you keep within your time for exercise, and play within your strength. A pupil's studies and a lawyer's work must not be interfered with by overtraining and exertion for a game. This would be overdoing sport.

Law 2. “Play the game within the rules, and win or lose with

honor." The true sportsman has a fine sense of honor. The rules are the terms of his agreement with his opponent, and he keeps them by his own choice. He does not care enough about the win to be willing to win by fraud. Nor does he care to play with one who enjoys winning by foul play. When entered in a game with such an one, he plays it through, keeping himself restrained within the laws of sportsmanship. He does not stop to make a scene. Others beside himself can see the fouls and fraud. If he loses the win, he keeps his reputation for skill and sportsmanship, while his opponent has nothing on which to base his brag,—not even self-respect. The true sportsman plays his game with shrewdness, takes every fair advantage, but makes it a matter of personal honor to keep this law of sport.

Law 3. "Be courteous and friendly in your sport." This is a law most boys will find it hard to keep. Take such a case as this: The boys are tossing up the bat for choice of innings in baseball. One claims his hand is last, the other that he can crowd his hand again on top. Here they stand and wrangle. Many a time they end in blows and the disgusting spectacle of a fight. Learn to keep your temper no matter what may happen in a game. A protest can be made with courtesy, and arguments as to what is and what is not within the rules can go on without a show of anger. The one who talks the loudest is not always right, indeed he is likely to be wrong. The one who knows his rules can keep his self-control, and quote them in a courteous manner, or show them in the book.

Before the game is on, and later in all discussion of its points, your treatment of your opponents must be courteous and friendly. If they have not your respect and friendship, it is hardly worth your while to play a game at all.

Law 4. "A sportsman must have courage, a coward is not worthy of the name." In every game there are dangers sometimes serious as in polo, sometimes trifling. The sportsman plays with caution, but he accepts the dangers of the game, and plays it with full courage. The rules are drawn to reduce these dangers within reason, and revised when this is not at first accomplished. Within these rules the game of sportsmen is as hard as they can make it. A sportsman asks no namby-pamby play from his opponent. He intends to earn his laurels, and his courage strengthens in a losing game. It is part of the discipline of sport to keep your nerve. When fear enters the heart of an athlete, his muscles lose their strength. You can see how fear unnerves a boy when he holds his hands to catch his ball, but is afraid lest it sting and pound too hard. He must outgrow fear, and get his nerve, to be a sportsman.

Law 5. "The umpire shall decide the play." An umpire to be satisfactory must be both intelligent and just. Usually in a close decision the umpire is correct against the judgment of any player or any spectator in the crowd. He is close at hand to see. On the whole it is the proper thing to doubt your adverse judgment, and to accept

the umpire's as correct, playing the game without dispute. You can properly call in question some misinterpretation of the rules, and argue on that kind of difference of opinion: but the umpire is sole judge of such a fact as whether a man is out at first or not, and a sportsman does not argue on a point like that.

To make a charge of unfair umpiring merely as an excuse for a losing game is most unsportsmanlike.

When an umpire is manifestly unfair or unreliable, unless your opponents also think this and desire a change, there is nothing left for you to do but to play the game as sportsmen. A partisan umpire is a disgrace to those he favors. Others beside the players can see the fact of his unfairness, and those who win by reason of it have no honor from their game. Before the game, both sides should agree on one as umpire in whom they have perfect confidence. When once the game is on, then play it through on his decisions. These wrangles with the umpire are most unsportsmanlike. The umpire shall decide the play.

Law 6. "Honor for the victors, but no derision for the vanquished."

No sportsman wishes to detract from the joys of victory. Let the thrill of victory go through and through you, but remember to bear your honors like a gentleman, and have consideration for those disappointed by defeat. If your victory is worthy of rejoicing, your opponents were worthy as contestants, and are deserving of continued courtesy. Have your celebration on your home grounds after the vanquished have withdrawn, and if you win on their field, wait until you are out of town before you explode in honor of yourselves. If they win on your field, congratulate them on their game, and see them off with honor and good feeling. This is the fellowship of sportsmen.

Law 7. "The true sportsman is a good loser in his games." Since games are all for sport, one does not wish to make an enemy by winning in a game, and yet each side must play to win, else the game is childish in the extreme. You must not let defeat upset your feeling of personal good will toward your opponents. When you entered on the game, you took the chances of your defeat; now accept the outcome as a sportsman should. Hide your disappointment, and congratulate the men who win. To withhold the honors that belong to them is dishonorable. You must not do that sort of thing. A vanquished sportsman admires the superior skill of his opponents, and loses in a sportsman's way.

Law 8. "True sportsmen may have pride in their success, but not conceit."

A quiet, modest pride in one's success, a consciousness of the rights that honors fairly won bestow on him who wins them, this is entirely proper and reasonable. But conceit and brag are quite intolerable. They show a head that is weak in right good sense, in contrast with one's ability as an athlete. And after all it is brains and heart that

sportsman is made of. His muscles are but the machine he uses, which must not seem to him too seriously important outside the field of sport.

Be an amateur in sport, and keep alive thereby in every fibre of your body, from boyhood to manhood and old age. Your health and spirits will profit by the exercise. And keep the eight great laws of sport.

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