

opinion exists only with respect to the competitive games and sports which have grown up out of the newly awakened interest in physical prowess.

Athletics are distinguished from gymnastics, first, by specialization, or an attempt to reach the highest attainable point of efficiency in a given time. Secondly, by excess of exercise performed under the stimulus of competition. In the competition for championship honors and in the preparatory training vital force is not created but consumed, and it is very questionable whether or not the young man is as healthful and as powerful during the remaining years of his life. This is a danger that must be guarded against, and especially so by those whose physical frames are not fully developed. From those physical contests which result merely in the consumption at the time of current physical force which would or might be devoted to study, the danger is not nearly so great. And yet in all our universities there are young men competing for honours in football, &c., to the neglect of study whose circumstances and means and views and plans of life are such that they cannot afford to treat their educational privileges in this way.

LITERATURE.

ROMAN CULTURE IN THE PERIOD OF THE REPUBLIC.

THE period from the capture of Corinth to the establishment of the empire is one of the most memorable in the history of human culture. With almost magical rapidity, Italy overflowed her frontiers and became a world-power. There springs up a period of intellectual ferment and extended dominion externally, accompanied by profound internal disorder and deep demoralization, in its essential character completely analogous to that which in Greece followed the Peloponnesian War and preceded the Macedonian conquest.

In proportion as Italy adopted Greek culture did she lose moral force. Long had the stern Roman nature resisted the witchery of Greece, but at last she succumbed.

Increase of knowledge made the Romans eager for the more refined enjoyments of life and the rapid growth of wealth gave them the possibility of indulging their new found tastes. But as that wealth alone benefits that has been won by labor, alike in the case of Rome as in that of Athens, her easily acquired riches proved her ruin. Demoralization and corruption came in with the plunder of the world and undermined her power.

What do we mean by saying that demoralization first affected the Romans in the hour of extended dominion? We mean this: Every people has a national character peculiar to itself—the sum of all

its moral qualities. Of these qualities some are good, some bad. There is no people without both. It is the different proportion in which both are blended that constitutes the varieties we see in national character.

Deterioration sets in when the balance between these national qualities is disturbed, and not by the introduction of any new qualities. As is well known, every virtue has its opposite vice, both being the extreme of the same moral quality, as faith has its opposite in superstition, use its opposite in abuse. Now this displacement of national qualities is the work of corruption or demoralization.

This demoralization is seen in the Roman character by the disappearance of those qualities that made it originally strong and masterful.

With the influx of foreign wealth vanished the love of toil. Avarice and luxury took the place of economy and the early Roman simplicity. Justice and honor and chastity vanished, and sensuality held sway. It is true that from the earliest times certain forms of Venus worship were not unknown to the Romans, and especially on the occasion of the great national feasts of the Lupercalia and the Floraba did license reign. Still Venus and Priapus were not worshipped as divinities in the time of the kingly rule. License grew only with the growth of power and wealth. It was the conquest of Greece that broke down utterly the Roman character. In the overthrow of Greece, Rome had an easy task. Her stern legionaries soon learnt the most refined luxury and the most heartless caprice.

In the midst of the general public wretchedness the wealthier Greeks revelled in the most wanton delight and horrible vices. Corinth rather than Athens was the centre of Greek civilization and the Helairae gave the tone to this society. The result of such contact between barbarism and luxury was natural and disastrous. With Greek culture came in Greek corruption. Roman licentiousness soon surpassed that of Corinth. Physical energy deteriorated. Agriculture lost in public esteem and became the occupation of slaves. To become rapidly rich, offices were sought. Consuls, pretors and generals plundered the provinces under their care. Three years at the longest was their term of office, there was, therefore, need of hurry. To all magistrates in Rome and the provinces everything sacred was matter of sale and purchase.

Italy, and especially Sicily, was full of slaves, who as prizes of war were, notwithstanding the high birth and education of many of them, compelled to serve in the chain gangs.

More thoroughly corrupt than the magistrates and nobility were the intermediate order of the state—the equestrian order or gentry. Trade was no degradation to them as to the nobility. They were the merchants, forwarders, bankers and tax farmers