

Old Stuff

By LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT

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ECHOES of the Harvard-Princeton football feud are still rumbling. The latest reverberation is heard in a letter from George Murphy, a former Yale student and son of that famous physical trainer at New Haven known to all college men as "Mike" Murphy. George Murphy's letter is addressed to and printed by Edward Hope, a Princeton graduate, who conducts the always shrewd, often wise, and generally amusing column called "The Lantern" in the New York "Tribune." A Harvard football graduate having publicly attacked Roper, the Princeton football coach, for instilling a spirit of brutal roughness into his players, Edward Hope had wittily risen to his defense, whereupon Murphy continues the debate in the following communication:

Why not let the whole cat out of the bag? So far you have seen nothing but a few of the forward whiskers. Did the Princetons sock the Harvards on the nose, knee them in the ribs, twist their ankles, and pull their hair in the big November games? Certainly.

Did the Harvards do their boyish best to commit similar violence on the Princetons? Beyond reasonable doubt. Would any sincere player . . . pass up a good chance to bash a dangerous opponent? Not if I know the pursuit of the skin of the pig. And I do.

You have no idea of how far the influence of your Mr. Roper has spread over the collegiate United States. Yes, and beyond that. Dirty playing isn't confined to Princeton or to Princeton coached colleges or to colleges at all. Nowadays—and you are a fossil if you don't know it already—unnecessary roughness is the rule everywhere.

Not so many years ago I was a freshman in the school Harvard accepts as its only rival. Being fired with ambition, I went with 300 or so others of my kind to have a go at the freshman football team, and presently, having two rabbits' feet and a horse-shoe concealed in my room, I was given a position on the freshman scrub.

Well, sir, in one afternoon I was awarded one of the prettiest black eyes you ever saw and a whack on the jaw smart enough to put me on a soup diet for several days. I don't mind telling you my faith in clean sport at Yale was shaken.

A week later, having added another rabbit's foot and three more horse-shoes to my collection, I was switched over to the first team. All went beau-

tifully for a couple of days. And then, what do you think? One of my recent teammates of the scrub—my roommate, to be exact—was the direct cause of my breaking my shoulder and riding off for a nice long rest in the infirmary. . . .

That'll give you some idea of conditions. If things like that were going on in freshman practice games, you can imagine what they were doing in the varsity contests for the championship of the newspapers. Nobody has any idea what this man Roper has done.

This is old stuff. My guess is that George Murphy took honors in Greek at Yale and has been reading that fine old Greek wit Lucian. Why Edward Hope, who also doubtless won distinction in Greek under "Andy" West, allowed Murphy to put over on him this bit of literary if not verbal plagiarism is difficult to understand. For Lucian in one of his dialogues gives the same picture of Greek university culture as that so effectively drawn by Murphy, of Yale, as a portrayal of American university culture.

In the dialogue from which George Murphy has so clearly drawn his philosophy of athletics Lucian imagines a conversation between Solon, the famous lawgiver, and a barbarian from Scythia, Anacharsis by name, who had come to Athens seeking to learn the sources of Greek intellectual supremacy. The entire dialogue may be found in the Loeb Library delightfully put into English by Professor Austin Morris Harmon—like George Murphy, a Yale man. I can quote only a fragment:

Anacharsis

And why are your young men doing all this, Solon? Some of them locked in each other's arms, are tripping one another up, while others are choking and twisting each other and groveling together in mud, wallowing like swine. Yet, in the beginning, as soon as they had taken their clothes off, they put oil on themselves and took turns at rubbing each other down very peacefully—I saw it. Since then I do not know what has got into them that they push one another about with lowered heads and butt their foreheads together like rams. . . .

Others, standing upright, themselves covered with dust, are attacking each other with blows and kicks. This one here looks as if he were going to spew out his teeth, unlucky man, his mouth is so full of blood and

sand; he has had a blow on the jaw, as you see. But even the official there does not separate them and break up the fight—I assume from his purple cloak that he is one of the officials; on the contrary, he urges them on and praises the one who struck the blow.

Others in other places are all exerting themselves; they jump up and down as if they were running, but stay in the same place; and they spring high up and kick the air.

I want to know, therefore, what good it can be to do all this, because to me at least the thing looks more like insanity than anything else, and nobody can easily convince me that men who act in that way are not out of their minds.

Solon

It is only natural, Anacharsis, that what they are doing should have that appearance to you, since it is unfamiliar and very much in contrast with Scythian customs. In like manner you yourselves probably have much in your education and training which would appear strange to us Greeks if one of us should look in upon it as you are doing now. But have no fear, my dear sir; it is not insanity, and it is not out of brutality that they strike one another and tumble each other in the mud, or sprinkle each other with dust. The thing has a certain usefulness, not unattended by pleasure, and it gives much strength to their bodies. As a matter of fact, if you stop for some time, as I think you will, in Greece, before long you yourself will be one of the muddy or dusty set; so delightful and at the same time so profitable will the thing seem to you.

