

one or two not less serious ones. And it is the nature of our countrymen not to nourish resentment or remorse for their faults when convicted of them, but to turn resolutely to the work of amendment.

Have we then deserved this judgment, or are we in danger of it? Have we learned, or are we learning, to boast without foresight, to take pride in domination rather than in service? Is our energy lost in the pursuit of frivolous distraction? Are we both stupid and idle: eager to witness or bet upon games but not to play them? It is not seriously against those at the wickets or the goals that the woes are denounced, but against a nation capable in the time of danger of contenting its soul with toys: are we given to this strong delusion, unwilling to sacrifice trade or ease or amusement for the safety of the life our fathers kept with the hand of the strong man armed?

It is no light matter to be called upon to plead to an indictment such as this, and no wonder that we have fallen for a moment into confusion and recrimination. We remember with a new and deadly fear those reports of football fields, where crowds of twenty and thirty thousand men watched a game in which their interest was chiefly that of the gambler and partly that of the savage and unintelligent local partisan; where the principal players on both sides were hired gladiators, and the umpire's life was in peril from a disappointed mob. We remember certain stories of the population of mining districts, much given to cock-fighting, whippet-racing, and other "sports," clamouring like one man for war, and refusing like one man to offer themselves when the time of need came. We think of certain great halls where suburban idiots gathered lately to applaud a miniature form of an inferior game. We think of certain "men about town," rich, strong, and unemployed, who have spent these two years past in reading the papers and are still "men about town." And we remember that a serious hard-working volunteer is a thing to be snubbed by the organisers of Colenso and despised by every semi-