

PRESIDENT SCHURMAN, OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY.

THE game of foot-ball as now played, and the advisability of permitting intercollegiate matches to be played away from college grounds, are matters now receiving a good deal of attention in the newspapers, from which source the people are learning of the magnitude of problems regarding the development of physical training at colleges, which have arisen to perplex and distress the men to whom our youth are entrusted for the purpose of procuring a liberal education. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that educators themselves have not all along been painfully conscious of these problems, or that they have not striven to find wise solutions. They will rejoice that the press has been moved to second their efforts, and in this reinforcement of popular sentiment they will recognize the promise of a satisfactory adjustment of a difficulty with which, unaided, they have not been able to cope. But they have received little new information from the newspapers which have of late given so much attention to foot-ball and other college games. There is scarcely a fact or an argument in all the recent writing on athletics which does not repeat what was said more than two years ago by Professor Wilder, of Cornell University, in a paper since published by the University of the State of New York, in Regents' Bulletin, No. 8, pp. 360-375.

As to foot-ball, if there was truth in Dr. Wilder's strong but judicial condemnation then, it is still less open to question to-day, for the character of the game has steadily deteriorated, as the experts themselves now declare. The "flying wedge" and other modifications of the play, which have lessened the relative importance of running, kicking, and catching, have transformed the game into a contest not merely rough, but dangerous to life and limb, brutal in itself, revolting to look upon, and degrading to the humanity of both participants and beholders. As I understand the matter, however, these conditions are not essential to the playing of foot-ball. And if by a foot-ball convention, or in any other authoritative manner, the game could be rescued from the brutalizing features which have given a shock to our humane sentiments, I should think it entitled to a new trial on its intrinsic merits; and I see much in it (at any rate as it used to be played) which makes me think it would permanently hold a place among the games proper to young men. A rough sport it must always be; but a certain degree of roughness is no bad seasoning for the recreations of those who are conscious of superabundant physical

energy. If, on the other hand, the game cannot be purged of its revolting excrescences, its fate is sealed; and foot-ball contests will be remembered only as survivals, in the midst of civilization, of the outrageous sports of barbarians. Until the effort at reform has failed, however, I shall not believe that foot-ball is in itself a coarse or undesirable form of physical recreation.

Though much has been said of late in regard to the brutal character of foot-ball, the gravamen of the best criticism seems to extend to the general policy of intercollegiate athletics. It is charged that the pitting of the "crews" and "teams" of one college against another is undermining in the students, and also in the public, those intellectual interests for the nourishment and cultivation of which all educational institutions exist. These contests, it is said, pervert the object of the colleges and set up false standards of excellence; they cast down the laurels of scholarship and exalt the trophies of the sporting-ground. Should students who have been sent to college for the training of their intellects and the formation of their characters be permitted to make a gladiatorial spectacle for the mobs of our great cities? Is there no shame in the taking of gate-money? Do not these intercollegiate games foster a predominance of athletic interest which can be traced in the conversation, thought, and reading of the students when in college residence? Nay, is not the college world the scene of a semi-professional athleticism, which engenders betting, condones trickery for the sake of success, and knows no other glory for *Alma Mater* than the pæan of victory on the athletic field?

There is some truth in these implications, but also much error. The work of the college or university goes on noiselessly; it is not exciting enough for the newspaper; and when the athletic doings of a few students—say, from one to five per cent of the entire enrolment—bring the institution into public notice, the accidental circumstance is invested with a significance, and heralded with a fulness of details, altogether out of proportion either to the character of the event or to its place in the life and activity of the institution as a whole. Intercollegiate athletics may appear to be a great business for the colleges because for a day they are the talk of the entire city; but it is not so. Nor do I think that they have led to a general lowering either of the intellectual tone or of the scholarly work of the colleges. On the other hand, I believe that the moral evils which seem to be inseparable from intercollegiate sports in great cities have been less exaggerated than any other objections which have ever been urged against them.

Why do we have these contests? The answer is not far to seek. Rivalry and emulation are the psychological sources of all sports and games; and the play takes on an intensity of interest as these impulses are deeply stirred, not merely at the time, but also in anticipation. By its very nature, therefore, any college game demands for the perfection of enjoyment a second college to play on the other side. Failing this, the game may be played between different classes or departments of the same institution, though with less zest, or with a diminution of that thrilling satisfaction which fills the student's mind and heart on the occasion of a victory over a different institution. It is natural, therefore, that there should be contests between different colleges, but what is natural is not always expedient or right. It would be absurd to attempt to put an end to sports, for they have deep roots in the nature of man—roots which strike even into the soil of animal life. But athletics may be regulated: restrictions may be put both upon the games and upon the players. And the whole question before us resolves itself into this: what kind of regulation should sports to-day receive at the hands of college authorities?

