

Physical Education at the University of Pennsylvania—from 1904 to 1931— and the Gates Plan

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I N October, 1904, the new Gymnasium, "Weightman Hall," and the stands about Franklin Field to accommodate 19,000 people were complete; and Physical Education was admitted to all the rights, privileges, and penalties of the Academic Family.

The old department had struggled on with limited powers and still more limited accommodation, and had done good work under a series of part-time directors; but the time had come to make a new start.

The new director was given a full professorship on the Medical faculty and executive rank, with seat on all the Faculties ex-officio.

The Board of Trustees passed a resolution requiring all undergraduates to undergo a medical examination on entrance, and to take a minimum of two periods of exercise a week under the direction of the department for all four years with credits and penalties the same as in all academic subjects—a radical policy then and even now.

At the formal dedication of the Building in December, 1904, the Director concluded his address by saying:

"The policy of the department may thus be said to contain something of the hospital clinic, a great deal of the class room and laboratory, and a little of the arena."

The first tasks of the department were the medical examination of the students, the equipping of the Building, the starting of classes, the exploration of the University by attending faculty meetings, speaking at student gatherings, alumni and class reunions, and watching with interest the "May Day Celebration" in which the three most unpopular professors were burned in effigy, little realizing that one day he was also to suffer this vicarious martyrdom at the hands of the indignant and rebellious proletariat.

The starting of gymnastic classes in February, 1905, soon gave a chance for an exhibition, and this was followed by an outdoor show in April on Franklin Field demonstrating class gymnastics and class boxing and wrestling, while fencing was brought to the attention of its friends by talks on armor and swords with bouts illustrating the use of various weapons; and swimming by demonstrations of life-