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OLYMPIAN SPORTS.

MEN OF MUSCLE AS THEY WERE IN ANCIENT GREECE.

Comparisons Between the Bouts of Olden Times and Similar Events of a Later Day.

The oft-quoted phrase of the Latin poet, "Mens sana in corpore sano"—a sound mind in a strong body—expresses tersely the value of physical culture and the interdependence of mental and physical strength. But the value of bodily strength and dexterity, great as it is, has in our day, especially, perhaps, in England, been somewhat exaggerated. Boys have been more anxious to be good oarsmen than good scholars, and to play in the cricket eleven or win the 100-yards race than to be at the head of their class. The undue importance attached to athletic prowess was doubtless the result of a reaction against the almost complete absence of the means of bodily training and exercise in the schools of a century or two ago. But the clear-sighted Greeks in this, as in so many other matters, drew distinctions of which we in later days have somewhat lost sight. Bodily exercises were classified by the Greeks in three groups: Gymnastics, agnastic, and athletic.

Of all the public exhibitions of gymnastic exercises in ancient Greece the Olympic games were by far the most famous, says the San Francisco Chronicle, and an account of them will serve to explain the nature of Greek sports. They were first established in the year 776 B. C., and were not finally discontinued until about 400 A. D. They were held once in every five years at Olympia, a small town in the province of Elis on the western coast of the Morea. Men of distinction termed hellonodikes (judges of the Hellenes or Greeks), clad in purple robes, presided over the games. None but free-born Greeks were allowed



to offer themselves as competitors, and in order that none might be kept away by war or political disturbances a general truce between all the cities of Greece was proclaimed and safe conduct to and from the games insured to all competitors. The first competition was a sprint race of 125 yards, and to this were added from time to time wrestling, discus-throwing, boxing, and chariot-racing. The running track was called a stadium and was a little more than 600 feet in length. The original race was once upon the course, but in time races of double the course were added, and we hear of races twelve, twenty, or twenty-four courses, the last making a distance of about 3,000 yards. There were short races for boys of half a course.

As regards speed it is very doubtful whether the Greeks equaled the performances of modern days. From what has been said of the fleshiness and grossness of athletes and from representations on vases, which show us men running with their arms spread out—to increase their speed, as the German commentators say quaintly enough—we may fairly conjecture that their performances were moderate as regards time. The Greeks had no means of taking the time of races at all accurately, and ran merely to see which competitor came in first, and not to beat records.

Many instances of very long runs are recorded in Greek history, but these are, of course, tests of wind and endurance and not of speed. As the runners wore no clothes it was impossible to distinguish them in any other way than by means of a herald, who proclaimed the name and city of each competitor as he advanced to the starting-post. The races were run in heats of four, and the man who drew a bye was thus often saved a heat. The winner of the final



heat received the prize, there being no second or third premiums. For the wrestling the body was anointed with oil and to counteract the too great slipperiness sprinkled with sand. This was done in a special room of the gymnasium called the konisterium, or sanding-room.

All kinds of feints and tricks were used in wrestling, and many things were permitted which modern rules do not allow. The contest was begun with the

competitors standing upright, but was continued after they were on the ground. A man was not defeated until he had been three times thrown. In the group shown in the cut one of the wrestlers has his leg twisted around the leg of his antagonist, and is forcing his right arm up.

The third event was the throwing of the discus, a piece of iron or stone of circular shape, but of the weight of which we have no accurate means of judging. One specimen of a discus has indeed been found which weighs about four pounds, but we do not know whether it was intended for the use of boys, youths, or men, by each of which three classes of competitors disks of different weight was employed. The attitude of a discus-thrower is very clearly shown in the famous statue, of which a cut is given, and every pose of which is enumerated in a passage of Statius, describing a contest of this kind. The distance to which a discus was thrown is also doubtful, though one author does mention of 100 cubits (150 feet) as a fine one.

