

Good news from Basle.

The cordial tone which seems to have prevailed throughout the meeting of the 1914 sub-committee which assembled at Basle on wednesday and thursday the 27th and 28th, of March 1912 cannot fail to have far-reaching effects.

This meeting brought together not only the elements upon which the Olympic movement has always been able to count for support, but also those which in the past were, if not actually hostile, exceedingly unsympathetic. And as the change of attitude which was noticeable on this occasion is a fact to be chronicled with genuine pleasure, it is not the slightest exaggeration to say that Basle meeting was an epoch-marking event in the history of the Olympic movement.

The American proposal, submitted by Professor W. M. Sloane, respecting the representation of the National Olympic Committees during the Paris Congress of 1914, which was fully discussed and most carefully examined, was unanimously accepted. Concerning the details of this proposal, which dealt minutely with the number and nomination of delegates amongst other things, nothing can be known at present, as the matter must be referred to the International Olympic Committee for final acceptance before publication; but the importance and value of the proposal is vouched for by the reputation of its sponsor. Professor Sloane's influence in the United States is very great, and he is acting with the complete agreement of Messrs. Allison V. Annour and Evert J. Wendell, his two compatriot colleagues on the International Olympic Committee, and with the full approval and support of the American Olympic Committee, which is a very powerful body, full of vitality and entirely devoted to the Olympic work.

This matter settled, the Committee discussed the most important question of the establishment of a standard Olympic programme, by which all future Olympiads should be regulated.

The general conditions under which the Games take place were examined, and then the question of the establishment of a standard, on the lines suggested by the Rev. de Courcy Laffan. The difficulties in the way of such a task as the drafting of a standard programme may well be imagined — indeed, they seem to be almost insurmountable — for there are so many people to please, and so many absolutely justifiable susceptibilities to be respected, that only a man of unusual tact and knowledge could possibly steer the happy mean course and evolve anything which would be acceptable to all alike. Happily, the Rev. de Courcy Laffan is such a man : his profound knowledge of sports in general enables him to speak with the voice of authority. And the fact that, with Lord Desborough, he brought the London Olympiad of 1908 to a successful close, is proof positive that he possesses more than the common share of tact.

The duty — a by no means light one — of preparing a report of the proceedings to be presented to the International Olympic Committee at Stockholm was delegated to Baron von Venningen, who enjoys the well-deserved reputation of being one of Germany's foremost all-round athletes. What the results will be, when this report is submitted to the International Olympic Committee, may be foreseen. Very important decisions will no doubt be arrived at, which will influence the trend of all the future Olympiads and Congresses; and the consequences will probably be such as to justify most fully the assertion that the Basle meeting will rank as an epoch-marking event in the annals of the Olympic movement.

The three countries which form the foundation of the Olympic movement were undoubtedly represented very strongly. England, with its old traditions is the acknowledged cradle of sports, and it was represented by the scheme prepared by the Rev. de Courcy Laffan; the United States, with its enthusiasm and independence, was represented by the proposal of Professor Sloane; and Germany, with its status on the Continent, was represented by the choice of Baron von Venningen to prepare the report which is to be presented to the International Olympic Committee at Stockholm. These three countries have, admittedly, done more than any others to further the Olympic movement, to which it is no longer sufficient to refer as the Olympic Games, and from this combination it is justifiable to hope much; and the invitation to be present at certain of the meetings which was extended to the Presidents of the French,

Belgian, and Austrian Olympic Committees is not without significance. It shows that the International Olympic Committee is desirous of obtaining views, opinions, and information from all quarters and from all sources — from those who were once opponents as well as from those who have always been staunch supporters.

Again the harmonious tone of the meetings calls for a word. Nothing that could have happened would have been more welcome; and the signs that differences are disappearing, that the sword — for in some cases it was almost war — is being sheathed, are most encouraging to all those who have the furtherance of the true aim of the Olympic movement at heart.

Let peace and progress remain the keynote of the future meetings : for only then can the fullest amount of good derivable from the Olympic movement be fully enjoyed. How true this conviction is, will be proved by the rally of British and American athletes which will be present at the Olympiad of 1916 — should it, as seems very probable, be held in Berlin.

There is an old saying to the effect that the strength of a tree must be judged by the depth of its roots rather than by the length or height of its branches, which is specially applicable to the growth of the movement during the years since that memorable day on which the re-establishment of the Olympic Games was formally proclaimed at the Sorbonne, in Paris.

When that meeting took place on the 23rd. of June, 1894, much work had been done already, although up to then it had made little if any show. If I may retain the metaphor of the tree — which seems to be so applicable — the ground had been well dug and dressed, but the excellent seed which had been sown had scarcely begun to stir in the earth. Nevertheless, the prophetic eye of the originators of the movement had already foreseen what manner of plant would ultimately arise, and every effort was then concentrated towards the realisation of the ideal at which they aimed, as it has been ever since; yet, greatly daring to hazard a conviction, I venture the opinion that not even the author of the idea foresaw the dimensions to which the little seed he planted a score of years ago would grow, but I am equally convinced that his ideal has remained unchanged. All that has altered is, that the scale of his ideas had to be changed, in order to cope with the unexpected demands which the wonderful extension of the movement has created. The seed was planted in a pot; but it has been found necessary to transplant the fast-growing sapling into the open ground, in order

that its far-reaching roots might push into every corner of the earth — unstopped by mountain ranges, wide rivers, or even by the ocean itself.



Éducatons de Princes.

Il semble que la doctrine de l'héréditarisme Ou de l'atavisme obligatoire ait enfin un peu de plomb dans l'aile. Elle devenait sinistrement encombrante. On s'en servait pour excuser et gracier les pires criminels. Pauvres gens ! Dégénérescence alcoolique, défauts et vices hérités inconsciemment; ils n'étaient nullement responsables de leurs méfaits... Il fallait les traiter avec commisération; pour un peu la Société eut été priée de les entourer de bien-être afin de compenser l'injustice de leur indignité native. De telles théories assurément présentaient un grand danger; même reposant sur des faits exacts, elles auraient eu pour résultat certain de distendre tous les rouages sociaux, d'énerver toutes les organisations collectives et de mener au triomphe du plus affreux individualisme sans frein ni lois. Mais il leur manquait en plus un fondement quelconque de certitude et de vérité. On avait tout bonnement, et non sans naïveté, transporté du domaine physiologique dans le domaine psychologique une vérité que l'humanité a eu le loisir d'observer 'depuis des centaines de siècles sans avoir l'idée d'y chercher une atténuation de la responsabilité. Il est entendu que certaines formes de nez, de mentons ou de crânes, que certaines particularités corporelles, que certaines attitudes et certains gestes se reproduisent dans les familles et même parfois avec une inlassable persistance. Mais c'est que nous ne connaissons point — y parviendrons-nous jamais ? — les lois qui président à la formation des nez, des mentons et des crânes ce qui nous a toujours privés du moyen d'influencer ladite formation. Il n'en va pas de même en ce qui concerne la mentalité, le caractère, l'orientation morale et sociale de l'individu. Certes la pédagogie en est difficile et il n'est bruit que de ses échecs. Combien de parents se lamentent de n'avoir pu « orienter » leurs enfants du côté qu'ils eussent souhaité. Mais sont-ils surs de s'y être toujours pris comme il fallait ?