

bien à lui qui n'est pas celle des autres, qui n'est pas seulement de noblesse et de vertu et a sels rayons et ses ombres mais dont nous participons tous, petits et grands, citadins et campagnards à laquelle nous nous reconnaissons et dont le trait dominant est d'être paysanne et rurale, que nous le voulions ou non. A em suivre les impulsions nous avons vécu heureux. Gardons la précieusement, cultivons la, transmettons la fidèlement aux générations qui viennent. Qu'elle puise toujours sa sève dans notre sol et ses inspirations dans notre histoire. Qu'elle se rajeunisse et se renouvelle au contact des réalités du temps présent et de l'heure qui vient, qu'elle reste ouverte à tous les enseignements utiles et en retienne les meilleurs mais qu'elle demeure telle que nos pères nous l'ont faite, qu'elle, soit toujours à nous, bien suisse.



The chronicle of the amateur spirit.

Il est un peu tard sans doute pour parler du remarquable travail que l'éminent professeur R. Tait Mckenzie de l'Université de Pensylvanie a présenté à la National Collegiate Athletic Association des Etats-Unis sous ce titre. Mais il s'agit d'un sujet « éternel » et le D^r Tait Mckenzie l'a traité en artiste et en savant car son ciseau de sculpteur est aussi habile que sa plume d'écrivain. Nous désirons donc résumer pour nos lecteurs ce travail si suggestif et en citer les passages les plus importants.

L'auteur cherche d'abord à définir l'esprit d'amateurisme. a For a definition of the spirit that should actuate the gentleman amateur in his dealings with his opponents, one might well go back to the Greek word *Aidos* for which the exact English equivalent is hard to find, but which is opposed to both insolence and servility, that, while it puts into a man's heart the thrill and joy of the fight, restrains him from using his strength like a brute or from cringing to a superior force : that wins for him honor and respect, in victory or defeat, instead of terror from the weak and contempt from the strong. It includes that scrupulous respect for personal honor and fairness that should make

a team elect to risk a probable defeat rather than win through the services of those who do not come within the spirit of a gentleman's agreement. It is that spirit of modesty and dignity that obeys the law, even if the decision seems unjust, instead of piercing the air with protestations. « *Aidos* is stolen away by secret gains » says Pindar; and so in our own day is the spirit of amateurism in constant danger from the insidious commercialism that threatens it, by making appear plausible and right the most flagrant forms of lying and deceit. With *Aidos* in the hearts of the competitors, a sport that at first sight seems rough and brutal becomes a school for those manly virtues of self-control, courage and generosity; without it the same game is but an opportunity to display malignant spite and brutality or to vent the meanness of a vengeful nature, however high we pile up law upon law padded with parentheses and fortified with foot-notes ».

Le professeur Tait McKenzie épouse ensuite une thèse que nous avons toujours soutenue à savoir que les sports d'autrefois ne furent pas sans rencontrer les mêmes difficultés que ceux d'aujourd'hui mais il l'appuie de faits intéressants. « Do we think that the tram athlete is a development of American civilisation? In B. C. 75, Astylus of Croton, having previously won the stade race and the long race in two successive olympiads, and so established a great reputation entered himself as a Syracusan to court favor with the tyrant, Hieron. His enraged townsmen destroyed his statue, banished him and converted the house they had given him into a common prison.

Were decisions of officials ever disputed? In 332 B. C. Callippus of Athens bribed his opponents to let him win the Pentathlon. The guilty parties were fined and the Athenians sent the orator Hyperides to beg the Eleans who were in charge of the games to remit the fines. His mission failed; they refused to pay and withdrew their entries for the games until they were compelled to give in because the Delphic god refused to give them any answers until the fines were paid. A Delphic god would be a boon at some of our games, both international and at home. Six bronze Zanes were cast from their money, placed at the entrance of the stadium where every competitor must pass and adorned with the significant inscription « Not with money but with speed of foot and strength of body must prizes be won at Olympia. » At certain periods in the history of Greek athletics pot hunting was almost universal. At the Isthmian games, a competitor promised his rival 300 drachmae to let him win. After the race

he refused to pay, stating that he would have won anyhow, and the resulting quarrel made a spicy scandal in the athletic circles of the day ».

Ensuite le professeur distingue quatre âges différents dans l'histoire des sports hellènes « *First*, the period of unorganized or casual athletic competitions for which no special training was undertaken; consisting of a rehearsal of the warlike exercises of soldiers on active service, to celebrate or commemorate a feast or a funeral. *Second*, the period of widespread competition; in running, jumping, boxing, wrestling, throwing the discus and javelin which all the Greek youths practiced and the organization of the great athletic festivals at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, Athens and the Isthmus. *Third*, the period of high standard of excellence and record breaking. The introduction of training, diet and great specialization and hero worship which finally resulted in the fourth period. *Fourth*, the period of professional athletics, paid for by the states, when athletics drifted into the hands of guilds or companies of athletes who traveled about and were merely used as entertainers of the crowd. In this last period athletic exercises completely lost their hold among the better class of Greeks who refused to compete with those whom they considered their social inferiors ».