Javelin-throwing was performed at first with sharp-pointed spears and was intended as a preparation for actual warfare, but in the latter times pointless spears were used. For throwing at a mark, however, it is probable that light spears with points were employed. Disc-throwing thus tested strength and distance of throw, and javelin-throwing accuracy of aim.

The leaping was probably what we now call the broad or long jump, for mention is made of a certain Phayllus who jumped "beyond the dug ground" (which was turned up with a spade that the point reached by the jumper might be easily seen), clearing a distance of fifty feet. This was probably a standing jump, and as the modern jumper can, with a run, clear only twenty or



WRESTLING ON FOOT. twenty-one feet, it is perfectly incredible. To assist them in standing jumps the Greeks carried in their hands pieces of metal or dumb-bells.

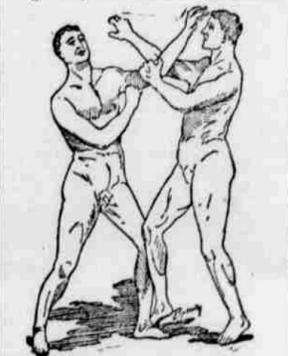
The five enumerated contests formed the Pentathlon or five-fold competition, and the prize, according to one authority, was awarded to him only who had been victorious in all. According to Mr. Mahaffy victory in three contests was sufficient, but it appears that sometimes the running and wrestling were omitted, and it may have been on these occasions that three successes constituted a victory.

The most dangerous sports of all remain to be considered, the boxing and the pancratium. Greek boxers were not content to use the naked fists, but bound their hands and wrists with leather thongs. Later on these thongs, which were termed mild or gentle, were studded with pieces of metal, and then the blows must have been frightful, though intentional killing of one's adversary was not commended. It seems that though great skill, endurance, and courage must have been required for such contests the Greeks did not understand the scientific principles of boxing. We read of a boxer getting up on his toes in order to deal a deadly blow upon the top of his adversary's head, and a boxer was commonly spoken of as a man "with his ears crushed."

A most terrific contest is related by Pausanias. Two boxers of great skill and strength could neither of them get at the other, and therefore agreed to receive a blow turn and turn about. The first struck his adversary full on the top of the head, while the other drove his fingers into his adversary's stomach and pulled out his entrails. The dying man was crowned victor on the ground that the five-fingered blow was a foul one.

The pancratium, or complete combat, was a combination of boxing and wrestling, and those who trained for it were termed pancratiasts. They did not wear thongs upon their hands, for these would have been hindrances in the wrestling, but all tricks of wrestling and boxing, except absolutely illicit ones, were permissible. Biting seems to have been the only means of violence which was not employed, unless we except kicking, which was rendered of no avail by reason of the competitors wearing no shoes.

After the competitors had thrown each other the contest was continued on the ground, and sometimes the combat-



ants were choked or had their fingers or toes broken. The pancratium was the lowest and most brutal of Greek sports and was not in favor with the Spartans, who considered it, as well they might, an ungentlemanlike business.

Of smaller and less violent exercises we may mention ball-playing, which was much recommended by Greek physicians. It was practiced by men, boys, women, and girls in a part of the gymnasium specially reserved for it. The balls varied considerably in size and the rules for the various games were numerous. Bathing was much engaged in by the Greeks, and hot, cold, and vapor baths were attached to the gymnasium. After violent exercise the athletes scraped off the dust and oil with strigils or scrapers of metal or bone. The cut shows an athlete thus engaged. Warm baths were taken in the public or private bath-houses as refreshment after the day's fatigue.

The Olympic victor, in early times at any rate received very substantial rewards. He won a money prize of considerable value and was welcomed back to his native city as a hero and entertained in its town hall by the dignitaries of the state. The great sculptors of the day executed his statue and poets sang his praises in odes which in some instances have become immortal. But in later days public opinion altered very much in this regard. The polished Greek came to value intellectual strength more than physical, and to esteem mental gymnastics more than bodily exercises. The severe training for prize-winning became more and more enacting and tended to usurp an athlete's whole attention, to the exclusion of more liberal culture.