Anacharsis

Get out with you, Solon! You Greeks may have those benefits and pleasures. For my part, if one of you should treat me like that, he will find out that we do not carry these daggers at our belts for nothing! But tell me, what name do you give to these performances? What are we to say they are doing?

Solon

The place itself, Anacharsis, we call a gymnasium, and it is consecrated to Lyceian Apollo; you see his statue—the figure leaning against the pillar, with the bow in his left hand; his right arm bent back above his head indicates that the god is resting, as if after long exertion. As for these forms of athletics, that one yonder in the mud is called wrestling, and the men in the dust are wrestling too. When they stand upright and strike one another, we call it the pancratium. We have other such athletic exercises, too—boxing, throwing the discus, and jumping—in all of which we hold contests, and the winner is

considered best in his class and carries off the prizes.

Anacharsis

And these prizes of yours, what are they?

Solon

At the Olympic games, a wreath made of wild olive, at the Isthmian one of pine, and at the Nemean one of parsley, at the Pythian some of the apples sacred to Apollo, and with us at the Panathenæa, the oil from the holy olive. What made you laugh, Anacharsis? Because you think these prizes trivial?

Anacharsis

No, the prizes that you have told of are absolutely imposing, Solon; they may well cause those who have offered them to glory in their munificence and the contestants themselves to be tremendously eager to carry off such guerdons, so that they will go through all these preliminary hardships and risks, getting choked and broken in two by one another, for apples and parsley, as if it were not

possible for any one who wants them to get plenty of apples without any trouble, or to wear a wreath of parsley or of pine without having his face bedaubed with mud or letting himself be kicked in the belly by his opponent! (μήτε πηλῶ καταχρῶμενον τὸ πρόσωπον μήτε λακτιζόμενον εἰς τὴν γαστέρα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνταγωνιστῶν)

Solon

But, my dear fellow, it is not the bare gifts that we have in view! They are merely tokens of the victory and marks to identify the winners. But the reputation that goes with them is worth everything to the victors, and to attain it, even to be kicked, is nothing to men who seek to capture fame through hardships. Without hardships it cannot be acquired; the man who covets it must put up with many unpleasantnesses in the beginning before at last he can expect the profitable and delightful outcome of his exertions.

Anacharsis

By this delightful and profitable outcome, Solon, you mean that every-

body will see them wearing wreaths and will applaud them for their victory after having pitied them a long time beforehand for their hard knocks, and that they will be felicitous to have apples and parsley in compensation for their hardships!

Solon

You are still unacquainted with our ways, I tell you. After a little you will think differently about them, when you go to the games and see that great throng of people gathering to look at such spectacles, and amphitheaters filling that will hold thousands, and the contestants applauded, and the one among them who succeeds in winning counted equal to the gods.

It is pleasant thus to learn that American college football is maintaining the best traditions of Greek culture. But wait a moment! Can it be that both Murphy and Lucian are slyly suggesting that the great defect of university education is the exaggerated emphasis laid on spectacular athletics?

The Chinese Puzzle

Correspondence Based on an Interview with Émile Vandervelde,
Belgian Foreign Minister

By ELBERT FRANCIS BALDWIN

The Outlook's Editor in Europe

YEARS ago, during the Boxer Rebellion, the Empress Dowager and the Chinese Government fled from Peking. Then, as now, China seemed rudderless, in the grip of chaos; certainly there was no central power or authority.

The Powers were dismayed. No Foreign Secretary, save one, dared to move. He was John Hay, our Secretary of State. I asked him:

"What are you going to do?"

"Do?" he replied. "I am going right ahead just as if there were a real Chinese Government with which I could do business. I am going to tackle the best people at Peking I can find. And, with the Powers, I am going to insist on the one possible solution—a guaranty of Chinese territorial integrity. No more grab game."

Alone among Foreign Secretaries Mr. Hay took this stand. Finally, he won them all over to his side.

TO-DAY we find a somewhat parallel case. China sways apparently helpless in the throes of conflict. There are various more or less shadowy Gov-



Underwood & Underwood

Émile Vandervelde
Belgian Foreign Minister

ernments there, a reaction from the over-centralization attempted when the Republic was established.

But with the only Government—that at Peking—with which she has had affairs Belgium, through her Foreign Minister, Émile Vandervelde, proposes, for the first time in history, a new treaty on the basis of *equality*.

Three months ago, as was reported in The Outlook, China denounced the Belgo-Chinese treaty of 1865, with its guaranty of consular jurisdiction under the principle of extra-territorial rights or extraterritoriality—that is to say that, by virtue of this treaty, Belgians were entitled to be tried by their own national authorities. The treaty was unilateral; only Belgium had the right of denunciation. Despite the illegal Chinese action, the Belgian Government announced its willingness to submit the case to a ruling of the Hague Court. China refused, thus violating the protocol she had signed at Geneva, engaging so to submit such questions.

Since then things have gone from bad to worse. In their natural desire for tariff autonomy, the Chinese National-