

fast and how to do the best thing for the good of all, given a situation, as will usually come up in the course of a game.

In spite of all the good which sports are doing for the country and the people, there is still one thing which the public only can undo for itself. This is over-recognition of the one-man sports and placement of too little

emphasis on the team sports. Individual glory is too much recognized in China today. Not that this is not good, but the public pays so much attention to the one-man game, as in swimming, tennis, or other individual sports, that it forgets the sports which require the co-ordination and cooperation of six, nine or eleven men or women to make a winner.

The Other Side Of The Question

By LIN YU (林鹵)

TIME was—and it was not so very long ago—when our beauties used to sing, with a bit of pride perhaps, of their worries and ailments, and actually “little pale face” (小白臉) is a phrase used to describe beaux in old China. This phrase has survived till 1935, though today our conception of the attributes of an ideal young man has changed much. Perhaps the pendulum has swung to the extreme and many of our boys and girls are paying so much attention to athletics that they forget that their primary purpose in school, barring the school of physical training, is to study. Hence, let us consider the other side of the question.

Let it be understood at once that I am not proposing that we go back to the good old ways. I have no quarrel whatsoever with the present trend stressing the physical culture of our manhood and womanhood. However, there is always the danger of going to the extreme, and the method which the different schools, colleges and universities employ in picking and training their athletic teams always appears questionable to my mind. Moreover, there is the publicity connected with athletics that may be called to question. Let us take up these questions one by one.

It may be true that a sound mind resides in a sound body, but to have a sound body one does not have to go the length of training oneself to win honors for his school. In fact, one seldom meets a good athlete who at the same time has a good scholastic record. There may occasionally be such a one or a good scholar who also excels in one of the different varieties of sports, but an all-round sportsman who has also high scholastic accomplishments is as rare as an Edison or a Marconi. The question arises then: are we to raise up fine sportsman or fine scholars?

The argument may be advanced that while our scholars may run the government and work out rehabilitation plans, it yet remains for the soldiers to run out the reds and bandits first, before these plans may be put to work. Shall we then not train up soldiers for our immediate need? And what is true internally within our country is equally true in our international relations. We need today perhaps more soldiers to defend the country than poets whose pen is no longer mightier than the sword, or diplomats whose kid-gloves are no match for steel gauntlets. There is, I am ready to admit, truth in such an argument, but does physical prowess always mean the pluck to fight in a life-and-death encounter? Besides, war needs anything but sportsmanship. That sportsmanship is still found among soldiers belonging to different camps need not blind us to the fact that sportsmanship is absolutely lacking in the high com-

mands of either side, which no amount of sportsmanship among the soldiers can help to improve. Moreover, mechanical and chemical “progress” is fast eliminating the physical strength of the soldiers as a decisive factor in a battle, though occasion may still arise wherein soldiers with greater physical endurance may win the battle in the proverbial last five minutes.

Next, we will consider the methods employed by many, if not all, of our colleges and universities to train up athletic teams. Let us consider first the motive behind the training of athletes. A few years ago when I inquired about the impression of our compatriots in the South Seas concerning one university which claims to have a special mission in educating the sons of our overseas, this was the reply I got: “Oh yes, the impression was good, because it had just sent a football team to the South on a goodwill trip.” Now, I am not suggesting that our universities are consciously doing that, but the danger is there nevertheless. Nearly two decades ago, several universities in Shanghai, my *alma mater* included, in one way or other, paid for some of the athletes who were to win honors for these universities. Whether the condition has grown worse or better, I am in no position to tell. I can only hope for the better.

Leaving the “paid” athletes alone, we still have the question of the teams. It is, of course, impossible for whole schools to go into athletic contests and games, such as football, baseball, etc., hence the various teams. Because of the “reputation” involved, the school authorities always pay the greatest attention to the care of the team, even to the neglect of the physical education of the average students. And this is what I am opposed to, not without reason, I hope.

Under the present system, by far the greater part of the money that the school authorities spend for athletics is spent on the teams, and the physical education of the average students is poorly taken care of, though the schools usually charge the students an equal amount for the purpose. This is most unfair. However, let us pass over this point.

Considered purely from the standpoint of physical education, the selection and training of the teams for inter-school meets, benefits only the team members and those who aspire to become one of them. The result is that the winning or losing teams may or may not represent the actual physical well-being of the student bodies they are supposed to represent. Now, it does not take one more than five minutes straight thinking to realize that if

physical education is to do China any good, it is not by producing a few football, tennis, or swimming stars, but by giving the average man such training as will give him a well-developed body. This, however, our school athletics fails to give us.

So long as our school athletics remain what they are, just so long this defect cannot be remedied. How, then, shall we improve the situation? Obviously not by abolishing the inter-school meets altogether, for it can't be done, and even if it could be done, we would be in danger of relapsing into do-nothingism. The remedy would lie rather in the revision of the basis of competition so that the average student will figure as the decisive factor in winning or losing the honor of his school. Professor Ross has devised a scheme for this purpose, but as I have practically forgotten it and the book is not on hand, it is impossible for me to introduce it here. However, any one who is interested in it, may consult his "Principles of Sociology" (I am not sure if it could be found in the revised and more compact "Outline of Sociology").

There remains the last question—publicity. The employment of publicity to encourage sports is a sword that cuts both ways. It makes the reading public "athletic-minded," if I may coin such a word, it inculcates a sense of the importance of sports in the mind of the public, and it lures many ambitious boys and girls to train hard in order to climb to the position of a star athlete. The results from this are questionable, though some good may be done to a limited number of people.

There are, however, a number of undesirable effects on both the public and the individual athletes. It may easily mislead the youthful mind concerning the importance of athletics in the scale of value in one's life. Publicity may also lead another class of people, whose sense of distinction between reality and its reflection is never too keen, into believing that taking an active interest in the news about sports is equivalent to taking active interest in the sports. It may make them spend their time in reading the sports news instead of taking exercises themselves.

Finally there is the evil effect of popularity on the athletes themselves. A great athlete may be truly great and deserve all the publicity that he or she enjoys, but the publicity that borders on idolatry is something to be deplored. It turns the athlete's head, it detracts the public attention from the interest in sports and centers it upon the personality of the idol. He or she may even become a necessary part of any athletic meet of importance as orange blossom is to a bride's veil, although the relation between the two is in both cases something purely decorative in nature. But what is worse, to become a decoration in some athletic meet takes time, and takes the time that he or she ought to spend for training, with results that can be easily predicted.

As I said at the beginning I am not against athletics and the above criticisms are offered with the hope that public attention may be directed to these unhealthy practices. If some discussion of the problems stated herein follows, the aim of writing this article will be more than fulfilled.

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