Athletes fell into disrepute in much the same manner as professional runners, boxers, and scullers have done at the present day. The athlete was no match for the polished thrusts of the philosopher's wit, and his heaviness, dullness, and stupidity were a constant target for the comic poet's subtle humor. Another argument against athleticism was the brutalizing tendency of such contests as the pancratium, in which the vanquished competitor was put to the humiliation of suing for mercy at the victor's hands.

Finally we may say that though the pancratiast at any rate was not much above the level of the modern prize-fighter the Greeks contrived, by the combination of literary and musical contests with physical and by the aid of scripture and poetry, to throw around their games an unequalled splendor. The greatest painters and sculptors found their models and the greatest poets their heroes among the competitors at the Olympic games.

PRINCE BISMARCK.

The Literary Tastes of the Man of Blood and Iron.

Although Bismarck is old and becoming less strong, he still finds pleasure in his library, says Edward W. Bok in the Ladies' Home Journal for December. He is a fluent French and German scholar, and although he hates the French people with an intensity that can hardly be emphasized in cold type, he is an admirer of the realistic school of fiction writers. Of these he prefers Zola, but he is as often engrossed in the feuilleton of one of the French dailies as he is with a new book from the master's hands. He has a small and valuable library. That portion of it devoted to political history and statecraft is as valuable as any in Europe. The iron chancellor is quite a connoisseur in books and has added without very much expense at any time to the small library that he began to gather when a student. He is a good Greek and Latin scholar also, and often amuses himself by translating from the original. He is not nearly so voluminous a reader as Mr. Gladstone and is not always looking for a gem or something that will repay the perusal of a stupid chapter. He once explained to a friend that the book most interest him at the beginning or he would have nothing to do with it. He pays little or no attention to English or American literature, and although many of the English and American men of letters have been presented to him, he is not well acquainted with their work. He possesses a well-thumbed copy of Whittier's poems and likes to spend an hour or so occasionally with "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

When some great work has appeared in either England or America and is translated into German Bismarck reads it, but it must be of surpassing interest to engage his attention. Of the English and American magazines and newspapers he knows but little. The various representatives of Germany in Great Britain and the United States send to the German war office translations of everything bearing on German affairs, and these are filed and properly indexed for reference, with copies of the original, but only occasionally does Bismarck feel sufficient interest in them to devote his own time to reading and studying up the subject. He prefers German literature and German music, and he can not be blamed perhaps for not patronizing letters when he is such an ardent believer in statecraft and warfare. He is a profound student of sociology, and a philosopher as well, and one of the rules of his life has been not to undertake what he could not accomplish. He unhesitatingly pleads ignorance of American men of letters, but is always willing to learn.

Humble ugliness does not make a weed, nor does beauty prevent the name from being deserved. An instance in point is cited: The blue ageratum, which is a cherished border flower, but which, transported to Ceylon by an English lady, has there become, in truth, a weed, so rapidly running wild in the island that it now costs over a million and a quarter dollars annually to keep it down in the coffee plantations.

To the small boy who has to wear his father's made-over apparel, life seems one dreary expanse.

The Wind of a Cannon Ball.