M. Tait McKenzie reprenant chacune de ces périodes les examine alors en détail : « It is in Homer that we get the first glimpse of the true amateur competing for the simple love of the struggle and the physical effort. The gymnasium of the Homeric Greeks was the field, the hill and the shore... Needless to say there was no special training unless we say that the life of a warrior was a continual training for athletics. . . . The value of the prizes depended on the generosity of the giver of the games They were gifts rather than rewards, mementos of the dead and often everyone got a prize. They were open to invited guests only and were strictly kept among the aristocracy. This was the first code of eligibility and was founded on strictly social lines. . . In Homer, both boxing and wrestling were already arts. These arts seem also to have been the possession of the chieftains and were jealously guarded like the jiu-jitsu of the Samurai in Japan. Jumping was not on the same level and is only spoken of as a sport in which the nimble Phaeacians excelled. » Arrive la seconde période : a Greece became more densely peopled and as conditions of life became more settled the athletic festival arose naturally from their strong athletic spirit and intense love of competition. The olympic games began as a local gathering of

neighbors but owing to its situation and accessibility the valley soon became the rallying point for ever increasing crowd and the games became a great factor in promoting the unity of the Greek empire. . . By the beginning of the sixth Century B. C. Olympia was firmly established as the national festival. The example was followed by other Greek states and the three other Pan-Hellenic games at Delphi, Nemea and the Isthmus were instituted as well as many others which never attained national importance. Palestræ and gymnasia sprang up in every town to train the youth in manly exercises but not for the purpose of preparing athletes for competition which was a later development. The rise of Sparta whose system of physical education was at that time most complete was an object lesson which the Greek world was not slow to take and the systematic education of the body became an essential part of the entire educational system. With the multiplication of athletic games, the increase in the number of gymnasia and the fierceness of competition, the art of training competitors soon developed into an occupation and the professional trainer received then as now honors scarcely inferior to those of the victors themselves.

Increasing rivalry drove olympic authorities to improve the accommodations for visitors and to formulate regulations to safeguard the purity of the games against the commercialism and we enter on a period of law-making which parallels strangely the last ten years of our athletic history... The standard of performance went up; natural ability was no longer sufficient and the necessity of special training became imperative... Athletics became more and more scientific as they are becoming with us. The Spartans refused to meet these conditions of forced and unnatural competition and Spartan names no longer adorned the list of olympic winners... The would-be victor at Olympia lived in a constant state of training and competition... Croton and Sybaris set up rival games to Olympia and tried by the value of their cash prizes to entice competitors.

In spite of the glorification of the athlete by the poet and the artist, amateurism was now in a most perilous state, even at Olympia. But here fate intervened. The war with Persia broke out. A handful of free citizens, athletic and well trained defeated a horde of slaves at Marathon. Patriotism ran high and the athletic movement got a new lease on life. At the next Olympiad, owing to the great entry list, the time of the festival had to be extended, new buildings were constructed, the great temple and statue of Zeus were dedicated, the hippodrome built, the stadium leveled and its sides banked up. »

Ce fut un moment de grande splendeur. Cette combinaison de la ferveur patriotique et de l'effort artistique et littéraire donna aux Jeux un éclat sans pareil. Mais cela ne dura guère. « The high ideals of the poet, artist and philosopher kept athletics comparatively pure for a short time, but when the patriotic wave that followed the Persian war had spent its force, the decline in amateurism was rapid ». C'est la troisième période qui commence « the period where too much competition begat specialization; specialization begat professionalism and that in itself was death to true sport. Even the good athlete could not hope for success unless he put himself under a rigorous and prolonged course of training. The trainers had to concentrate on the preparation for single events. . . The generals and soldiers condemned this training because it left no time for the practice of military exercises and failed to produce the all-round development necessary for the useful soldier and citizen ».

Combien tout cela ressemble en vérité à ce que nous avons devant nos yeux et comme l'histoire sait se répéter! Aussi est-il bien nécessaire que les leçons de l'expérience nous soient souvent rappelées... en athlétisme comme en politique.

(A suivre.)



Où en est l'aviron ?

Il ne progresse pas, voilà ce qu'à une question ainsi posée, répondront la plupart des adeptes des autres sports tout heureux et fiers des progrès accomplis par leurs exercices favoris. Et ils développeront leur pensée : voyez l'escrime. Elle n'a cessé de se perfectionner, de devenir de plus en plus scientifique, ouvrant aux ambitions de ceux qui s'y adonnent un champ presque illimité. Le jeu d'épée aujourd'hui approche de la perfection; il a pris au fleuret le secret de sa rapidité et y ajoute la saveur du véritable combat; le sabre, de son côté, s'est assagi et est devenu une arme de précision et de finesse. Voyez la boxe; le coup a acquis une force merveilleuse; tous les muscles nécessaires contribuent à assurer son efficacité; pas une seconde n'est perdue en parades inutiles ou en esquives exagérées. Voyez l'équitation; on dit qu'elle a perdu certaines élégances, certaines grâces un peu con-