

ungracious and unintelligent lack of readiness to accept their offers of fellowship in the service of freedom. And if these are the premises, the reasoning from them is no better. "You are too much given to athletics; you hunt and shoot too much; therefore you are beaten by the Boers, whose only qualifications for war are that they are good shots and horsemen." Also we shoot at rabbits and cock-pheasants, but must not expect the rabbit or the cock to repel an invasion. Apparently targets would do so, if we had shot at them instead. This opinion is, at any rate, unique. So, we fancy, is the belief that in physique our troops at the front are "striplings" compared with the millions of "strong men" who cheered them off. So, we hope, is the view that, when looked at from the true—that is, the military—standpoint, all the elements and objects of civil life are contemptible: schools, prayers and preaching, print and the ballot, trades unions and public speeches, Parliaments and municipalities—all these, if we understand our prophet rightly, come under the tail of his lash. But the thick of it, no doubt, falls upon our sports and pastimes; pursuits which are in themselves entirely undeserving of such castigation, and which are denounced here at the moment when their true value is being more and more appreciated on the Continent.

Such, we believe, was the impression of nine men out of ten upon a first reading. The opposite view was taken by a remnant only: those to whom games are less congenial, or the memories of their youth less near; those who resent a popularity in which they are unable to gain a share; those who have long given their energies to that other kind of holiday task which Mr. Kipling now urges upon us all: and some who had already seen for themselves the dangerous tendency of athletic mania. To these, no doubt, there have been added many who have read the charge a second time and found the sting of it less painful as they perceived it to be more deserved. For, after the first natural indignation is past, no reasonable man will claim an acquittal because most of the counts against him are struck out, while a verdict of "guilty" is returned on