Sir Robert Rawlinson, K. C. B., sends us the following striking narrative:

"On the morning of the 10th of June, 1855, I was riding in company with some military officers on their way to the trenches before Sebastopol, and entering the ravine known as 'The Valley of the Shadow of Death,' when in the act of turning round to go back was swept down with my horse by a 42-pound Russian steel shot. The shot passed in front of me, from left to right, cutting the reins out of my left hand and passing through the thin jacket under my right arm. I had in my right hand trousers pocket a small leather purse with a steel rim to it and a little silver in it. This purse bruised the strong cloth of the pocket and my flannel shirt, as also the crest of the pelvis. My own impression was that the shot had struck me full in the abdomen, and that I was cut in two. I fainted and my wound bled copiously, and I was taken to the nearest temporary hospital. Now, as to the wind of this shot. It could have had nothing to do with my wound. As explained, the shot traversed across the abdomen and met with nothing solid but the purse and money in my pocket, and the contact was sufficient to break the strong cloth of the pocket under the purse—not above it—the flannel shirt, and the flesh and bone of the pelvis. And remember, so slight must have been the touch of the shot on my clothes that they were not abraded or marked; the thin summer coat being perforated, but the outer edge not broken. How could the wind perform this feat? The full front force of this shot, if only 1,000 feet per second, would have a striking power of about 40,000 pounds; but, cannoning on me in front, the force or blow might be only equal to a severe blow by a man striking below the belt. If this shot had passed over any more solid portion of the body, as the head or the back, sudden death would have been the result; but as it barely touched the clothes upon the abdomen the effect lessened. At all events, I was severely wounded by a forty-two-pound round shot, and most certainly not by the wind of it; and by reason of the grand surgery of the late Sir James Ferguson I am now alive to tell the tale.

A medical correspondent quotes Prof. Sir T. Lennox upon the matter thus: The true explanation of the appearances presented in those cases which were formerly called 'wind contusions' appears to rest in the peculiar direction or degree of obliquity with which the missile has happened to impinge against the yielding and elastic skin, together with the position of the internal organs injured between this missile and other hard substances in their neighborhood. The surface itself is not directly torn or cut into, because the impact of the projectile has not been sufficiently direct to effect an opening; but the parts beneath are crushed by the pressure to which they have been subjected between the combined influence of the weight and momentum of the shot on one side and of some hard resisting substance on the other.—Pall Mall Gazette.

The Beauties of Andalusia.

As regards her statue and mold, the Andalusian girl is almost invariably a petite brunette, and although not all are plump, and many are too stout, the majority have exquisitely symmetrical tapering limbs, well-developed busts (flat-chested women are almost unknown in Spain), and the most dainty and refined hands and feet. Regarding these feet Gautier makes the most astounding assertion, that "without any poetic exaggeration it would be easy here in Seville to find women whose feet an infant might hold in its hands. A French girl of 7 or 8 could not wear the shoes of an Andalusian of 20." I am glad to attest that, if the feet of Sevillian women really were so monstrously small fifty years ago, they are so no longer. It is discouraging to see a man like Gautier fall into the vulgar error of fancying that, because a small foot is a thing of beauty, therefore the smaller the foot the more beautiful it must be. Beauty of feet, hands, and waists is a matter of proportion, not of absolute size, and too small feet, hands, and waists are not beautiful, but ugly. We might as well argue that, since a man's foot ought to be larger than a woman's therefore the larger his foot the more he has of manly beauty. If Andalusian women really had feet so small that a baby might hold them in its hands, they would not be able to walk at all, or, at least, not gracefully. But it is precisely their graceful gait and carriage for which they are most famed and admired. All Spanish women are graceful as compared with the women of other nations, and this is probably the reason that, although regular facial beauty is perhaps commoner in Madrid than in Seville, I found that you can not pay a greater compliment to a girl in Northern Spain than by asking her if she is an Andalusian. It would be useless to seek among the land animals for a gait comparable to that of the women of Seville, Cadiz, Malaga, and Granada; and when you compare it to the motion of a swan on the water, a fish in the water, a bird in the air, it is the birds and the fishes that must feel complimented.—Henry T. Finck in Scribner.

"My lad," remarked Judge Spencer to the little boy who had just taken the witness stand, "do you understand the nature of an oath?" "Yes, sir; I was in pap's office yesterday when his coal bill was presented." "Mr. Clerk, enroll the witness."—St. Joseph News.

