

The main object of school and college is the same—to establish character, and to make that character more efficient through knowledge; to make moral character more efficient through mental discipline. In the transition from school to college, continuity of the best influence, mental and moral, is the thing most needful. Oddly enough, the only continuity worthy of the name is often (in its outward aspects) neither mental nor moral, but athletic. An athlete is watched at school as an athlete, enters college as an athlete; and if he is a good athlete, and if he takes decent care of his body, he continues his college course as an athlete—with new experiences, it is true, but always with the thread of continuity fairly visible, and with the relation of training to success clearly in view. Palpably bad as the management of college athletics has been and is, misleading as the predominance of athletics in an institution of learning may be, the fact remains that in athletics lies a saving power, and that for many a boy no better bridge of the gap between school and college has yet been found than the bridge afforded by athletics. The Freshman athlete, left to himself, is likely to fall behind in his studies; but unless he is singularly unreasonable or vicious, he is where an older student of clear head and strong will can keep him straight—can at least save him from those deplorable falls that, to a greater or less degree, bruise and taint a whole life. "The trouble will begin," said a wise man, talking to sub Freshmen, "in the first fortnight. Some evening you will be with a lot of friends in somebody's room, when something is proposed that you know isn't just right. Stop it if you can; if not, go home and go to bed, and in the morning you will be glad

you didn't stay." The first danger in the transition from boyhood to manhood is the danger in what is called "knowing life." It is so easy to let mere vulgar curiosity pose as the search for truth. A Senior, who had been in a fight at a public dance, said in defence of himself: "I think I have led a pretty clean life in these four years; but I believe that going among all sorts of people and knowing them is the best thing college life can give us." The old poet knew better:

"Let no man say there, 'Virtue's flinty wall
Shall lock vice in me; I'll do none but
know all.'

Men are sponges, which, to pour out, receive;

Who know false play, rather than lose, deceive;

For in best understandings sin began,
Angels sinned first, then devils, and then
man."

Here comes in to advantage the ambition of the athlete. Football begins with or before the college year. Training for football means early hours, clean life, constant occupation for body and mind. Breach of training means ostracism. That this game tides many a Freshman over a great danger, by keeping him healthily occupied, I have come firmly to believe. It supplies what President Eliot calls "a new and effective motive for resisting all sins which weaken or corrupt the body;" if appeals to ambition and to self-restraint; it gives to crude youth a task in which crude youth can attain finish and skill, can feel the power that comes of surmounting tremendous obstacles and of recognition for surmounting them; moreover, like war, it affords an outlet for the reckless courage of young manhood—the same reckless courage that in idle days drives young men headlong into vice.

Has not hard study, also, a saving power? Yes, for some boys; but