Now I will answer that question by asking another. What duty do teachers owe to students under the terms of the contract which the institution virtually makes with its patrons, its benefactors, and the public? Surely the duty of teaching them during the whole of the college year as officially announced. Is it not then a breach of trust, though a breach more common than the observance, when college authorities permit students to absent themselves from their daily exercises, or remit their daily work, for the sake of engaging in out-of-town contests or exhibitions? Some foot-ball "teams" have been absent from their colleges as much as one-fifth of the entire fall term, in order to play with other organizations. This is certainly wrong. The primary, the inviolable duty of educators is to keep all the students at work in the college during the entire period which has been announced as the college year. Where this is not accepted as the rule, holidays for such contests should be announced in the calendar. I do not assert that to this rule there may not be occasional exceptions. But if so they must be justified as special instances. The presumption is always against students going away from the college to play games during term time, because their sole business in college is to study. The college is not a training-school for racers and players; the degree of B. A. does not mean Bachelor of Athletics.

But what of holidays? If members of different institutions choose

during the summer vacation to measure their strength or skill against one another, I see no great objection. It is a private matter; and as it takes place when students are scattered all over the country, it is free from most of the abuses which have been deplored. It is different, however, with the Thanksgiving recess. And I frankly express my opinion that, if college "teams" are to continue the practice of going to great cities, and drawing thither hundreds—or perhaps, more correctly, thousands—of students, in order to make a "Roman holiday" for the crowd, on the sole condition of the crowd paying gate-money;—a thought so humiliating that I will add nothing concerning the dangers to this goodly company of youth in a strange city,—neighboring institutions of learning may be compelled to consider the advisability of instituting scholastic exercises at Thanksgiving in order to save their students from the influences of so demoralizing a spectacle.

College games, then, are to be conditioned, in the first place, by the fact that the players are students who should not as a rule leave the college during term time.

A second limitation, which will, I think, be deemed fair and manly, is that these contests between students should be regarded as exhibitions *for students*, and not primarily for the public. They are prostituted when they are treated as money-making shows. The proper place for them is the college field; and in cities this should not be given up to the crowd.

Thirdly, not more time should be given to games than is compatible with the demands of study. Training for intercollegiate contests has now reached such a pitch that a foot-ball player, for example, on one of the best "teams," must give the larger part of his time during the season to practice and preparation for the contests. Now one of two things is evident. Either these students are shown favors by the college authorities, or the standard of scholarship required of all members of the institution is absurdly low. What an athlete can study in a small fraction of his time cannot fill up profitably the studious hours of the average undergraduate.

I will say in conclusion that I believe, not in less, but in more of physical training and exercise for students. My ideal is a moderate participation in athletics by large numbers, and not an excessive and unjustifiable devotion on the part of a few. Why, for example, should not hundreds of students of Cornell University be seen every spring term rowing on Lake Cayuga under the instruction of a competent director? I would rather have an endowment for this general

training than for any coaching of experts, however effective it might prove to be. In a few years I suspect the current views on athletics will be looked upon as hallucinations; and we shall all return to the good old watch-words of self-respect, moderation, and the greatest good to the greatest number.

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PRESIDENT ANGELL, OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

IN answer to the inquiries of the Editor of THE FORUM about foot-ball as now played, and games played elsewhere than on college grounds, I would make the following remarks:

Interest in the game has, I think, not yet become so general and so absorbing in the West as it is in the East. But it is rapidly growing, and Western colleges and universities are likely to have to deal soon with the same problems respecting foot-ball as are now embarrassing the Eastern. I regard foot-ball as a valuable athletic game. It calls for and cultivates temperate and regular habits of living, vigor and agility of body, quickness of perception, readiness of resource, manly courage, skill in planning, and subordination of the individual will to coöperation of the team. These are all admirable fruits of good athletic training. Unhappily, as now conducted, the game seems to be attended with too much danger, and tempts players who are not thoroughly disciplined to some unworthy tricks and to occasional "slugging." I believe that it can be relieved of its objectionable features without depriving it of the interest that it now excites, and I hope that it may be. Perhaps this would require a considerable modification of the rules now followed, but if such modification of them furnishes the only relief from the danger and abuses now complained of, it should be cheerfully made.

In my opinion the cases are rare when it would not be better to have the games on college grounds. Many of the undesirable concomitants, which it is not easy to prevent when the game is played in a city of considerable size at a distance from the colleges, would, it is probable, be generally avoided in the college town. Still I am not confident that this would always be true, if the excitement over games should continue to be as great as it now appears to be in the East.

May I add one remark on another matter? A large part of the public and many newspapers are censuring college faculties for not suppressing the evils connected just now with the game. Does it not occur to the public and to the newspapers that the evils are in no