

Pax Olimpica.

On the eve of the opening of the Fifth Olympiad, it seems to be mete and right that the importance of the occasion should once more be emphasised, and that the true significance of the Olympic Games should be brought into prominence as much as possible, in order that their sphere of influence may be extended to the greatest possible extent. Already these great meetings, which, though purely sporting events on the surface, are in reality far more than this, being powerful agents in the cause of mental and moral progress, as well as of physical discipline, have assumed an importance which places them in a category all to themselves — apart from all other sporting meetings; and there is no logical reason to prevent the modern Olympiads from playing in the world of to-day the same part as their famous classical prototypes played in ancient times in Greece.

In Greece, the period during which the Games lasted was a period of semi-religious solemnity and festival. The life and conduct of the people was coloured by the Olympiads, and their influence was so great that the chronology of the country was counted by reckoning the length of time between the successive gatherings. Perhaps this is a too Utopian ideal to aim at; perhaps it is useless to hope that the modern world will count the years by the Olympiads. This may be so; but there is nothing like having a high ideal, and it is not too much to hope that, this outward sign apart, the modern Olympic Games may exercise the same beneficent influence as the classical models. We do not think so, at any rate — and there are not wanting signs to encourage those whose seer's eyes discern far more in the meetings than strikes the mind of the casual spectator of the contests which take place in the modern stadia. The first meeting, which took place at Athens, in 1896, was regarded — not

without a certain amount of scepticism — as a rather inflated sporting meeting. But each successive Olympiad has done much to sweep away those initial feelings of scepticism; and it is no exaggeration to say that the Fifth Olympiad has acquired much of the dignity which it was hoped from the first that the events would attain.

Therefore, it is not an inappropriate moment at which to allude to one of the noblest hopes concerning the influence that coming Olympiads may wield — the establishment, by tacit, mute consent, of a state of universal peace, corresponding to the ancient Pax Olympica, which shall prevail during the celebration of the Games. There is, we venture to assert, at least as much chance that this state of world-wide harmony — even if it be but of temporary duration — will be established through the influence of the Olympic Games, as that it will be produced — permanently or temporarily — by the efforts of any peace congress.

In ancient Greece it was ordained by law that war as well as private dissensions should cease during the solemn celebration of the Games. Cannot this same result be obtained, without legislation, through the intermediary of the modern Olympiads? Why not? — At least, the ideal can be aimed at, and it will be productive of nothing but good; and if the current of popular opinion is given a proper direction, there is no knowing to what volume it will grow. The melting of the snows on a thousand mountains starts a thousand streams, which ultimately flow into the oceans as great rivers: in the same way, shall grow and develop in volume the resistless river of public opinion.

The complicated economic and social conditions of the present day, and the vast area covered by the modern Olympic movement, make the realisation of this exalted ideal impossible by legislation. But there is no reason why the same result should not be attained by surer if slower methods. If the individual athletes who are taking part in the Games will themselves start the crusade, by making it a rule that *all personal grievances, differences, and quarrels shall be laid aside while the meeting is in progress*, much will have been already accomplished. As a natural corollary, the clubs to which the individuals belong will follow their lead — and thence the progress of the pacific sentiments which will mark the celebration of the Games cannot fail to be steadily progressive.

It is unnecessary to attempt to trace the stages by which the expansion of the idea will take place, until it becomes a

national, an international, and a world-wide tenet; but enough has been said to show that the crusade can — and should — be started forthwith. The responsibility of starting the movement rests upon the shoulders of those who will take part in the forthcoming Olympiad.

That the establishment of a Pax Olimpica is a possibility is a glorious and encouraging thought. Do not let the opportunity slip of making a start — a good start on the report of the pistol — ye athletes of many nations, who are turning your faces and your steps towards Sweden at the present moment; for who shall dare to predict what the ultimate harvest that will be gathered as the result of your modest, individual pioneer work may be ?

As a final incentive to the athletes, to whom this call to labour is specially addressed, let us point out a sacred reason which should inspire everyone to do his best to make the Games pass off successfully — the sacred obligation which rests upon the shoulders of all who accept hospitality. Sweden is preparing and has long been preparing — a great and cordial reception for those athletes of many nations who are already foregathering in her capital of Stockholm. Nothing that can happen — the arrival of no « incidents, » however untoward they may be — is a sufficient excuse for the violation of this obligation. The laws of hospitality, the noblest sporting ideals, demand that the guest shall in no way render the position of the host difficult. Rules and regulations can never be drawn up which will exclude all possibility of differences of opinion arising — and so, only upon a full realisation of the mutual obligations which exist can reliance be placed. The uprightness and the fairness — the spirit — of the judges should be the point of view from which all is regarded; and when this is realised the microbe of dissension will die for want of the disagreeable nutriment on which it flourishes.

The loftiest ideal in the world of sport will be thus attained; and the crusade towards the establishment of a Pax Olimpica will have advanced a long stage on its difficult journey when it has been realised. Much must be forgiven the competitors in the modern Olympiads, whose excitement and patriotism is an excuse for a feeling of bitterness when defeated; but the true aim of the Games will not have been attained until the vanquished can hail the victor without the ghost of a feeling of rancour in his heart. Years ago matches were often played — cricket and football — without an umpire, the readiness of the players

to admit their faults being a sufficient guarantee of fair play. Has human nature so deteriorated that this is no longer possible ? We do not for a moment believe it — any more than we believe that the Greek Olympiads were absolutely devoid of « regrettable incidents » — and it is certain that a proper realisation of the moral obligation which rests upon the shoulders of every individual competitor will eliminate most of them and make the settlement of everything that occurs possible.

Happily, war has ceased to be a form of rather violent amusement. Nations only go to war nowadays when serious issues are at stake; and, therefore, it is truly optimistic to hope that a state of universal peace will ever be brought about by any agency save the disappearance of all causes of quarrel. And so the establishment of a world-wide Pax Olimpica may be a remote possibility. But there is no earthly reason to prevent it from coming into operation in the truest sense at once; and those who sow the good seed may leave posterity to reap the fuller harvest that may yet be gathered, with joyous hearts — having in their day and generation done their duty.



Rapport sur les Concours artistiques et littéraires de la V^{me} Olympiade.

La pensée qui a dicté l'établissement des concours littéraires et artistiques érigés par le Comité International Olympique et devant dorénavant faire partie de chaque Olympiade ne paraît pas avoir été encore comprise de tous les concurrents. Ceux-ci d'autre part n'ont pas toujours réfléchi aux conditions qui leur étaient imposées. Il n'y a pas lieu de s'étonner de ces faits. Il en va toujours ainsi avec les « nouveautés ». Elles ne sont pas acceptables du premier coup à la mentalité générale parce qu'elles ne cadrent pas avec les habitudes reçues. C'est ainsi qu'il nous a été présenté, en littérature par exemple, des ouvrages techniques ou, en peinture, des photographies coloriées et, ici et là, des dessins ou des écrits insuffisamment inédits ou bien