THE HAIR AND THE NAILS.

The Styles in England—The French and the English Way of Trimming the Nails.

The style of wearing all the hair on top of the head is dying out. Many fashionable women are wearing their hair in a loose knot, low on the neck. This is a revival of the style of hair-dressing of ten years ago. Mrs. Langry introduced it and made it popular. The

THE LANGRY KNOT. fashion lasted three years; but it is doubtful whether it will last three years this time. Hairdressers prophesy that it won't last one. The "Langry knot" is worn to advantage by young women with shapely heads, pretty hair, and plenty of it. A bunch of bright hair looks pretty enough beneath the big, fashionable, romantic looking hats. Lady Claud Hamilton always wears her hair low on her neck in a loose knot. But her hairdresser says she has a lot of lovely hair and a perfectly hopped head. A small quantity of hair never looks so meagre or miserable as when it is twisted up into a button and worn under a large hat. Middle aged women with none too much hair can set off what little they have best by wearing it on top. Loops and bows and rolls of artificial hair can be cunningly arranged among the real hair, and worn with a sense of security on top of the head. THE GRECIAN KNOT. The sketches were made at Mrs. Carmichael's, the hairdresser and manicure of Conduit street. The "Grecian" knot is founded on Mary Anderson's style of hairdressing, but is softer, prettier, and more elaborate. The half of the hair nearest the head has to be curled, the other half is left straight and twisted into a ring, and artificial curls are stuck in the middle. A fluffy fringe is worn in front. Fringes are as popular as ever.

The artist has sketched a couple of the nails of the period. One in the English style, the other the French. The rounded nail is English, the pointed one French. These two styles are admirably symmetrical of the style and conversation of the wearer. The English woman is rounded and pleasant; the French woman remarkably pointed. The proper length of the little finger nail in the pointed style is about a quarter of an inch.—Pall Mall Gazette.

JEFF DAVIS' REMARKABLE MEMORY. Jefferson Davis had a memory for faces and names that has probably never been excelled by that of any public man in the United States. It has been said of Gen. Sherman that when he meets a man who was introduced to him twenty years previously he will recall his name and the circumstances of the introduction, and will talk over the incidents of their first meeting. Both Grant and Lee possessed to a great degree the same faculty of remembrance, but neither Sherman, nor Grant, nor Lee could do what Mr. Davis did. At his office in Richmond, as President of the Southern Confederacy, and in his visits to the front of the army, he treasured up in his memory the names of every officer and soldier with whom he came into contact, and he never forgot them. While he was at his beautiful plantation last winter there came to him a worn-out and broken-down man who made a claim on his charity as having been a Lieutenant in a certain Mississippi regiment. Davis taxed his memory a moment, and then told the applicant that he was a fraud, and that a man bearing an entirely different name was the Lieutenant of the company which the applicant had specified. The beggar made a quick exit from the house, and was never seen around it again.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

THE WEIGHT OF DROPS. Boymond has lately published an interesting article on the weight of drops. It is well known that the weight depends upon the exterior diameter of the dropping tube, the interior diameter having no influence except upon the velocity of the flow. The nature of the liquid determines the weight, whatever may be the proportion of the dissolved material it may contain. Boymond used a dropper of one-eighth of an inch in diameter and determined the weight by a very delicate balance. The mean of his results gave: For 15 grains of distilled water, 29 drops; alcohol of 60 degrees, 52 drops; alcoholic tinctures from 60 to 90 degrees, 53 to 61 drops; ethereal tincture, 82 drops; fatty oils, about 48 drops; volatile oils, 59 drops, aqueous solutions, whether diluted or saturated, 20 drops; wine, 33 to 35 drops, and laudanum, about 33 to 35 drops.

BUNYAN'S BOOK. The "Pilgrim's Progress" has been translated into Amharic, the language of Abyssinia. The book has now been translated into eighty-four languages.